

**NEWS RELEASE:  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day Set for January 27<sup>th</sup>**  
*-Millions could overlook valuable tax credit –*

Horry County, SC (January 20, 2012) – January 27<sup>th</sup> marks Earned Income Tax Credit, EITC, Awareness Day, a nationwide effort to increase public awareness about EITC and kick-off the free tax preparation sites. VITA, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, is a valuable program in our community that can offer tax preparation assistance. Our local United Way is part of the Horry County Financial Literacy Coalition of non-profit and governmental organizations working to ensure that this free tax assistance is available for individuals and families. The local VITA volunteers are already at work in our community getting ready for this great opportunity for Horry County residents.

While EITC Awareness Day is on Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, the local VITA group is partnering with the James R. Frazier Community Center, 1370 Bucksport Road, in Bucksport on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> to generate extensive mainstream and social media coverage for EITC Day. Individuals can get free help determining their EITC eligibility and claiming the credits at the James R Frazier Community Center from 10:00am to 2:00pm on Saturday. This will kick-off the VITA program and IRS trained volunteers will begin preparing taxes for individuals.

Millions of workers could overlook a special federal tax credit because they don't know about it. As a result, they could miss out on up to \$5,751 extra in their federal income tax refunds through the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC. Last year, 1,627 residents were assisted in receiving FREE tax services which totaled \$536,428 refunded back to county residents through the Earned Income Tax Credits. "This money can make a real difference to workers struggling in this recovering economy" said Utocqua Grissett, Horry County VITA Coordinator.

Anyone earning \$49,078 or less from wages, self-employment or farming in 2011 should see if they qualify. Eligible workers must file federal income tax returns-even if they are not required to file-and specifically must claim the credit to get it. The VITA Program offers free assistance to those with low-to-moderate income, filing Forms 1040EZ, 1040A, or basic 1040 Federal tax returns. The Volunteer Tax preparers also assist eligible taxpayers in claiming any special credits and deductions for which they might be eligible. All Volunteer Tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS in basic income tax return preparation.

Many people will qualify for the first time this year due to economic changes in their income or changes in their marital or parental statuses according to the IRS. The agency estimates four out of five eligible workers

currently claim their EITC. "We want to raise that to five out of five," states Grissett. "They earned it. Now they need to file, claim it and get it."

While EITC Awareness Day for Horry County is being held on Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at the James R Frazier Community Center in Bucksport, there will be other Horry County VITA locations available for individuals to receive free help for their taxes this season:

**Surfside Library:** Tuesdays 3:30pm – 6:00pm

**Chapin Memorial Library:** Wednesdays 3:00pm – 6:00pm

**Conway Library:** Saturdays 10:00am – 2:00pm

**Coastal Carolina University\*:** Tuesdays 4:30pm – 7:00pm,

Wednesdays 4:30pm – 7:00pm (2/15, 3/7, 3/28, 4/4 only)

Thursdays 4:30pm – 7:00pm

Fridays 12Noon – 3:00pm (2/24, 3/2, 3/23 only)

\*There will be no VITA hours during Spring Break: March 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>

The above locations and times are subject to change without notice; contact the United Way office at 843.347.5195 for the latest information on area VITA sites.

To help preparers accurately determine EITC eligibility and prepare returns, individuals should bring:

- Photo proof of identification
- Social Security cards for themselves, their spouse and all dependents or Social Security number verification letters issued by the Social Security Administration
- Birth dates for all persons listed on the tax return
- Wage and earning statement(s) Forms W-2, W-2G, and 1099-R, from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- Copies of their prior year federal and state returns, if available
- Bank routing and account numbers for direct deposit of their refunds
- Other relevant information about income and expenses
- Amounts paid for day care, if applicable, and the day care provider's identifying number.

Both spouses must be present to sign joint returns. Anyone paid to prepare federal income tax returns is required by law to sign the return and enter their Preparer Tax Identification Number.

"EITC is a financial boost for working people in a recovering economy and allows more funds to flow within your community. Its money that can make lives a little easier," expresses Grissett. If you qualify for free assistance in filing your taxes electronically and want to ensure that you receive all of the tax credits that you have earned, please contact Utocqua R Grissett, local IRS contact, at (843) 347-5195 or

[horrycountyvita@yahoo.com](mailto:horrycountyvita@yahoo.com).

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*The United Way of Horry County has been impacting the community for 39 years. United Way is focusing its efforts on the underlying causes in the community. By doing so, the United Way of Horry County has developed four impact areas, which will help solve the problems at the root cause. Each program will make a real impact to ensure successful youth and children, strong, safe and healthy families, that self-sufficiency is promoted and a basic needs safety net is provided. The United Way of Horry County supports 45 Community Partner programs that help fill the needs in the community.*