

# ***News Release***

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

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### **Free Tax Preparation Help Available at Lifeline, Inc. February 11, 2013**

**PAINESVILLE, Ohio**— Did you know that you may not have to spend money to get your own money back? For the fourth consecutive year, 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 2012 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 2012 than they did in 2011, 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:

- \$45,060 (\$50,270 married filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children
- \$41,952 (\$47,162 married filing jointly) with two qualifying children
- \$36,920 (\$42,130 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child
- \$13,980 (\$19,190 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children

Tax Year 2012 maximum credit:

- \$5,891 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,236 with two qualifying children
- \$3,169 with one qualifying child
- \$475 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.

“Tax filing for 2012 is off to a great start. Our volunteers are trained and ready to go. We will ensure every eligible credit is claimed, especially the earned income credit,” said Linda Tarach, VITA site coordinator at Lifeline.

Lifeline’s tax clinics proved highly successful in 2011. Through the volunteer clinics, over 140 households received assistance in preparing their tax returns and nearly \$230,000 in returns were generated.

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 Tarach at (440) 354-2148.

For more information, please contact Tarach 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. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health.

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 healthcare, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is ‘helping people, changing lives.’ Lifeline is currently funded by the UWLC and by grants through the ODOD, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the CVS Foundation, Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics and through private donors.