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### **United Way Bay Area Offers Free Tax Preparation for Low-Income Residents**

*--200 sites across eight counties ensure access to federal and California EITC*

SAN FRANCISCO, January 31, 2019—Low- to moderate-income residents of the Bay Area can get their taxes prepared for free through **United Way Bay Area’s Earn It! Keep It! Save It! (EKS)** program. IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers at more than 200 EKS centers are ready to help households earning less than \$55,000 navigate changes to the tax code and receive the best possible refunds by ensuring they claim all deductions and tax credits available. Most EKS centers open in early February, but some are already operating and others open in March. Many sites offer appointments and many provide “drop off” tax preparation service. Details are available at [www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org](http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org).

“The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides a significant cash infusion to residents who need it the most, but their taxes need to be filed correctly to make it happen,” said Anne Wilson, CEO of United Way Bay Area. “For 16 years, the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! program has been helping eligible families and individuals get the best possible refund without spending a dime on tax preparation. We hope to serve more people than ever this year.”

EKS centers help families access the federal EITC and the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC), which has been expanded to include workers between the ages of 18 and 25 and over 64. The salary limit for families for the 2019 tax season also has been increased to \$24,960. Families with multiple children can claim the maximum state credit of almost \$3,000. The federal EITC can provide eligible families with three or more qualifying children a credit of as much as \$6,400.

The convenient “drop-off” tax preparation service launched last year is back for 2019 with 17 intake locations across the Bay Area. Volunteers screen clients for eligibility, then collect their tax information and upload it to a secure cloud storage system. Volunteer preparers working at central preparation sites then interview the taxpayers by phone and prepare their returns. The taxpayers go back to the intake location to sign and pick up their completed returns later. Visit [www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org](http://www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org) for locations offering drop-off service.

In 2018, almost 3,000 EKS volunteers across the Bay Area helped file more than 78,000 federal and state tax returns, bringing more than \$81 million in federal tax refunds back to the local Bay Area community. Since 2003, volunteers have facilitated more than half a billion dollars in refunds to Bay Area households—an estimated 80 percent of which is spent locally.

### **About United Way Bay Area**

United Way Bay Area (UWBA) fights for financial stability and equal opportunity for residents in eight Bay Area counties. UWBA takes an innovative, holistic approach to ending the cycle of poverty through advocacy and programs that support all ages—providing free access to family support, financial and career coaching, job opportunities and basic needs. [www.uwba.org](http://www.uwba.org)

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