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**For Immediate Release: January 21, 2010**

**Contact:** Chris A. Schneider 559-570-1214  
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**Event Date:** Friday, January 22, 2010

**Event Time:** 10am

**Location:** Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Conf Room

**Local Agencies, City of Fresno Once Again Launch Efforts to Help Families claim their Earned Income Tax Credit For Free!**

**Fresno, CA.** The City of Fresno and local agencies will gather at Fresno City Hall today to announce a joint effort to help families claim their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for free. IRS estimates that more than \$26 million of EITC money from the federal government goes unclaimed.

Since 2004, local agencies have come together every tax season to encourage eligible low- to moderate-income workers across the city to participate in EITC program. During this tax season, just by filing a basic tax return, qualified families in Fresno could receive federal refund checks of up to \$5,657. Many individuals and families missed out on the money last year, simply because they did not file for the credit, were not aware of the credit or did not know where to go for help.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit helps families who are struggling in these very difficult economic times,” said Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin. “The program also helps strengthen Fresno’s economy as families spend those dollars on the goods and services they need, right here in our community.”

The EITC is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit. The credit this year could put as much as \$5,657 into the pockets of a family with three children, or up to \$457 for a worker with no children.

“We want to make sure people know that they don’t have to make a lot of money to be eligible for the EITC program,” said Chris Schneider, Executive Director of Central California Legal Services (CCLS). This week, CCLS began offering free tax help and assistance in filing for the earned income credit.



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[www.centralcallegal.org](http://www.centralcallegal.org)

Using a free online tax filing tool known as “ICAN! E-File”, local agencies are also helping local residents obtain refunds quickly without the high fees associated with “cash now” loans. “We want those with low and moderate incomes to keep all of the money they’re eligible to receive,” Schneider said. “With this free online service, refunds can be processed in as few as 10 days.”

Fresno City Council member Blong Xiong a supporter of the program for years applauds these efforts. “With the struggling local economy and the economic challenges our city residents are facing, I see this program as another way for the working families to put money in their pockets,” Xiong said.

More information on the EITC program call Central California Legal Services ([www.centralcallegal.org](http://www.centralcallegal.org)) at 570-1220.

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