

Carson, Peterson, IRS Encourage Families to Take Advantage of Tax Credits, Free Preparation Sites

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Indianapolis, IN – Mayor Bart Peterson, Congresswoman Julia Carson and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) encouraged all qualified families to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by visiting one of more than 40 free tax preparation sites sponsored by the Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign.

"Although personal debt can seem overwhelming, it can be overcome," Representative Carson said. "Although filing taxes can seem confusing, it can be made understandable. I urge everyone coming to the mall today to take advantage of the great resources here today."

The EITC is available to low-to-moderate-income taxpayers. In Indianapolis, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 families failed to claim the EITC in 2002, which could bring \$22 million in tax credits back into the local economy.

"Many Indianapolis families fail to claim their earned income tax credit because they don't know they are eligible, haven't heard about it or don't know how to apply. Also, many do not get the credit because they file the E-Z form, which does not make the credit available," Mayor Peterson said at Glendale Mall's Super Saturday site. "Our free tax preparation sites will ensure families claim the credit and give them financial counseling to help them wisely use their refunds."

Last year's Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign pilot program targeted only three Indianapolis neighborhoods, yet returned \$650,000 in tax credits. This year's program has expanded to include more than 40 free tax preparation sites throughout Marion County.

"If you're working to support yourself and have one or more children living with you, you may qualify for the Earned Income Credit," IRS Territory Manager Ken Williams said.

The EITC can provide as much as \$4,140 per year to working families with incomes up to \$34,178. Single workers who are raising one child in their homes and who earn less than \$29,281 can receive an EITC up to \$2,506. Married workers who are raising one child in their homes and who earn less than \$30,201 in 2002 can receive an EITC up to \$2,506.

Tax preparation sites sponsored by the Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign also focus on financial counseling to educate families on how to build long-term assets with their refund.

The Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign is a coalition of Mayor Bart Peterson, Congresswoman Julia Carson, the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, the IRS and other community partners.

To learn more about the program and to find a site near you, call Community Solutions at 423-1770, Monday through Friday.