

Calendar of Events

May 21 & 22

Workshop for Small and Mid-sized 501(c)(3)

What: IRS workshop on tax and other compliance issues

Where: Holiday Inn Columbus-Worthington
7007 N. High Street
Columbus, OH 43085

When: 9:00 am– 4:00 pm

Contact: (800) 521-3980

Cost: \$45.00

Note: Pre-registration is required.

Choose either May 20, 21, 22.

May 22

Nonprofit Organizations: State and Federal Perspectives

What: Ohio State Bar Association Continuing Legal Education Course

Where: 1700 Lakeshore Drive
Columbus, OH

When: 8:30 am-4:15 pm

Contact: (614) 487-8585

June 4

From Debt to Wealth

What: Principles for building wealth with Stephanie Steward-Young of National City Bank

Where: United Way Neighborhood Partnership Center
360 S. Third Street
Columbus, OH 43215

When: 6:00 pm-8:00 pm

Contact: (614) 241-3071

Cost: Free

June 3-4

Introduction to Microenterprise Credit Analysis and Loan Fund Management and Developing the Microenterprise Developing Executive

What: Part of the Ohio CDC Association Microenterprise Workshop Series

Where: Greater Linden CDC
1410 Cleveland Avenue
Columbus, OH 43211

When: 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Contact: Celia Elkins
(614) 461-6392 x.201
celkins@ohiocdc.org

Cost: Members \$65/day
Non-members \$100/day

Tax Relief Thanks to Volunteers

For the fifth year in a row, The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC) at The Legal Aid Society of Columbus brought clients relief from tax-related stress with the help of volunteer attorneys from local firms.

The LITC offers year-round assistance to individuals having problems with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Attorneys help clients who are wrongfully denied the Earned Income Tax Credit to obtain funds from the IRS. They also assist clients who owe money to the IRS and are subject to IRS collection actions such as levies on wages.

Pro bono volunteers increase the capacity of the LITC program by meeting one on one with clients at clinics, reviewing and explaining IRS documents, and providing advice and counsel. Tom O'Brien, a public utilities attorney with the firm Bricker & Eckler



LITC attorney Fred Ballam pictured with client

LLP, volunteered during two of the three clinics held this year.

Meeting mostly with self-employed or "contract" employees without regular W-2 wages, O'Brien described his role, "Really, the biggest challenge for individual taxpayers in dealing with the IRS is navigating the considerable maze that it presents. I believe that the main value I bring to my clients is a 'plain English' explanation of what the IRS is requesting, their options, and how they should reply."

Among his motivations for

participating, O'Brien includes comfort with the area of practice and the rewards of community service, "I would describe the experience as surprisingly rewarding – and enjoyable. I'm of the opinion that the needs of the community are most effectively addressed from within the community and here is a need that I have the basic skill-set to address."

The LITC team recently submitted a proposal for a Continuing Legal Education session focused on tax law with the hope of increasing the number of clinic volunteers. O'Brien plans to join volunteers at future clinics.

"I expect that I will be a regular participant in the taxpayer clinic. There is certainly plenty of room for additional help...I would encourage any attorney looking for a pro bono opportunity to become involved."

Coming Soon: Economic Stimulus Payments

Many Americans are eagerly awaiting their Economic Stimulus Payments, and there is still time to file.

In order to receive the payment, individuals must file a federal income tax return. Although the April 15th deadline has passed, anyone who is filing simply to establish eligibility for the stimulus payment has until October 15th to do so. This also applies to anyone who has obtained a valid six-month extension to file.

All individuals with a "qualifying income" of \$3,000 or more may be eligible.

The amount of the economic stimulus payment will vary depending on one's tax liability and the presence of a qualifying child. Eligible individuals will receive between \$300 and \$600, and eligible married couples who file a joint return will receive between \$600 and \$1,200.

Those with qualifying

children may receive \$300 per child. The IRS will either send a check or make a direct deposit, and this will be separate from any tax refund.

Even those who are not usually required to file a federal return, such as recipients of Veterans Benefits; Railroad Retirement Board Benefits; or Social Security retirement and disability benefits, must file in order to receive their payment. (continued page 2)

Calendar (cont.)

June 10

How to Complete The 501c

What: Step-by-step look at filing for tax-exempt status for your organization

Where: United Way Neighborhood Partnership Center (see above)

When: 6:00 pm-8:30 pm

Contact: (614) 241-3071

Cost: \$25

June 25

Pro Bono Tax Clinic: Representing Low Income Tax Payers

What: Training and CLE session for volunteer attorneys

Where: Legal Aid Society (see below)

When: 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Contact: Megan Sullivan
msullivan@columbuslegalaid.org

Cost: Free

**The Legal Aid Society
of Columbus**
1108 City Park Avenue
Columbus, OH 43206
1-888-246-4420

**Serving Franklin, Madison,
Morrow, Marion, Union, and
Delaware counties**

Stimulus Payment (cont. from page 1)

While these benefits count as qualifying income, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) does not.

Those without earned income, meaning income from employment, such as recipients of the previously mentioned benefits must file a form 1040 or 1040A.

If Social Security, Rail Road Retirement Board or Veterans benefits are the only source of income, then the individual must write the amount of the benefits on line 14a of Form 1040A and write "stimulus payment" across the top of the tax form used to file.

To learn more about the economic stimulus payment or how to file for it, visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov or call 1-800-829-1040. For free tax filing assistance, call 2-1-1 or visit the "Tax Clinic" link on the Legal Aid website: www.columbuslegalaid.org.

Tax Incentives for Columbus Businesses

Over \$5 billion in tax incentives are available to small and large businesses located in select communities throughout the country and right here in Columbus. These incentives are part of the Empowerment Zone and Renewal Community Initiative designed to revitalize communities and spur investment and economic development.

Empowerment Zones are areas designated by the federal government as being economically distressed but with the potential to thrive with targeted private-sector investments in the areas.

To promote these private investments, the federal government offers various tax incentives to business owners who operate within the zones. These include the Empowerment Zone Employment Credit and increased deductions for business property.

The Empowerment Zone Employment Credit offsets

the cost of hiring workers, allowing small business owners to expand their enterprise, creating jobs within the zone.

The credit allows business owners to deduct from their taxes 20% of "qualified zone wages" up to \$15,000 for a maximum credit of \$3,000 per employee each year.

Wages that qualify for the deduction are wages that are paid to a employee who lives within the empowerment zone where the business is located, is not an owner of the business or related to the owner, and who works for the employer for a minimum of 90 calendar days (unless terminated for cause or disabled during the 90 days).

Certain businesses do not qualify for the empowerment zone credit, including: golf courses, country clubs, massage parlors, hot tub or suntan facilities, facilities used for gambling or stores whose main purpose is the sale of alcoholic beverages

for off-premise consumption.

There are 16 Empowerment Zones in the Columbus area. The Empowerment Zone Neighborhoods are: **Argyle Park, Atcheson East, Driving Park, East Columbus, Franklinton, Italian Village, Livingston Park, Milo-Grogan, Mount Vernon, Near East, North Central, Old Oaks, Olde Towne East, South Linden, University, Weinland Park.**

To determine if your business and your employee's addresses are in an Empowerment Zone, visit www.hud.gov/cr and use the address locator or call **1-800-998-9999**.

Be sure to keep a record of your employee's wages and keep addresses up to date. Use Form 8844 to claim the credit. More information about this and other tax information for small businesses can be found at: <http://www.irs.gov/>

A Message From The Community Economic Development Unit...

The Legal Aid Society of Columbus Community Economic Development Unit (CEDU) works to break down barriers to economic independence by offering free legal assistance to low-income individuals and nonprofits engaged in assisting low-income individuals. Our areas of service include: the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, nonprofit assistance, and assistance for small business start ups. For more information about the CEDU or Legal Aid, visit our website at www.columbuslegalaid.org or contact our intake line at 1-888-246-4420.