

Press Release

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Free Help Available to Claim Federal Stimulus Payment

Some seniors, others with low-incomes don't know they are eligible for a check

SAN FRANCISCO, March 12, 2008 – United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) today announced that free help is available for low-income Bay Area residents, who don't normally file federal tax returns, but need to do so this year to claim economic stimulus payments recently announced by the U.S. government.

Helping low-income individuals file federal tax forms in order to claim the stimulus checks is a free service available at most of the tax sites operated by Earn It! Keep It! Save It!, the Bay Area's largest free tax assistance program, which is coordinated by United Way. This tax season, Earn It! Keep It! Save It! is operating more than 150 sites throughout the Bay Area, which provide free tax preparation to households that earned less than \$42,000 in 2007.

United Way encourages low-income residents who want to claim the economic stimulus payment to call 2-1-1 or 800-358-8832 to receive a referral to a free tax site in their neighborhood. Because most – but not all – Earn It! Keep It! Save It! sites can help residents complete the federal form to claim the stimulus payment, individuals should then call the site they plan to visit directly to confirm they can receive help.

Individuals not normally required to file federal income tax returns because their income is low or tax-free must file one this year to receive a stimulus payment. They could be eligible for stimulus payments of \$300 to \$1,200, based on income, family size and circumstance. These include:

- Senior citizens
- People with disabilities
- Veterans
- Social Security recipients
- Retired railroad workers
- Low-income workers who earned at least \$3,000 in 2007

Free help to get federal stimulus rebate - page 2 of 2

Individuals who make at least \$3,000 in qualifying income can receive a stimulus payment. Qualifying income includes earned income, such as wages and net self-employment income, as well as Social Security or certain railroad retirement benefits. Veterans' disability compensation, pension and survivors' benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007 also qualify.

“Throughout the Bay Area, thousands of people who can use these stimulus payments the most might miss out,” said Carole Watson, chief community investment officer for United Way of the Bay Area.

“We want to let them know they are eligible and they don’t need to spend money to get help filing their returns; Earn It! Keep It! Save It! sites can help them file their forms free of charge.”

WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Bay Area households with income less than \$42,000 in 2007 are eligible for free tax assistance, as well as help claiming the stimulus check. Individuals who make at least \$3,000 in qualifying income are eligible to receive a stimulus payment.
WHERE & WHEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn It! Keep It! Save It! operates 159 sites in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. For times and locations, call 2-1-1 or 800-358-8832 or visit www.EarnItKeptItSavelt.org.
WHAT TO BRING:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Security cards for all family members W-2 forms for all jobs 1099 forms and other income forms Bank routing and account numbers for checking and savings accounts Childcare provider information Previous year’s tax return if available Name, address and phone number of landlord (if you have one)

Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Bay Area is celebrating its sixth year in 2008. In 2007, the coalition processed \$23.9 million in refunds for 22,962 hardworking families.

About Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Bay Area

Led by United Way of the Bay Area, Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Bay Area coordinates 159 free tax preparation sites and asset development programs in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties, with the participation of over 200 public and private-sector partners. Funding partners include Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bank of America, Chevron, City of Oakland, East Bay Community Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Firedoll Foundation, First 5 Alameda County, First Five Contra Costa, HSBC Bank USA, N. A., KPMG LLP, Levi Strauss Foundation, National Disability Institute, Port of Oakland, The San Francisco Foundation, State Street of California, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Union Bank of California, United Way of the Bay Area, Wells Fargo & Company, Y&H Soda Foundation and others. For more information please visit www.EarnItKeptItSavelt.org or call 415-808-4300.

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