

## FAQs

- Q. *Does the EITC affect eligibility for other public benefits?*
- A. The EITC does not count as income in determining eligibility for benefits like cash assistance (welfare), Medicaid, food stamps, SSI, or public or subsidized housing.
- Q. *Can immigrant workers claim EITC?*
- A. As long as they meet eligibility requirements, legal immigrants can qualify for EITC.
- Q. *Can a worker eligible for EITC in past years who didn't claim it still get their refund for those years?*
- A. Yes. Workers can claim the EITC for the most recent tax year and up to three prior years. For example, in the 2009 filing season (Tax Year 2008), a worker who was eligible for EITC in Tax Years 2005, 2006, and 2007, but did not claim it, can complete an *Amended Tax Return (IRS Form 1040X)* for those years and send it to the IRS along with copies of the returns filed originally.

Talk with your VITA tax preparer for more information on filing amended returns.



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# Understanding Your Earned Income Tax Credit



**Earn It, Keep It, Save It!**

**Don't pay fees to claim your refund!**

**After January 1, call for free tax preparation:**

**1-888-LA-HELP-U or dial 2-1-1**

## What is EITC?

The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a tax benefit for low- to moderate-income working families as well as a benefit for some workers without children.

Qualifying persons who file a federal income tax return can receive a refund even if no taxes were taken out of their pay during the year.

## Who is eligible?

Single or married people who worked full-time or part-time at some point during the year can qualify for the EITC, depending on their income.

For Tax Year 2008, you could be eligible if your income is less than:

- \$38,646 (\$41,646 for married filing jointly) with two or more qualifying children:  
You could receive up to \$4,824.
- \$33,995 (\$36,995 for married filing jointly) with one qualifying child:  
You could receive up to \$2,917.
- \$12,880 (\$15,880 for married filing jointly) with no qualifying children:  
You could receive up to \$438.

## Bigger refunds this year with state EITC!

Did you know that Louisiana is the first state in the South to have its own state Earned Income Tax Credit? If you're eligible and claim EITC on your federal tax return, then you're automatically qualified to claim the state EITC.



## Which children qualify?

- Sons, daughters, stepchildren, grandchildren and adopted children.
- Brothers, sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters, as well as descendants of such relatives if they were cared for as members of the family.
- Foster children who are placed with the worker by an authorized government private placement agency.

Qualifying children must live with the worker for more than half of the year. They must be under age 19 or under age 24 if they are full-time students. Totally and permanently disabled children of any age also may qualify.

For comprehensive information on the EITC, visit [www.irs.gov/eitc](http://www.irs.gov/eitc)

## Why should I file a tax return?

- You could be eligible for a large refund, but you can't get it if you don't file.
- Over a year's time, an EITC refund can be the equivalent of a \$1- to \$2-per-hour raise. *You've earned it—so keep it!*

**Don't pay fees to claim your own money!**

**"Rapid refunds" are actually high-interest loans from commercial tax preparers. Use a FREE tax service and save money!**



## FREE Income Tax Preparation

Many families who qualify for EITC pay to have their taxes prepared. This can cost hundreds of their hard-earned dollars. Getting a "rapid refund" that comes the next day costs even more.



During filing season, low-income taxpayers can have their taxes prepared and filed for **FREE** at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. VITA sites are conveniently located throughout the state. These sites have friendly, knowledgeable tax preparers that are trained and certified by the IRS, and the sites offer free electronic filing.

## Did you know?

If you have a bank account, you can take advantage of free electronic filing at a VITA site and *receive your refund in as little as 8 days!*

**After January 1, call  
1-888-LA-HELP-U  
(1-888-524-3578)**

**or  
2-1-1  
to find the VITA site  
closest to you.**