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**United Way of  
Southwestern Pennsylvania**

**United Way to open free tax preparation sites to help low-income individuals and families**  
*25 locations available across region in 2016*

Pittsburgh, Pa. (Jan. 19, 2016) – United Way of Southwestern PA, in partnership with the Money in Your Pocket Coalition (MIYPC), will offer free, in-person tax preparation across 25 sites to eligible individuals and families. More than 250 IRS-certified volunteers will prepare tax returns for the Free Tax Preparation Campaign beginning this month through mid-April.

“This campaign helps change the lives of so many hard-working individuals and families in our community,” said Angela Reynolds, United Way’s Director of PA 2-1-1 Southwest and Helping Families Thrive. “Our IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers help them secure the tax credits and refunds they have earned. This is money that can help people meet basic needs, from an unexpected bill, to maintaining reliable transportation, to putting food on the table.”

Although there are several programs and credits that exist to help low-income individuals during tax time, many people do not know they exist. The Earned Income Tax Credit is earned by low- to moderate-income working individuals and families based on income and number of children and is one of the strongest tools to help people build financial self-sufficiency, keep people working and lead children into successful futures.

Last year, across the region, volunteer tax preparers helped file more than 10,000 tax returns, resulting in millions of dollars in tax refunds for households in the region.

In the 2014 tax year, the young mother of a three-year old became sole owner of a house she could barely afford and a car on its last leg when her husband unexpectedly passed away. After attending one of the MIYPC Free Tax Prep Sites, a volunteer discovered she was eligible for the Child Tax Credit and EITC. She received a refund large enough to enable her to fix the roof, make needed repairs to her car, and ultimately get her and her child’s life back on track.

Appointments for free tax preparation can be made by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting [www.pa211sw.org](http://www.pa211sw.org), the free, 24-hour human services helpline powered by United Way. 2-1-1 resource navigators will schedule free tax preparation appointments for four counties (Allegheny, Greene, Washington and Westmoreland) and make service referrals for Fayette and Lawrence counties, which are also part of the MIYPC. 2-1-1 will serve as a resource for free tax

preparation assistance for 11 counties throughout Southwestern PA. Households with a total annual income up to \$54,000 *may* qualify for free in-person tax preparation; free online tax assistance is available for individuals and families with a total annual income up to \$62,000.

**About United Way of Southwestern PA** – United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, serving Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette and Southern Armstrong counties, leads and mobilizes the caring power of individuals, the business community and organizations to help local people in need measurably improve their lives. United Way creates long-lasting change for the betterment of our community.

**About Money in Your Pocket Coalition** – The Money in Your Pocket Coalition (MIYPC) is a group of nonprofit and government agencies in southwestern PA 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. Beyond tax season, the Coalition partners offer year-round assistance for financially struggling adults and families.

The MIYPC is comprised of the following agencies, in partnership with the IRS, *PA 2-1-1 Southwest*, and United Way of Southwestern PA: Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny Valley Association of Churches, Community Action Southwest, Fayette County Community Action Agency, Goodwill of Southwestern PA/ Northside Common Ministries, Human Services Center Corporation, Just Harvest Education Fund, Lawrence County Community Action Partnership, North Hills Community Outreach, Robert Morris University, Veterans Leadership Program of Western PA, Westmoreland Community Action, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh/ YMCA Hope for All.

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