



WS 12-01
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Basic/Expanded Service
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To: Career Offices

From: Rodney Bradshaw
Mike Temple
Lucretia Hammond

Subject: 2011 Federal Tax Credits and No-Cost Tax Filing Assistance

Purpose

1. Provide information on 2011 low-income household federal tax credits;
2. Ensure staff promote the tax credits to TANF recipients and other low-income households; and
3. Ensure offices provide assistance to customers in applying for credits through referrals to Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites.

Background

The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families.

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) is a federal income tax credit for low-income working families with one or more children.

- The EIC and CTC often result in a refund to low-income households who file a return.
- To qualify for these credits, taxpayers *must* file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money to be obligated to file a tax return. A qualifying taxpayer must file a return and claim applicable credits in order to receive them.
- EIC and CTC refund payments do not count as income when applying for or renewing benefits like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (food stamps), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance, or public housing.

Promoting the Credits

1.

Career offices will:

- Display the EIC poster in resource rooms;
 - Keep EIC fact sheets on hand for interested customers and staff;
 - Keep VITA fact sheets on hand and direct customers to the nearest VITA site for free tax help;
 - Ensure staff can provide fact sheets and referrals to VITA sites to interested customers.
2. Career office contractors and managers will make sure the staff promotes the 2011 tax credits at least to customers who are tagged in TANF/Choices and who are working or have worked during 2011.
3. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has created an outreach campaign kit entitled *Your Money. You Earned It. Now Claim It!* The kit includes posters, flyers and an information book. You may download the posters and flyers at no cost from the center's website at <http://EICOutreach.org/category/new-2012-outreach-materials>.

Free Tax Help for Customers

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program offers free tax help for low-to-moderate income households (generally, those that made \$45,000 or less) who need assistance in filing a federal tax return. Certified volunteers sponsored by various organizations help prepare basic tax returns in communities across the region. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools and shopping malls. Most locations also offer free electronic filing. A list of VITA sites will be available on the IRS Website at [List of VITA Sites](#) or by calling 1-800-906-9887.

- Make copies of the 2012 VITA Checklist and EIC/CTC Benefits Chart and place these in resource rooms for customers. You may download the checklist and chart at no cost from the center's website at <http://eitcoutreach.org/category/outreach-tools>.
- Career offices may offer space, if it is available, for a VITA location on-site. Offices interested in providing space for VITA may contact the IRS regional office in Houston by calling (281) 721-7070. Notify Ginger Rogers at ginger.rogers@wrksolutions.com if your office is sponsoring a VITA location.

Action

1. Make sure all offices display the EIC posters in resource rooms.
2. Make sure all offices have copies of the informational flyers and forms available in resource rooms for interested customers to pick up.
3. Make sure all office managers, supervisors, personal service representatives, employment counselors and other appropriate staff are aware of the EIC and where customers can go for free tax help.

Questions

Staff should direct questions to their immediate supervisors. Direct questions to the Board staff through the electronic Q&A posted with the policy on the website at <http://www.wrksolutions.com/staff/policiesandprocedures.html>.