PNC Bank, IRS Offer Free Tax Prep, Refund Assistance

- Help available at 200 sites in 16 states and Washington, D.C.

- IRS assists with filing; PNC offers faster access to refunds, free check cashing

- Lower-income taxpayers can learn if they qualify for tax credit of up to $6,242

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 26, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- PNC Bank will once again support the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program's efforts to bring free tax assistance and expanded access to faster refunds to low- and moderate-income taxpayers.

IRS-certified volunteers working with the VITA program will be available to provide tax filing assistance for people who generally earn less than $54,000 a year. PNC will work with local community organizations at more than 200 VITA sites in 16 states and Washington, D.C.to provide faster and safer access to tax refunds.

Since 2011, VITA participants have had the option to receive faster refunds on PNC Visa® refund cards usable at 30 million locations. Last year, approximately 955 PNC cards were distributed to VITA clients. Other PNC services offered at VITA locations include financial education programs and no-cost refund check cashing at participating sites and designated PNC branches.

"We are very grateful to have financial institutions across the country participating in our VITA program," said Ken Corbin, commissioner, IRS Wage and Investment Division. "We recognize the value they bring in providing free tax preparation and financial education assistance to low-income taxpayers and communities across the country."

Many tax filers miss out on a beneficial tax credit – the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), either because they don't claim it when filing, or don't file a tax return. VITA volunteers will determine if taxpayers qualify for the EITC and other refundable credits. Last year, the IRS returned over $65 billion to almost 27 million workers. For workers filing for the 2017 tax year, the EITC can mean up to $510 in EITC for people without children, and up to $6,318 for those with three or more qualifying children. The credit varies by income, family size and filing status. The average tax credit amount last year was $2,400.

"Free check-cashing services and affordable prepaid refund cards are some of the many resources PNC offers as part of the support we offer taxpayers in low-income communities in establishing mainstream banking relationships," said Cathy Niederberger, managing director of PNC Community Development Banking. "We provide an alternative to high-fee check cashing services for the nearly 30 percent of unbanked and under-banked households that may lack access to affordable financial services."

In addition to providing a low-fee alternative for those VITA clients without bank accounts, the Visa® card offers taxpayers quick and easy access to their refunds.

Card benefits include:

- **Speedy refund:** Receive refunds typically in less than 21 days once the request is filed by the VITA site.
- **Ease of use:** Buy items in stores, online, by mail or phone.
- **Pay everyday expenses:** Pay bills and make purchases such as groceries, gas, and clothing.
- **Access to ATMs:** Use cards fee-free at 40,000 PNC and Allpoint® network ATM locations.

What to Bring to a VITA Site

Taxpayers who visit a VITA site should bring their picture identification, Social Security card, wages and earnings statements (Form W-2) from all employers, interest statements from banks (Form 1099), a copy of their previous

year's tax return if available, and other relevant information about income and expenses.

This year, PNC teams support VITA sites in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. Dates may vary by site. For a list of sites and available dates, please visit http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep.

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