

H&R Block Helps Put Food on the Table; Tax Offices in 12 States Provide Food Stamp Applications to Millions of Clients

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KANSAS CITY, Mo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 27, 2005--H&R Block (NYSE:HRB) today announced the creation of a new client assistance program designed to help millions more low- and middle-income families and individuals take advantage of the federal food stamp program.

Between now and April 15, H&R Block tax offices in 12 of the most populous states will provide clients with food stamp applications, local contact information and brief "what to do next" instructions -- all free of charge. Food stamp officials in the participating states have agreed to accept and process the applications distributed by H&R Block.

The states included in the program for 2005 are California, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Georgia, Michigan, Massachusetts, Virginia, Missouri and North Carolina.

"We are excited about this opportunity to help our clients enroll in the food stamp program," said Susan Stanton, vice president of client experience at H&R Block. "Because we're in a unique position as tax professionals to assist our clients in assessing their financial situations, we think it only makes sense that we take the next step to help ensure that they're taking full advantage of programs that can improve their lives."

H&R Block's outreach effort comes at a time when federal officials estimate that only 54 percent of those eligible nationally for food stamps are receiving the benefit. This equates to millions of Americans nationally who may be eligible, but are not claiming and receiving valuable food stamp assistance.

"We appreciate H&R Block's efforts to improve food stamp participation for those eligible for this critical nutrition program," said Roberto Salazar, Administrator for the Food and Nutrition Service.

Under the H&R Block food stamp outreach program, tax professionals will provide food stamp applications to clients who want them, along with state contact information and simple instructions about how to continue the application process. Tax offices will not submit or fill out the food stamp applications.

"By helping our clients learn more about this valuable benefit program and begin the application process, H&R Block is furthering its mission of helping our clients achieve their financial objectives by serving as their tax and financial partner," said Stanton.

H&R Block opened nearly 1,000 new locations in tax season 2005 and now operates more than 11,000 tax preparation offices in the United States company officials said.

About H&R Block

H&R Block Inc. (www.hrblock.com) is a diversified company with subsidiaries that deliver tax, financial, mortgage and business products and services. It is the only major company with subsidiaries offering a full range of software, online and in-office tax solutions, combined with personalized financial advice about retirement savings, home ownership, and other opportunities to help clients build a better financial future. As the world's largest tax services company, H&R Block served nearly 21 million clients in the U.S. and 11 countries in 2003. H&R Block Financial Advisors Inc. offers investment services and securities products. With more than 1,000 financial advisors serving clients at more than 400 offices, H&R Block Financial Advisors Inc. is a member NYSE, SIPC, a registered broker-dealer and a registered investment advisor. H&R Block Inc. is not a registered broker-dealer and is not a registered investment advisor. H&R Block Mortgage Corp. offers a full range of retail mortgage products. Option One Mortgage Corp. provides mortgage services and offers wholesale mortgage products through large financial institutions and a network of 24,000 independent mortgage brokers. RSM McGladrey Business Services Inc. and its subsidiaries serve mid-sized businesses and their owners with tax, accounting and business consulting services, as well as personal wealth management services.

About the Food Stamp Program

The federal Food Stamp Program, which is administered at the state level, enables low-income families to buy nutritious food with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. Food stamp recipients spend their benefits to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores.

The program is the cornerstone of the federal food assistance programs, and provides crucial support to needy households and to those making the transition from welfare to work. More information is available at www.fns.usda.gov.

CONTACT: H&R Block

Denise Sposato, 816-932-4909

dsposato@hrblock.com

or

Weber Shandwick

Dave Fransen, 952-346-6225

dfransen@webershandwick.com

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