

# ***News Release***

## **Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers, Inc.**

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### **Free Tax Preparation Help Available at Lifeline, Inc. January 27, 2011**

**PAINESVILLE, Ohio**—Did you know that you may not have to spend money to get your own money back? Free tax preparation help is available to low-income families and individuals in Lake County. Lifeline, Inc. wants to help families and individuals meet their filing obligations, find credits they may not know about and protect them from unnecessary costs.

“Many people struggle with preparing taxes,” said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director. “Low-income people really cannot afford expensive advice to get the refund they should. We want everyone to know there is an alternative.”

In particular, Dotson believes Lifeline, Inc. can help many families and individuals who may not realize they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is a federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working families and individuals. Congress originally approved it in 1975. Eligibility factors include how much you earned in 2010 and how many children you have.

“A lot of families are at a different place financially than they were a year ago,” Dotson said. “If they earned less in 2010 than they did in 2009, they might qualify for the credit but not be thinking about it.”

Even single adults and couples without children can qualify for the credit, although families with children receive larger credits. Earned Income and adjusted gross income (AGI) must each be less than:

- \$43,352 (\$48,362 for Married Filing Jointly) if taxpayer has three or more qualifying children
- \$40,363 (\$45,373 for Married Filing Jointly) if taxpayer has two qualifying children
- \$35,535 (\$40,545 for Married Filing Jointly) if taxpayer has one qualifying child
- \$13,460 (\$18,470 for Married Filing Jointly) if taxpayer does not have a qualifying child

Tax Year 2010 maximum credit:

- \$5,666 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,036 with two qualifying children
- \$3,050 with one qualifying child
- \$457 with no qualifying children

“Millions of EITC dollars go unclaimed every year,” Dotson said. “We don’t want that to happen in our community. The low-income people of Lake County can count on Lifeline, Inc. for free tax help.”

Lifeline, Inc. uses volunteers trained and certified by the IRS through its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA volunteers provide free income tax assistance to low-income, elderly and disabled people.

“Our volunteers are committed to helping our community. With their skills, dedication, and hard work, the VITA program will be a great success for the people of Lake County,” said Tiffany Johnson, VITA Site Coordinator at Lifeline.

Free tax preparation is available to residents who meet Lifeline, Inc.’s federal income guidelines. Clinics are available on a variety of dates and times by appointment only. All clinics are held at Lifeline, Inc.’s Painesville office at 54 S. State St., Suite 309. Appointments can be scheduled by calling (440) 354-2148.

For more information, please contact Johnson or Michelle Mezaris, Consumer Education Coordinator at Lifeline, Inc., at 440-354-2148. For more information on Lifeline, Inc., visit us online at [www.lclifeline.org](http://www.lclifeline.org).

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Department of Development, ODOD.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake County’s low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline’s current programming includes services in the health, housing, energy and consumer education areas. Our motto is ‘first to help, then to teach.’ Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODOD, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the CVS Foundation, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.