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WE Connect Helps Californians Claim Underused Tax Credits with *Web Connector EZ*

New Online Tool Helps Individuals and Families Determine EITC Eligibility

Sacramento –In the final days of tax filing season, California families were introduced to a new online calculator that can help them easily determine if they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a federal tax credit that can boost an individual's or family's federal refund by as much as \$5,666. The **WEb Connector EZ** asks four questions and within minutes lets taxpayers know whether they are eligible for the EITC. When taxpayers finish using the **WEb Connector EZ**, they can enter their zip code to locate online and onsite free tax assistance programs available from the IRS and community agencies.

"As we approach the tax filing deadline, it is more important than ever to inform as many individuals about the Earned Income Tax Credit," said Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom. "Each year, a billion dollars in EITC refunds are left unclaimed by Californians. During these challenging economic times, the EITC can put more money in the pockets of thousands of working families that can help improve their living conditions, buy food and pay off bills, while also strengthening our economy."

WE Connect is a program that empowers low-income families to lead healthier and more financially secure lives by connecting them to resources such as the EITC, California's Healthy Families Program and CalFresh. WE Connect, founded by former California First Lady Maria Shriver, has successfully helped millions of Californians through its community events, web-based tools, public-private partnerships, and publications.

The **Web Connector EZ** was created by Intuit Inc., makers of TurboTax, Mint.com, Quicken and QuickBooks. "Intuit is committed to improving people's financial lives," said Brad Smith, president and CEO of Intuit. "Learning about tax credits and deductions like EITC puts people in charge of their finances and ultimately can put more money in their pockets. We are proud and humbled by this opportunity to empower our fellow Californians." A link to the **Web Connector EZ** can be found here: <http://www.weconnect.net/index.php/public/home/page/290>

The **WEb Connector EZ** is just one of the many money-saving programs and services available through the WE Connect campaign. WE Connect recently began distributing the 2011 WE Connect Bilingual Supplement, the state's most comprehensive bilingual source for low-income families about important money-saving public and private programs. 1.5 million WE Connect Supplements have been distributed

to *La Opinión* subscribers in addition to thousands of WE Connect partner organizations statewide. The supplement features important information about the new federal health care law – the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the many benefits it provides families, such as new coverage options and tax credits.

“WE Connect is committed to making it as easy as possible for families struggling during this economic downturn to connect with money-saving programs and services that help bring economic security into the household,” said Robert K. Ross, M.D., president and CEO of The California Endowment. “It’s important we help get the word out about these programs so that families can take advantage of them.”

In the coming year, The California Endowment, in partnership with Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom and partner organizations across the state, will continue to explore creative ways to continue the work of WE Connect and develop ties with its statewide health-related initiatives.

For more information about the WE Connect program, please visit www.weconnect.net.

Public Service Announcements by Lieutenant Governor Newsom about the **Web Connector EZ** are available here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqXayn7Y7dY> (60 seconds)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBoUutVv2Ns> (30 seconds)

About WE Connect

WE Connect, a program founded in 2005 by former First Lady of California Maria Shriver and now run by The California Endowment, empowers families in underserved communities to lead healthier and more financially secure lives by connecting them to resources such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, California’s Healthy Families Program and CalFresh. This nationwide campaign connects those eligible with the information and tools they need to access these valuable resources. The program has successfully resulted in helping millions of Californians through its community events, web-based tools, public-private partnerships, and publications. Through a partnership with *La Opinión*, the nation’s largest Spanish-speaking newspaper, WE Connect has developed four editions of a 24-page, full color, bilingual supplement that has been distributed to over 20 million Californians in need. For more information about the WE Connect program, please visit www.weconnect.net.

About The California Endowment

The California Endowment, a private, statewide health foundation, was established in 1996 to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians. Headquartered in downtown Los Angeles, The Endowment has regional offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno and San Diego, with program staff working throughout the state. From 2010-2020, The Endowment will focus the majority of its resources on its 10-year strategic plan Building Healthy Communities. For more information, visit The Endowment’s Web site at www.calendow.org.

About the Intuit Financial Freedom Foundation

The Intuit Financial Freedom Foundation directs programs that help to empower disadvantaged, lower-income individuals, small businesses, and the nonprofit organizations that serve them. By donating Intuit's tax preparation, financial management and accounting software and online services, the

Foundation promotes financial literacy and independence, helping people and organizations master their finances and bridge the digital divide. The Intuit Tax Freedom Project is a philanthropic initiative of the Intuit Financial Freedom Foundation. Through the Intuit Tax Freedom Project, Intuit donates use of TurboTax® Freedom Edition to individuals and families who meet eligibility criteria announced at the beginning of tax season. More than 22 million returns have been donated since this program began in 1998. www.intuitempowers.com

About *La Opinión*

La Opinión is the leading Spanish-language daily newspaper in the country, distributing nearly 100,000 copies throughout the five-county Southern California area and reaching nearly half a million readers daily. *La Opinión* was founded in 1926 in Los Angeles to provide daily news and information to a Hispanic population that has grown to become the nation's largest. Leveraging print and digital opportunities, *La Opinión* continues to captivate Hispanic audiences by providing quality content across print, online and mobile platforms. *La Opinión* is owned and operated by impreMedia LLC. For more information, please visit our website at www.impre.com/laopinion