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Volunteer tax preparers, taxpayers and leadership are available for interviews throughout the taxathon – until 9pm on Friday and 9am – 9pm on Saturday. Prepare + Prosper (located in the Court West Building) 2610 University Ave. W., Lower Level, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Pictures from the event can be found on Flickr: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskqx1mny>

Local nonprofit launched 24-hour “Taxathon,” Will Return Half Million in Tax Refunds

Prepare + Prosper and the Claim it! campaign kicked off tax season with a tax preparation marathon during busiest weekend

St. Paul – February 5 – Prepare + Prosper launched its “Taxathon” on Friday morning with the goal of returning half million dollars in tax refunds to nearly 200 taxpayers during its busiest time of the tax season. Throughout the taxathon, there will be a giveaway, contests, coloring sheets for kids, balloons, popcorn, and a “results board.” Leadership from Greater Twin Cities United Way and the Minnesota Department of Revenue joined volunteers, taxpayers, and staff to kick off two-day, 24 hours of tax preparation.

“Many low-income working families who anticipate receiving large tax refunds want to file early,” said Tracy Fischman, Prepare + Prosper executive director. “By adding hours this weekend, we are ensuring that more people can be served with high quality free tax assistance and financial services. This also means that fewer people will go to paid preparers, many of whom charge high fees and may sell unnecessary, sometimes harmful, financial products and services.”

Households receiving large refunds are often getting the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). According to the Brookings Institution, the EITC is the nation’s most effective anti-poverty tool, moving 6.2 million people out of poverty every year. This year, the maximum credit is \$6,242, and eligibility is determined by family size and income.

According to the IRS, one in five taxpayers eligible for the credit are not claiming it. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Claim it! campaign, an initiative led by Greater Twin Cities United Way and Prepare + Prosper, aimed at increasing the number of eligible taxpayers claiming the EITC.

“United Way’s mission is to create pathways out of poverty and Claim it! is one of the tools that can aid in the process,” says Meghan Barp, United Way senior vice president of Community Impact. She continues, “Since tax year 2006, more than 1.3 million people in the Twin Cities have claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and used it to get ahead, pay down debt, and save for the future.”

The Claim it! campaign also encourages eligible taxpayer to use one of Minnesota's free tax preparation sites.

"There are hundreds of IRS-certified volunteers ready to help taxpayers accurately file their taxes. They can even help identify the credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Minnesota Working Family Credit, that taxpayers may qualify for," said Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly. "I encourage those who qualify to take advantage of these free filing services."

To locate a free tax preparation site, call United Way 2-1-1 by dialing 2-1-1 or 651-291-0211, statewide, toll-free 1-800-543-7709; or visit www.youclaimit.org.

Follow Prepare + Prosper (@PrepareProsper) and Greater Twin Cities United Way (@UnitedWayTC) on Twitter using the hashtag #taxathon.

About Claim it! – Celebrating 10 years, [Claim it!](#), managed by Prepare + Prosper and funded by Greater Twin Cities United Way, is a statewide public awareness campaign to promote the Earned Income Tax Credit and free tax preparation for hardworking Minnesotans. For more information, call 651-262-2160 or United Way 2-1-1.

About Prepare + Prosper – [Prepare + Prosper](#) is a nonprofit focused on financial capability for low-income households. It provides free tax preparation and access to financial services and products; builds the capacity of other organizations providing these services; and works to advance policies and practices that directly benefit the people it serves. In 2015, 555 volunteers prepared taxes for 13,256 taxpayers who received \$25 million in refunds; 1,000 of those taxpayers committed to saving \$1.6 million of their refunds.

About Greater Twin Cities United Way – Ranked as Minnesota's largest nongovernmental social services funder, [Greater Twin Cities United Way](#) collaborates with business, government and nonprofit organizations to build pathways out of poverty by working in two areas – Safety Net and Education & Jobs. More than 715,000 people in the metro area live at or near poverty. Learn how to Give, Advocate, or Volunteer at <https://www.gtcuw.org/>. Find out about our free, 24-hour statewide multilingual information and referral service, United Way 2-1-1 at <http://www.211unitedway.org/>. Greater Twin Cities United Way serves Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott and western Washington counties. For more information call (612) 340-7400.

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