

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIVE UNITED



United Way
in Ottawa County

United Way of Greater Toledo encourages community to use Free Tax Help, File with MyFreeTaxes

Toledo, Ohio – United Way of Greater Toledo encourages Americans earning \$62,000 or less to keep more of their hard-earned money this tax season by using a free, online tax preparation service and accessing valuable tax credits. A new national survey finds **72 percent of working Americans making that amount or less are unaware they qualify for free tax filing and counseling.**

The self-file service, MyFreeTaxes is available for anyone earning **\$62,000 or less**. United Way also offers free in-person filing assistance through our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. On average, filers can save \$200 in tax preparation fees by using the free platform.

“Our program is not just about filing tax returns for the community. We are working to build greater financial stability for hard workers of Northwest Ohio, creating a stronger, more productive workforce. Our partnerships throughout the community allow us to use tax preparation as just one of the many touch points for our clients in order to connect them to other social services,” said Landyn Jordan, Program Manager, Free Tax Preparation.

Limited Awareness of Tax Credits

In working to boost financial stability in Lucas, Wood, and Ottawa Counties, United Way of Greater Toledo has seen first hand the power of connecting people to tax credits through MyFreeTaxes and VITA. One working mom was able to get caught up on her utilities and rent with her refund. She still had money left to purchase a new couch she had been eying for some time and to put some in her savings account.

Spending Refunds on Critical Needs

Tax refunds help working Americans put money in their pockets for everyday items and save for the future. About 23 percent of those asked say they spend their refunds for food, while 22 percent spend the money on housing costs; 31 percent use their refunds for utilities. A quarter of those who receive refunds put the money into savings or invest the funds for the future.

United Way Can Help With Tax Preparation

Filers can enter data into the secure MyFreeTaxes site anytime, from anywhere, making it easy to update the documents from home, at work or on mobile devices. The service also includes a helpline, 1-855-MY-TX-HELP, which operates through April 18 from 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. EST Monday through Friday and noon to 9:00 p.m. EST Saturday. The website also provides a live chat function. To find a VITA site near you, visit MyFreeTaxes.com or call 1-855-MY-TX-HELP. United Way of Greater Toledo is the VITA site here. Call United Way 2-1-1 for more information. Individuals earning more than \$62,000 a year can still use the H&R Block software through the MyFreeTaxes site at a discounted rate. MyFreeTaxes is provided by United Way, with the support

of a grant from the Walmart Foundation. The tax filing software is provided by H&R Block and free tax support is available in English and Spanish by IRS-certified specialists.

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United Way of Greater Toledo, serving Lucas, Wood, and Ottawa counties, changes lives by mobilizing the caring power of the community. United Way is focused on the building blocks for a good life: **education**, **income**, and **health**. Starting at the root, United Way addresses the circumstances that destabilize communities. United Way recruits people and organizations who bring the passion, expertise, and resources needed to get things done. You can give, you can advocate, and you can volunteer – that's how to **LIVE UNITED**. For more information, visit www.unitedwaytoledo.org.