

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way of  
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### **More than 470 volunteer tax preparers needed for Free Tax Preparation Campaign** *Campaign helps local working people across region secure tax credits, refunds*

Pittsburgh, Pa. (Oct. 31, 2017) – United Way of Southwestern PA is recruiting volunteer tax preparers to support the 2018 Free Tax Preparation Campaign. More than 470 volunteers are needed to commit just three hours each week to prepare tax returns for hard-working, low-wage earning families and individuals from Jan. through mid-April.

“Our Free Tax Prep volunteers are making a difference in the lives of local, working families who count on the refunds they’ve earned to help make ends meet,” said Angela Reynolds, United Way’s senior director of PA 2-1-1 Southwest and United for Families. “From businessmen and women, to retirees, to student interns and more – anyone who is comfortable working with people and a computer should consider giving their time.”

No prior tax preparation experience is necessary for someone to volunteer. United Way partners with the IRS to provide both in-person and online training and resources. Training prepares volunteers to pass an IRS certification test prior to starting at a tax site. Volunteers with accounting experience may qualify for condensed training. Continuing education credits are available for professionals, and internship opportunities are available for students.

“This money might be the help a family needs to keep the heat on through the winter or put dinner on the table for their children,” said Kiandra Foster, program manager United for Families, United Way. “While many tax sites provide costly services, our sites allow qualifying taxpayers to get reliable help, free of charge, so they can use their refund toward basic needs. It’s also the first foot in the door for many families who can benefit from other resources United Way can connect them to.”

Last year across the region, 457 volunteers dedicated more than 22,000 hours to help prepare over 10,000 tax returns. They helped many working families obtain the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), one of the nation’s largest anti-poverty programs. Taxpayers who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax, or even get a tax refund of \$500 to nearly \$6,300.

“I feel like this was a good way for me to engage with and become part of the community. I had

to do my own taxes in 2015 and figure it out on my own, so I knew how hard it could be for an immigrant or really anyone without the background,” said Yuyun Liang, a Chinese immigrant who volunteered as a free tax preparer last year.

Volunteers must sign up before January 1, 2018. More information is available at [swpafreetaxes.org](http://swpafreetaxes.org). Volunteers are needed at sites across Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette, Greene and Washington counties and can sign up at [www.swpafreetaxes.org](http://www.swpafreetaxes.org).

Appointments for free tax preparation can be made beginning January 10, 2018 by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting [www.pa211sw.org](http://www.pa211sw.org). 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 \$66,000.

**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.

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