



## Growth Of Payroll Cards Brings Financial Inclusion For Unbanked Americans <sup>Ⓜ</sup>

(NAPSA)—According to a recent Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) survey, more than 68 million Americans live day to day in a cash-only economy. They pay their bills and buy groceries with cash and what money they save is stuffed under the proverbial mattress.

They are classified as unbanked or underbanked, meaning they have little to no access to traditional banking services.

For decades, the financially underserved have had to make their payments and access their money the hard way. Now, however, that's changing with the growing use of payroll cards. Employers are increasingly moving away from issuing paper checks to paying their unbanked workers with prepaid payroll cards. In 2012 alone, more than \$34 billion was loaded onto 4.6 million active payroll cards, according to the Aite Group. By 2017, it is expected that \$69 billion will be loaded onto 10.8 million cards.

Unbanked workers today can enjoy the same conveniences and protections with their payroll cards that most people experience with their credit and debit cards. Funds are available immediately, which eliminates the need to visit and pay exorbitant fees at check-cashing cen-

ters. The card users can swipe their cards in stores to make purchases and shop and pay bills online.

For some people, going from cash to electronic payments will take some getting used to. Short of using prepaid gift cards, many unbanked Americans have never made electronic payments. Master Your Card, a public education program sponsored by MasterCard, is working with these groups to educate them on how they can get the most for their money.

The company has added new consumer-protection standards for all MasterCard-branded employee payroll cards for the benefit of those without bank accounts who otherwise are at the whim of payday lenders and check cashers. Under these new rules, employers and payroll card providers must offer consumers at least one fee-free cash withdrawal per pay period, free access to account information online, and protection and zero liability if the card is lost or stolen.

These standards were developed in consultation with customers and community organizations through the Master Your Card and Master Your Card: Oportunidad public education programs.

### Learn More

For more information, visit [www.masteryourcardusa.org](http://www.masteryourcardusa.org).