

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**United Way and the Money In Your Pocket Coalition
to provide free tax preparation assistance to residents across the region**

Appointments can be made beginning Jan. 14 by dialing 2-1-1; sites open week of Jan. 19

Pittsburgh, Pa. (Jan. 13, 2015) – United Way, in partnership with the Money in Your Pocket Coalition, is providing free tax preparation services to qualifying residents across the region. PA 2-1-1 Southwest, United Way’s 24/7 human services helpline, will begin scheduling appointments on Jan. 14 in eight counties across Southwestern PA (Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Mercer, Washington and Westmoreland), and will serve as a resource for tax assistance in Beaver, Lawrence, and Indiana counties. Most tax sites will open the week of Jan. 19 and will be in operation through mid-April.

Sites will be staffed by IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers who will prepare tax returns at no charge for qualifying individuals and families, ensuring they receive full refunds with no hidden charges or fees in an honest and knowledgeable environment. Any taxpayer with a total annual income of up to \$53,000 may qualify.

Last year in Allegheny County alone, IRS-certified United Way/Money in Your Pocket Coalition volunteers prepared more than 6,600 tax returns, which delivered \$11.3 million in refunds back to local residents, including \$4.8 million in Earned Income Tax Credits. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), one of the nation’s largest anti-poverty programs, is a tax credit for people who work but do not earn high incomes. Taxpayers who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax, or even get a tax refund between \$496 and \$6,143.

Additionally, those making up to \$60,000 could qualify to file their state and federal taxes for free online at myfreetaxes.com. MyFreeTaxes is sponsored by the Walmart Foundation in cooperation with Goodwill Industries International, National Disability Institute and United Way. The tax filing software is provided through MyFreeTaxes.com and powered by H&R Block.

“The free tax preparation project provides a critical support service to low-wage earning families and individuals across our region,” said Kiandra Foster, program manager for Helping Families Thrive at United Way. “Our IRS-certified volunteers are trained to provide caring, accurate and thorough service so that hard working people can receive the full refunds they’ve earned.”

The Free Tax Preparation Project is supported by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

For more information or to schedule an appointment, dial 2-1-1 or visit swpafreetaxes.org.

About United Way of Allegheny County – United Way of Allegheny County is a change agent and efficient community fundraiser that improves lives by addressing critical community needs. By convening diverse partners and investing in programs and people to advance solutions, United Way creates long-lasting change and helps children and youth succeed, strengthens and supports families by promoting financial stability, ensures the safety and well-being of vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities, and provides county-wide access to information and referral sources meeting basic needs.

About Money in Your Pocket Coalition – The Money in Your Pocket Coalition is a group of nonprofit and government agencies in Allegheny County who provide free tax preparation for low-and-moderate income individuals, families, and seniors. Since 2009, the Coalition has trained and mobilized hundreds of community volunteers during tax season to provide free, quality income tax preparation assistance to families, completing over 33,000 tax returns. Beyond tax season, the Coalition partners offer year-round assistance for financially struggling adults and families.

The Money in Your Pocket Coalition is comprised of: Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny Valley Association of Churches, Goodwill of Southwestern PA/ Northside Common Ministries, Human Services Center Corporation, IRS, Just Harvest, North Hills Community Outreach, Robert Morris University, United Way of Allegheny County, Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA, PA 2-1-1 Southwest, YMCA and YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh.

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