



For Immediate Release

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Who: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

What: Free Tax Preparation for Lower to Middle Income Families

Where: Broward County

When: January 16 - April 17, 2018

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Returns to Broward County

Lower to Middle Income Families Could Save up to \$200 with FREE Tax Preparation

January 31, 2018 – Hollywood, FL – The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program will provide free income tax services through April 17, 2018. Individuals and families who earned \$54,000 or less in 2017 can save up to \$200 with free tax preparation services; the program includes eligibility determinations for inclusion in federal tax credit programs. Starting this year, program participants will also receive financial advice on the best way to use their refund.

These services will be provided at 16 permanent tax sites at local nonprofits and more than 20 tax sites where a mobile team will assist the community. To find the nearest VITA site in Broward County, call 211 or 954-537-0211 or visit www.VITATaxesFree.org.

Low- to mid-income families and individuals may qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and/or the Child Tax Credit (CTC). These tax credits change from year to year and are based on earnings, number of qualifying children and marital status.

The maximum amount of EITC credits for 2018 is as follows:

- \$6,444 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,728 with two qualifying children
- \$3,468 with one qualifying child
- \$520 with no qualifying children

This free tax service is available for persons with disabilities, veterans and the elderly. Services are available in English, Spanish, French, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese and American Sign-Language.

“VITA and the Earned Income Tax Campaign have been enormously helpful to millions of working families struggling to make ends meet,” said Cindy Arenberg Seltzer, President/CEO of the Children’s Services Council of Broward County. “That is why we have been a major supporter of this campaign in Broward for fifteen years. Reimbursements going directly into the pockets of Broward County families that need them most makes an enormous difference in the lives of children,” she said.

“During the 2017 tax season, \$6 million in taxes were refunded to Broward County working families and individuals and more than 5,908 people were served across 18 site locations,” said Josie Bacallao, President/CEO of Hispanic Unity of Florida, the largest provider of these services in Broward County.

According to the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act, filers are advised that this year the tax refund will be delayed until mid-February, without exceptions.

“It is crucial Broward County residents know what tax credits are available, how they can qualify, and are able to file. These credits amount to significant funds that will filter into Broward County and improve the lives of many who are living paycheck to paycheck,” said Kathleen Cannon, President and CEO of United Way of Broward County.

This Broward community-wide initiative is made possible by the Children’s Services Council of Broward County (CSC), the IRS, Hispanic Unity of Florida, United Way of Broward County, and Citi. Other key partners and funders include: 211 Broward, Bank of America, Broward College, Broward County, Broward County Libraries, Community Access Center, DeVry University, HandsOn Broward, SunTrust Bank, and Third Federal Savings & Loan.

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About the Children’s Services Council:

The Children’s Services Council of Broward County is an independent taxing authority which was established by a public referendum on September 5, 2000 and was reauthorized by voters on November 4, 2014, which, through Public Act, Chapter 2000-461 of the laws of Florida, authorized the Council to levy up to 0.5 mills of property taxes. The role of the Council is to provide the leadership, advocacy and resources necessary to enhance children’s lives and empower them to become responsible, productive adults through collaborative planning and funding of a continuum of quality care.

For more information about the Children’s Services Council of Broward County, please visit www.cscbroward.org. Follow us on Twitter at @CSCBroward and on Facebook.

About United Way of Broward County:

United Way of Broward County is a volunteer driven, community-based, non-profit organization servicing Broward County for more than 75 years. United Way of Broward County’s mission is to focus and unite the entire community to create significant lasting change in the impact areas of Education, Income and Health, the building blocks for a better life, which positively impacts people’s lives. United Way of Broward County is the catalyst for change and convener of partnerships that unite the hearts, minds, and resources within the Broward community. For more information, visit www.UnitedWayBroward.org.

About Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF):

HUF is a non-profit founded 36 years ago by community leaders to ease the acculturation transition for newcomers from other nations. Today, HUF provides assistance through 12 programs and 30+ services in four languages to Broward's diverse community. HUF remains the county's largest agency dedicated to the immigrant population, providing them with the tools they need to build a new life. In 2017, the agency served more than 15,000 children and families. The agency offers assistance at eight Broward County sites, in addition to 18 FREE tax preparation sites and nine citizenship preparation sites. For more information, visit www.hispanicunity.org.

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