

IRS News Release

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On EITC Awareness Day, IRS and Partners Alert Low- and Moderate-Income Workers of Significant Tax Benefit

IRS YouTube Video:

Earned Income Tax Credit: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Podcast:

Earned Income Tax Credit: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service and partners nationwide launched the Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day outreach campaign today, aimed at helping millions of Americans who earned \$50,270 or less take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Local officials and community organizations across the country are sponsoring over 250 news conferences and other outreach events highlighting the benefits of this key work incentive for low-and moderate-income workers and working families.

The annual campaign is necessary because one-third of the eligible population changes each year as their financial, marital and parental statuses change. Although an estimated four out of five eligible workers and families get the credit, one in five still miss out on it, either because they don't claim it when filing, or don't file a tax return at all.

"A large part of the nation sees major changes every year with their tax situation," said IRS Acting Commissioner Steven T. Miller. "This year, millions of workers could qualify for EITC for the first time, and the IRS urges them not to overlook this valuable credit."

The EITC varies by income, family size and filing status. The average EITC amount last year was around \$2,200. People can see if they qualify by visiting IRS.gov and answering a few questions using the [EITC Assistant](#). In tax year 2011, over 27 million eligible workers and families received nearly \$62 billion total in EITC.

Workers, self-employed people and farmers who earned \$50,270 or less last year could receive larger refunds if they qualify for the EITC. That could mean up to \$475 in EITC for people without children, and a maximum credit of up to \$5,891 for those with three or more

qualifying children. Unlike most deductions and credits, the EITC is refundable. In other words, those eligible may get a refund from the IRS even if they owe no tax.

The EITC provides a financial boost for millions of hard-working Americans. However, the IRS reminds taxpayers that even though most federal tax refunds are issued in less than 21 days, many factors can affect how long it may take for taxpayers to get their refunds. It is also possible that a tax return could require additional review and therefore take longer to process. Taxpayers can track the status of their refund with the “Where’s My Refund?” tool available for use on the IRS.gov website after the IRS starts processing tax returns on Jan. 30.

How to Claim the EITC

Following the late tax law changes made by Congress, the IRS plans to open the 2013 tax filing season and begin processing both paper and e-filed individual income returns on Jan. 30 after updating forms and completing programming and testing of its processing systems. The vast majority of taxpayers who qualify can begin to file EITC claims with their federal tax return starting on Jan. 30, 2013.

To get the EITC, workers must file a tax return, even if they are not required to file, and specifically claim the credit. Those eligible for the EITC have free options to file a tax return to claim the credit:

- **[Free File on IRS.gov](#)** Free brand-name tax software walks people through a question and answer format to help them prepare their returns and claim every credit and deduction for which they are eligible. The program also allows people to file electronically for free, using [Free File Fillable Forms](#), which are online versions of our paper forms designed for taxpayers comfortable preparing their own returns.
- **[Free tax preparation sites](#)** EITC-eligible workers can seek [free tax preparation](#) at thousands of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites. To locate the nearest site, taxpayers can search [www.IRS.gov](#) or call the IRS at 800-906-9887. Taxpayers can also find VITA/TCE sites by calling their community’s 211 or 311 line for local services.
- **[IRS Taxpayer Assistance Centers](#)** EITC-eligible workers can seek free assistance in IRS locations across the country. Locations are listed online at [www.IRS.gov](#). Hours and services offered vary by location and should be checked before visiting.

More information on EITC and detailed eligibility rules are available at [www.irs.gov/eitc](#). IRS partners should also visit EITC Central at [www.eitc.irs.gov](#) for helpful resources.