



## **For Immediate Release**

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## **\$4 Million Walmart Foundation Grant Helps Bay Area Residents Access Free Tax Preparation and Filing Services**

***Walmart Foundation, United Way Worldwide, One Economy and the National Disability Institute's Real Economic Impact Tour Partner to Return More Than \$1 Billion to Individuals in Total Tax Refunds Nationwide***

**OAKLAND, Calif., February 24, 2010** – The Walmart Foundation, United Way Worldwide, One Economy and the National Disability Institute's Real Economic Impact Tour have partnered to bring free tax preparation and filing services directly to consumers in the Bay Area. The initiative will also help educate consumers and provide free preparation and filing for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a federal income tax credit of which many are unaware.

A \$4 million nationwide grant from the Walmart Foundation will be shared among the program partners and is expected to help return \$1 billion in total tax refunds, credits and tax preparation savings. In 2009, a similar effort from the Walmart Foundation helped more than 650,000 people receive tax refunds, credits and tax preparation savings totaling more than \$950 million.

Today, the Walmart Foundation announced the arrival of the MyFreeTaxes.com national tour in the Bay Area. The announcement was made at the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation in Oakland, which is a long-time partner of Earn It! Keep It! Save It!, the Bay Area's largest free-tax program, which is lead by United Way of the Bay Area.

"The Walmart Foundation is building on the success of last year's program to again put savings and EITC refunds back in taxpayers' pockets," said Margaret McKenna, president of the Walmart Foundation. "As many continue to feel the impact of the challenging economy, our goal is to establish a more integrated and accessible program that helps Americans live better lives."

The Walmart Foundation-funded MyFreeTaxes.com national tour, equipped with One Economy's online tax filing technology and IRS-trained volunteers, will be touring the Bay Area from February 17<sup>th</sup> through March 6<sup>th</sup>. Those earning less than \$58,000 per year can visit the van and file their taxes free of charge. For additional information on Walmart Foundation-funded VITA sites, the Mobile Tax Center van tour and eligibility requirements visit [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org) or [www.myfreetaxes.com](http://www.myfreetaxes.com).

"One Economy is committed to using technology to improve the lives of people across the nation," said Alan Greenlee, Vice President of One Economy California. "With MyFreeTaxes.com, and the wonderful work of our partners at the community tax sites throughout California, people are using digital tools to take their finances into their own hands and file online."

The Walmart Foundation grant also supports United Way's Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Bay Area, which is operating more than 200 free tax preparation sites in nine Bay Area Counties throughout tax season. IRS-trained volunteers are on hand to help those earning less than \$49,000 per year file their taxes free of charge. Residents should call 2-1-1 or 800-358-8852 to find their neighborhood tax site.

“We are excited to positively affect communities by offering free tax filing services with the support of the Walmart Foundation grant,” said United Way of the Bay Area Executive Vice President Eric McDonnell. “We look forward to serving Bay Area residents, to help them receive the maximum credit available on their tax returns.”

The National Disability Institute’s Real Economic Impact Tour will assist taxpayers with disabilities who earn \$49,000 or less who may be eligible for certain tax credits. The tour will stop in Oakland on February 25 and convene a disability workgroup meeting to expand the outreach to the disability community participating in free tax preparation and other asset building work.

“We are happy to be a part of free tax preparation in Oakland that is expanding outreach and education to reach more taxpayers with disabilities” said Dr. Johnette Hartnett, Director of the Real Economic Impact Tour. “We are grateful for the Walmart Foundation’s grant to assist members of the disability community with tax services because tax knowledge is freedom.”

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#### ***About Philanthropy at Walmart***

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are proud to support the charitable causes that are important to customers and associates in their own neighborhoods. Through its philanthropic programs and partnerships, the Walmart Foundation funds initiatives focused on creating opportunities in education, workforce development, economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness. From February 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009, Walmart – and its domestic and international foundations – gave more than \$423 million in cash and in-kind gifts globally. To learn more, visit [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

#### ***About United Way of the Bay Area***

United Way of the Bay Area is a nonprofit organization that creates pathways out of poverty. We focus on helping working families and individuals, ensuring they can meet all of their basic needs, while creating opportunities for them to achieve lasting financial stability. We also invest in programs that empower the next generation for success. United Way leads the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! coalition, which provides low-income families with free tax filing assistance and help claiming the EITC. Founded in 1922, United Way of the Bay Area serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. For more information, visit [www.uwba.org](http://www.uwba.org).

#### ***About One Economy***

One Economy Corporation is a global nonprofit organization that uses innovative approaches to deliver the power of technology and information to low-income people. More than 15 million people have used One Economy’s online tools and resources, including public-purpose media at [www.pic.tv](http://www.pic.tv), to build better lives. Learn more at [www.one-economy.com](http://www.one-economy.com).

#### ***About National Disability Institute’s Real Economic Impact Tour***

Designed to provide Americans with disabilities insight, tools and resources to improve their lives through financial education, training and counseling, The Real Economic Impact Tour (REI Tour) is a groundbreaking effort powered by the National Disability Institute (NDI) that’s been the gateway for many to explore opportunities which connect them to financial independence. The 100 2010 REI Tour cities focus on assisting taxpayers with disabilities who earn \$49,000 or less who may be eligible for certain tax credits. Key components include free tax preparation and financial education plus benefits counseling, asset summits, workgroup meetings, audio conferences and more in select cities. The 2010 Real Economic Impact Tour. Tax knowledge is freedom. To learn more, visit [www.reitour.org](http://www.reitour.org).

#### ***About East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation***

EBALDC is a community development corporation that develops affordable housing and community facilities with integrated services focused on tenants and neighborhood residents with emphasis on Asian Pacific Islanders communities and the diverse low income populations of the East Bay. During its 35 years, EBALDC has become a lead developer of affordable housing in the East Bay and compliments its real estate development with programs that bring neighborhood revitalization and asset development to the communities in which we work. In the past six years, EBALDC has returned over \$2.2 million to the working families through our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

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