



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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**Low-income individuals and families can reduce or eliminate federal taxes owed
*Millions of dollars in Earned Income Tax Credits go unclaimed each year***

OLYMPIA, WA – Low-income people can reduce or eliminate the amount of federal income taxes they pay by claiming the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) on their 2014 income tax returns. Some may even qualify for a lump-sum payment if the credit exceeds the amount of taxes owed.

Last year, the average Earned Income Tax Credit refund in our state was \$2,145 per person. Many Washington households, including seniors, those with lower incomes, and non-English speaking residents, do not know they are eligible or how to claim the credit.

Governor Jay Inslee proclaimed tomorrow, Jan. 30 “[Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day in Washington State](#)” as part of a nationwide effort to increase awareness of the underused tax credit and how to apply for it.

“By raising awareness and providing information about free tax preparations sites around the state, we’re helping families and individuals, and giving a boost to our economy,” Inslee said.

Last year 448,000 people in Washington applied for the credit, claiming more than \$960 million in refunds and generating about \$1.44 billion for our state’s economy. Even so, an estimated \$353 million in federal tax credits go unclaimed in Washington.

“Enacted in 1975, the EITC has been expanded over the years and today it is one of the largest anti-poverty tools in the United States” said Brian Bonlender, Director of the Washington State Department of Commerce. “We want to remind every qualifying Washingtonian to take advantage of this opportunity. It puts money in their pockets and into the state’s economy.”

According to a study published by the Center for American Progress, a growing body of research finds that these credits are effective tools for boosting economic mobility: Children whose families receive the EITC and other income supports have higher rates of high school completion and increased adult earnings. In addition to mitigating economic hardship, these tax credits serve as a powerful source of economic stimulus. For example, the EITC nationally generates some \$1.50 to \$2.00 in economic activity for every \$1 that goes to working families.

Individuals can receive a tax refund of up to \$6,143 depending on their eligibility. Even if no federal income tax is owed, a tax return must be filed in order to claim the money. The [Department of Commerce](#) and Department of Social and Health Services are partnering with other agencies and organizations across the state to raise awareness about the Earned Income Tax Credit and resources for free tax return preparation.

Individuals can find out if they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit by visiting the Internal Revenue Service website at <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/EITC-Home-Page-Its-easier-than-ever-to-find-out-if-you-qualify-for-EITC>.

Free tax preparation services are available to many low- and moderate-income families, by calling 2-1-1 and asking for “free tax preparation locations” or searching “free tax prep” at www.irs.gov.

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About Commerce

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