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## **GARCETTI, HAHN TO KICK OFF “ACCESS” CAMPAIGN LA TO PROMOTE ASSISTANCE FOR HOME, WORK, HEALTH AND SCHOOL**

At the Edendale Branch Library in Echo Park this morning, Mayor James K. Hahn and Councilmember Eric Garcetti joined representatives from United Way-L.A., the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, and multiple city departments and other agencies to announce the launch of ACCESS. ACCESS is a marketing campaign designed to increase the awareness of under-utilized programs and subsidies that can lead low-income households to self-sufficiency.

“ACCESS is a high-impact, low-cost anti-poverty program,” said Mayor Hahn. “Greater utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit alone could bring \$36 million into communities in Los Angeles, to say nothing of all the other benefits that ACCESS will introduce to Los Angeles residents.”

“Your health, your work, your school, your home: these are four aspects of your life that ACCESS can help you with,” said Councilmember Eric Garcetti. “But when you fail to claim tax benefits or utility supports that you qualify for, your whole community loses money that you would have spent. When you miss out on educational opportunities or health care assistance, your whole community loses your talent and your vigor.”

"Working poor families live in very fragile environments, struggling to meet financial obligations, unaware that there is some relief available to them. Last year, tens of thousands of residents who were eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit never claimed it," stated Elise Buik, interim president, United Way of Greater Los Angeles. "ACCESS will raise awareness of existing programs that can help the working poor, especially when faced with tough choices such as medical care for a sick child or paying a utility bill."

“I used Cal Grants and Pell Grants to fund my education, and since I started supporting myself at the age of 17, I’ve applied for the Earned Income Tax Credit and taken advantage of telephone, gas, and electricity low-income assistance rates,” said Veronica Garcia of Los Angeles, a single mother who works as a pre-school teacher for Head Start. “ACCESS will help thousands more like me stand tall enough to reach their futures.”

“The National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families has been working with cities across the nation to elevate the role that city leaders can play in spreading the word about help for working families,” commented Clifford Johnson, executive director of the YEF Institute. “Municipal leaders are vital in designing and launching outreach efforts to promote key benefits that not only strengthen families but also strengthen communities and local economies. The NLC applauds Los Angeles’ launch of ACCESS and hopes that Mayor Hahn’s and Councilmember Garcetti’s leadership and support of ACCESS is a model to other cities interested in strengthening families,” continued Johnson.

Rather than provide new benefits, ACCESS will make sure that low-income families know about the benefits that are already available to them. It will promote benefits such as these:

- **Work:** the Earned Income Tax Credit, available to families below a certain income level; job training opportunities provided by the city’s Worksource Centers
- **School:** Cal Grants and other federal and state financial aid resources
- **Health:** insurance program such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids
- **Home:** low-income utility rate programs offered by LA-DWP or companies such as The Gas Company and SBC

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