



COMUNIDADES LATINAS  
UNIDAS EN SERVICIO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) Assists 547 Low-Income Families  
to Claim \$786,000 in Tax Refunds**

*Saint Paul and Minneapolis, July 6, 2011* – Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) is pleased to announce that it has helped over 547 taxpayers, whose average annual gross income was \$15,450, to receive \$786,172 in total refunds through free tax preparation assistance. Additionally, over 550 community members received tax assistance in 2011 through one-on-one meetings, workshops, and phone calls. Over thirty volunteers provided four-hundred hours of service to assist these clients at tax preparation sites located in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

CLUES' free, year-round taxpayer assistance and preparation services are offered through its Financial Empowerment Services, which assists Latinos, new immigrants, and other community members who struggle to understand the mainstream financial system. Financial Empowerment Services provides free, one-on-one financial counseling, financial education classes, first-time homebuyer education, and homeownership counseling to the community. As the result of the services provided, families increase their financial knowledge step-by-step, from opening their first checking account to starting a relationship with a bank and later purchasing a home.

CLUES was the first agency in Minnesota to become a certified Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) acceptance agency and is currently the only certified agency in the Twin Cities to offer this service. Consequently, CLUES assists taxpayers that don't qualify for a social security number to apply for an ITIN. Used as a tax identification number, the ITIN ensures that wage earners pay taxes even when they don't have a social security number. Thus far in 2011, CLUES has assisted 114 taxpayers to apply for an ITIN.

"During these tough economic times, tax refunds are a way for hardworking families to begin saving for a home, an education, or for their other hopes and dreams," said Jesse Bethke Gomez, President of CLUES. "Financial Empowerment Services of CLUES guides families through culturally and linguistically appropriate financial education that gives them the tools to move along the self-sufficiency continuum and pursue their hopes and dreams."

Financial Empowerment Services is a part of CLUES' Economic Advancement Services Division (EASD). Nationally recognized by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National Council of the Raza (NCLR), CLUES' Economic Advancement Services Division consists of Employment Services, Education Enrichment Services, and Financial Empowerment Services. EASD employs a linguistically appropriate and culturally proficient, family-centric program model to assist individuals and families in overcoming barriers to family stability and economic prosperity. Families enjoy improved parenting, financial stability, increased educational levels and improved English language proficiency, healthier home environments, and academically and socially successful children who pursue educational goals, careers, and economic independence to build stronger communities.

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**About CLUES**

CLUES is in its 30th year of service to the community and is among the top twenty-five Hispanic non-profit agencies in the United States, as ranked by Hispanic Business Magazine. The agency provides a family-centric, coordinated care model of linguistically appropriate and culturally competent services to Latino and other diverse communities in Minnesota. The divisions of CLUES include: Mental Health Services; Chemical Health Services; Family Services; Economic Advancement Services; Aging Well Services; and Community Health Worker Services.