

Dear Legal Services Providers and Partners:

As we are in the beginning of the tax season, please remember that the Mississippi Taxpayer Assistance Project provides free Statewide legal assistance to individuals who cannot afford an attorney who have a problem with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). However, the Mississippi Taxpayer Assistance Project does not prepare current year tax returns. Should you have an individual with a tax problem with the IRS, please refer them to the Project's hotline at 1-888-808-8049.

Please find attached a current listing of all of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Programs and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE or AARP) sites in Mississippi. These are free tax preparation services available to low income and elderly community members, which are of great benefit to our community. Please note that North Mississippi Rural Legal Services will be administering the VITA sites in DeSoto and Tunica Counties, in partnership with the DeSoto County EITC Coalition and Tunica EITC Alliance, and partnering with other VITA sites in order to assist in the provision of these services to our community.

The VITA Program offers free tax help to low-to-moderate-income (generally, \$49,000 and below) people who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Certified volunteers sponsored by various organizations receive training to help prepare basic tax returns in communities across the country. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing. Individuals can call 1-800-829-1040 to locate the VITA site closest to them.

The Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program provides free tax help to people aged 60 and older. Trained volunteers from non-profit organizations provide free tax counseling and basic income tax return preparation for senior citizens. Trained and certified AARP Tax-Aide volunteer counselors help people of low-to-middle income with special attention to those ages 60 and older. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site call 1-888-227-7669, or visit AARP's internet site at <http://www.aarp.org/money/taxaide/>.

In addition to VITA and TCE, the IRS is offering Free File. Free File is a form of e-file, is a free federal tax preparation and electronic filing program for eligible taxpayers developed through a partnership between the IRS and the Free File Alliance LLC. The Alliance is a group of private-sector tax software companies. Free File offers 20 different software options that can assist taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$57,000 or less in 2008 to e-file their federal tax returns for free. That means 70 percent of all taxpayers - 98 million taxpayers -

can take advantage of tax software that will help them complete their returns through the Free File program. It is essential that individuals use the IRS' website, or www.irs.gov, in order to obtain access to Free File, as there are some scam sites on the web phishing (identity theft) for information.