

# Free Tax Assistance at New Bedford City Hall on February 19th

Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern Massachusetts (CEDC) are encouraging residents of New Bedford to learn whether they qualify for valuable tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the MA Senior Circuit Breaker.



Interested residents must contact the CEDC to make an appointment to learn whether they qualify to claim these benefits on their tax returns. The CEDC will provide assistance to qualifying individuals at New Bedford City Hall on Tuesday, February 19th from 11:00 a.m.–4:00p.m.. Residents interested in making an appointment to meet CEDC at City Hall should contact the organization at (508) 979-4684.

The Internal Revenue Service defines the Earned Income Tax Credit as “a refundable federal income tax credit available to eligible families low-income working individuals and families.” And, while the EITC is the federal government’s largest program benefiting working families, it is largely underutilized.

“The EITC is a proven means of providing tax relief that spurs economic activity and labor force participation while targeting those most in need. I encourage the people of New Bedford to learn whether they qualify for this benefit, and to use the tax preparation services offered by the Community Economic Development Center,” said Mayor Mitchell.

Community Economic Development Center Director, Corinn

Williams said each year, her organization staffs a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program site where residents who are unable to prepare their own taxes and cannot afford professional help are assisted. "There are still many working families and seniors in our community who may qualify to get money back, but are not aware they need to file to receive their refund. In addition, the recent announcement regarding the economic stimulus bill also requires that individuals to file their taxes to collect the rebate. Dollars reclaimed through the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Senior Circuit Breaker give a boost not only to these families but it helps our local economy as well," said Ms. Williams.

The federal government states that the new maximum credit is \$5,891 for a family with three two children; \$3,169 for a family with one child and \$475 with no qualifying children. The government also states that the new income limits are:

- \$45,060 (\$50,270 if married filing jointly) for families with two or more children
- \$36,920 (\$42,130 if married filing jointly) for families with one child
- \$13,980 (\$19,190 if married filing jointly) if there are no children

Investment income must be \$3,150 or less and children must meet certain age, relationship and residency requirements.

In addition the Senior Circuit Breaker Credit is for seniors over 65 who pay property taxes and water bills. Even if a senior does not normally file taxes, he or she may be eligible for up to a \$1,000 credit.