

MEDIA RELEASE

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RELIEF AT A TAXING TIME OF YEAR

Thanks to the United Way supported Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, help is available for individuals and families who are unsure of how to complete a return or cannot afford the cost for commercial tax return preparation.

Community Financial Counselling Services (CFCS), a United Way agency partner since 1979, operates the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program in partnership with the Canada Revenue Agency. Both the Province of Manitoba Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Winnipeg Foundation provide additional funding.

The program offers free income tax preparation to Manitobans with individual incomes under \$25,000 or family incomes under \$35,000 with no other business or investment income. Five hundred and sixty CRA trained volunteers provide in-person or drop-off tax preparation at 195 locations across the province from March through to the end of April.

Last year, volunteers prepared almost 28,000 tax returns – 6,000 of them at the Norquay Building. The program's largest site operates Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. where volunteers at 14 tax preparation workstations complete 150 to 200 returns each day. In addition, 35 Aboriginal volunteers prepare T1 tax returns at 22 locations throughout the province.

The benefits of this no-charge service are two-fold. Many clients utilizing this service are wholly dependent on federal tax credits such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit, GST/HST Credit, Child Disability Benefit, Working Income Tax Benefit and Old Age Security Benefits - which are realized only after filing a tax return. In addition, the service allows clients to file their provincial tax information and become eligible for provincial tax credits and benefits.

"This program plays a vital role assisting people in accessing much needed income and encourages many - who might not otherwise do so - to file their tax return," says John Silver, CFCS Executive Director. "We estimate that last year close to \$14,000,000 in tax returns and credits was refunded to low income Manitobans."

"United Way is so pleased to support this much-needed financial program in Winnipeg," says Richard Irish, Chair of United Way's Community Investment Committee. "The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is strongly aligned with United Way's focus on promoting financial stability and independence. Without it, thousands of low income individuals and families would not receive necessary income and entitled benefits."

For information on how to access the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program call 989-1900. Also visit www.cfcs.mb.ca or www.cra.gc.ca.

For more information please contact

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