

NEWS RELEASE

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Stimulus Checks Contingent on Tax Filings, “MyFreeTaxes.com” still Available

[TOLEDO, OH] – Government stimulus checks are now being directly deposited into the bank accounts of millions of individuals across the U.S., with monetary amounts being based on 2018 or 2019 tax filings. MyFreeTaxes.com, powered by United Way and H&R Block, is a free online software, available to anyone seeking to file a simple return, giving opportunity to update bank routing numbers, addresses and income amounts on a 2019 tax filing.

Ongoing social disruptions, due to the spread of COVID-19, has delayed the “Tax Day” deadline, historically on April 15 – now July 15, 2020.

Additionally, a long-standing partnership between United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) and LISC Toledo (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) has made the program “Free Tax Prep” possible, allowing individuals who earned less than \$56,000 a year to file their taxes face-to-face with a certified Volunteer Income Tax Assistant at no-cost.

“Due to social distancing and public spaces closing, we have cancelled about 900 Free Tax Prep appointments, bringing normal operations to a standstill,” said Shaulonda Jones, program assistant at LISC Toledo.

“Not having the opportunity to file your taxes could be financially devastating to so many in our community. Earned income tax credits and a tax refund is something that could keep a person or family from falling below the federal poverty threshold. That’s why this service is so important,” Jones said.

Contingent on access to the internet and a computer, MyFreeTaxes.com could offer a quick solution for those wanting to file their 2019 taxes. If an individual has already completed their 2018 or 2019 taxes, no action is needed to receive a stimulus check.

“Payment information, like a bank routing number, can be updated for current filers who did not select a direct deposit option on their ‘18 or ‘19 taxes by visiting the IRS’s website at www.IRS.gov,” said Jill Bunge, director of Community Impact at UWGT. “Non-filers can also update their banking information on the IRS’s site. This is for folks who didn’t file a federal income return because your gross income was under \$12,200 or you simply have been unable to file previously.”

It is the intent of the IRS to deposit stimulus checks electronically, per routing numbers listed on tax information, to expedite the process. This poses an issue to those in our community who have no access to a digital bank account. A problem being analyzed by LISC Toledo and UWGT. Checks can be mailed by paper but will take much longer to receive.

Generally, payments will be \$1,200 for a single filer with an income less than \$75,000 and \$2,400 for married, joint filers making less than \$150,000. Qualifying children will be an additional \$500 per child. Checks are then reduced \$5 for every \$100 of income in excess of the earnings listed above. Single filers making \$99,000 or joint filers making \$198,000 a year or more will not qualify.

“We want our community members to know that, despite many Free Tax Prep locations closing, we are going to do everything we can to get folks their returns and stimulus checks as soon as we are permitted to gather again. In the meantime, we do have MyFreeTaxes for those comfortable filing on their own,” Bunge said.

In 2018, Free Tax Prep returned over \$2 million in tax returns, a critical boost to the local economy.

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United Way of Greater Toledo, serving Lucas, Wood and Ottawa counties, unites the caring power of people to improve lives. Together, we’re on a mission to change lives forever in our community by investing in programs focused on education, financial stability, and healthy lifestyles. We tackle the tough problems in these areas by funding and partnering with the most effective local organizations who create real opportunities and get results. LIVE UNITED by visiting www.unitedwaytoledo.org.