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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Free tax preparation sites open city-wide**

*Congressman Elijah Cummings, Mayor Sheila Dixon, Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot, and City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake show support for program that provides critical help for Working Families and alternative to high-cost Refund Anticipation Loans.*

**Baltimore, MD.** Congressman Elijah Cummings, Mayor Sheila Dixon, Comptroller Peter Franchot, and City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced the availability of free community tax services for low-income working families in Baltimore at a press conference on February 5, 2008. The Baltimore CASH – *Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope* – Campaign is operating 17 FREE community tax sites throughout the city (see below). Now in its seventh year, the Campaign aims to prepare more than 10,000 tax returns which should result in over \$15 million in refunds to working families in Baltimore while also saving them an estimated \$1 million in tax preparation fees. The largest CASH Campaign site is at the Northwest One-Stop Career Center, serving over 1,200 clients last season.

The Campaign targets low-income working families who are eligible for federal and state Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) because these families are most often targeted by commercial tax preparers who sell high-priced refund anticipation loans, or RALs. The Campaign’s free tax sites offer free e-filing for faster returns and can help residents access other wealth-creating opportunities such as US Savings Bonds, matched-savings accounts, and housing counseling. This year, the campaign is partnering with PNC Bank to provide savings opportunities for low-income workers, including savings accounts and CDs.

“The Baltimore CASH Campaign works to reduce poverty in Baltimore by providing free tax preparation services to eligible households in locations throughout the City. Not only does the program help people receive the Earned Income Tax Credit that is due to them, it also provides

working families with resources to reduce their debts and achieve financial independence,” remarked Congressman Cummings.

Along with providing free tax preparation services, the Congressman, Mayor, Comptroller, City Council President, and the Baltimore CASH Campaign aim to put a dent in the estimated \$29 million of EITC benefits that go unclaimed by eligible City residents. "I encourage everyone to take advantage of this very important financial resource," said Mayor Dixon. "The Baltimore CASH Campaign helps working individuals and families make the most of their tax returns, moving them towards a more sound financial future."

"Considering the current climate of the state and federal economy, the Comptrollers' office is working tirelessly to ensure that all Marylanders receive the proper tax credits and refunds they are due," said Comptroller Franchot. "I am an avid supporter of Earned Income Tax Credit and I urge all who are eligible to visit one of the free community tax sites throughout Baltimore City."

Adds President Rawlings-Blake, "I strongly encourage all working families to stop by a CASH Campaign center to get free professional assistance filing their tax returns. It's so important that the people of Baltimore get the money they deserve, and this service will help ensure just that."

The Baltimore CASH Campaign coordinates the city-wide EITC outreach campaign and 17 free tax preparation sites. Taxpayers can get information about EITC eligibility and free tax prep site locations, by calling the **2-1-1** hotline, United Way's First Call for Help (also at **1-800-492-0618**), or by visiting [www.baltimorecashcampaign.org](http://www.baltimorecashcampaign.org)

### **Free Tax Preparation Locations:**

Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service  
One North Charles Street, Suite 222  
Baltimore, MD 21201

SEIU 1199  
611 North Eutaw Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Catholic Charities  
Our Daily Bread Employment Center  
725 Fallsway  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Southern Community Action Center  
606 Cherry Hill Road  
Baltimore, MD 21225

CASA de Maryland  
2224 E. Fayette Street  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Bon Secours of Maryland Foundation  
26 North Fulton Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21223

Western Community Action Center  
1133 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Northeast Community Action Center  
5225 York Road  
Baltimore, MD 21225

Mayor's Office of Employment Development  
Northwest One-Stop Career Center  
2401 Liberty Heights Avenue  
Mondawmin Mall, Suite 302  
Baltimore, MD 21215

Northwest Community Action Center  
3314 Arydale Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21216

Tax Solutions!  
7002 Golden Ring Road  
Rosedale, MD 21236

ACORN/Financial Justice Center  
16 West 25th Street  
Baltimore, MD 21218

East Harbor Community  
Development Corporation  
120 S. Central Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21231

Eastern Community Action Center  
201 N. Aisquith St  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Southeast Community Action Center  
3411 Bank Street  
Baltimore, MD 21224

The Johns Hopkins Hospital  
Johns Hopkins Health System, Inc.

Community Assistance Network (CAN)  
7701 Dunmanway (North Point Center)  
Baltimore, MD 21222-5437

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