

# News Release

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

PO Box 496, Painesville, OH 44077

(440) 354-2148 [carried@lclifeline.org](mailto:carried@lclifeline.org)

### Free Tax Preparation Help Available at Lifeline, Inc. February 10, 2014

**PAINESVILLE, Ohio**— Did you know that you may not have to spend money to get your own money back? For the fifth 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 2013 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 2013 than they did in 2012, 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:

- \$46,227 (\$51,675 married filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children;
- \$43,038 (\$48,378 married filing jointly) with two qualifying children;
- \$37,870 (\$43,210 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child; or
- \$14,340 (\$19,680 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children.

Tax Year 2013 maximum credit:

- \$6,044 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,372 with two qualifying children
- \$3,250 with one qualifying child
- \$487 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 Laura Behnke, VITA site coordinator at Lifeline.

Lifeline's tax clinics have proved highly successful over the last four years. Through the tax clinics, Lifeline volunteers have prepared tax filings for over 500 residents, totaling \$634,786 in returns and our clients have kept every penny of those returns. Our volunteers have logged over 1,160 hours in training and actual tax filing preparation.

Free tax preparation is available to residents who meet Lifeline, Inc.'s federal income guidelines. Clinics are available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Saturdays, by appointment only, through April 15. All clinics are held at Lifeline, Inc.'s Painesville office at 54 S. State St., Suite 309. Appointments can be scheduled by calling Behnke at (440) 354-2148.

For more information, please contact Behnke 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 ODSA, 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.