

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 28, 2014

Contact:

Sylvia Soublet

Social Services Agency, Media Relations Officer

Office: (510) 267-9434

Cell Phone: (510) 207-2074

Fax: (510) 271-9120

ssoublet@acgov.org

Volunteer Tax Program's Happy Returns

Alameda County's "No Cost" Tax Help Nets Over \$26,000 for Local Family

Oakland, CA. — An old cliché lists taxes as one of life's dreariest certainties. But a happy surprise awaited an Alameda County resident who had his tax returns prepared at no cost by IRS-certified volunteers at one of the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA's) offices.

"I had no idea that my refund would be \$26,218," recalled Jose Sanchez, an Oakland resident. "The tax preparer is the person who told me that I could file an amended return for all those other years and possibly get more money back. I had no idea that money was even owed to me. That's money I can use to help my family."

Dana Jenkins, a coordinator for SSA's tax preparation site on Enterprise Way in Oakland, said preparing Mr. Sanchez's returns created "a musical moment" for the site's volunteers.

"This is one of the many great moments we experience during this time of the year," she added. "It's like Christmas."

To encourage more filers to join in that spirit, Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Dublin) will visit the Agency's tax preparation site at the Eden Multi-Service Center on April 5, 2014 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. A 2010 study by the New America Foundation found that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) was often ["left on the table,"](#) costing low-income residents and the state's economy \$1 billion annually.

SSA's program ends for the 2013 tax season on April 14, 2014. [For tax preparation hours and locations see the SSA website.](#)

Ms. Jenkins explained that Mr. Sanchez had been having his returns prepared at the Enterprise site since 2010. "This year, he had received his Social Security card for himself, his wife and one of his children, which made them eligible for the EITC and other credits. So we prepared his 2013 taxes with his social security number and amended his prior year (2010 – 2012) returns with the Social Security numbers."

With the help of a grant from the United Way of the Bay Area, SSA Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) preparers help tax filers receive larger tax refunds by claiming the credits they have earned. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is provided to working families and single or married individuals. Individuals and households whose 2013 income was \$52,000 or less qualify for the EITC and no cost tax preparation services. Additionally, families and individuals may be eligible for other credits. Last year SSA's No Cost Tax services returned \$2.5 million to low income County residents.

To learn more about SSA's tax program: Like us on [Facebook](#) / follow us on [Twitter](#).
