

# IRS News Release

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## IRS, Partners Across the Nation Mark Today's EITC Awareness Day Taxpayers May Qualify for Significant Tax Benefit

### **IRS YouTube Videos:**

Claiming EITC or ACTC? Your Refund May Be Delayed -- [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

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WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service and its partners across the country remind taxpayers about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on EITC Awareness Day. Today marks the 12<sup>th</sup> year of this awareness campaign to alert millions of low- and moderate-income workers who may be missing out on this significant tax credit.

There are more than 250 total outreach events and activities scheduled to promote EITC Awareness around the country.

Millions of taxpayers who earned \$53,930 or less during 2017 may qualify for EITC for the first time, making awareness critical. Local officials and community organizations nationwide hold events on EITC Awareness Day highlighting this key tax benefit.

Workers, self-employed individuals and farmers who earned \$53,930 or less last year could receive larger refunds if they qualify for the EITC. Eligible families with three or more qualifying children could get a maximum credit of up to \$6,318.

For those without a qualifying child, they could get up to \$510. Unlike most deductions and credits, the EITC is refundable. This means those eligible may get a refund from the IRS even if they owe no tax. In 2017, almost 27 million taxpayers received over \$65 billion in EITC. The average amount of EITC received was \$2,445.

The IRS recommends that all workers who earned \$54,000 or less learn about [EITC eligibility](#) and use the [EITC Assistant](#) to find out if they qualify. The tool, available in English and Spanish, helps users determine their filing status, if they have a qualifying child or children, if they qualify to receive the EITC and estimates the amount of the credit they may get. If an individual doesn't qualify for the EITC, the Assistant explains why. The worker can print a summary of the results and keep the summary with his or her tax records.

The IRS reminds taxpayers to be sure they have valid Social Security numbers for themselves, their spouse, if filing a joint return, and for each qualifying child. They must have these SSNs before they file their return and before the due date of the return, including extensions. For most people, the due date of the return is April 17, 2018. Most taxpayers can extend the due date for their 2017 tax return to Oct. 15, 2018. There are special rules for those in the military or for those out of the country.

## How to Claim the EITC

To get the EITC, workers must file a tax return and claim the credit. [Free tax preparation](#) help is available online and through volunteer organizations. Those eligible for the EITC have these options:

- [Free File on IRS.gov](#). Free brand-name tax software is available that leads taxpayers through a question and answer format to help prepare the tax return and claim credits and deductions, if they are eligible. Free File also provides online versions of IRS paper forms, an option called [Free File Fillable Forms](#), best suited 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, use the [search tool](#) on IRS.gov or the [IRS2go smartphone application](#).

Be sure to bring along all required [documents and information](#).

## Refunds

By law the IRS cannot issue refunds before mid-February for tax returns that claim the EITC or the Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC). The IRS must hold the entire refund — even the portion not associated with EITC or ACTC. This change helps ensure taxpayers receive the refund they deserve and gives the agency more time to detect and prevent errors and fraud.

The IRS expects the earliest EITC/ACTC related refunds to be in taxpayer bank accounts or debit cards starting Feb. 27, 2018, if they chose direct deposit and there are no issues with the tax return.

## Avoid Errors: Get It Right

Taxpayers are responsible for the accuracy of their tax return even if someone else prepares it for them. The EITC rules are complicated and the IRS urges taxpayers to seek help to make sure they are eligible by visiting a free tax return preparation site, using Free File software, or from a [paid tax professional](#). Be sure to choose a [tax preparer](#) wisely. [Errors](#) can have lasting impact on future eligibility to claim EITC and leave taxpayers with a penalty.

Taxpayers should be sure to reply promptly to any letter from the IRS requesting additional information about EITC. If taxpayers need assistance or have questions, call the number on the IRS letter.

## Beware of Scams

Beware of scams that claim to increase the EITC refund. Scams that create fictitious qualifying children or inflate income levels to get the maximum EITC could leave taxpayers with a penalty.

Taxpayers who had an EITC claim reduced or denied for any reason other than a mathematical or clerical error must file [Form 8862](#), Information to Claim Earned Income Credit after Disallowance, to claim the credit.

IRS.gov is a valuable first stop to help taxpayers get it right this filing season. Information on [other tax credits](#) are also available such as the [Child Tax Credit](#).

**Related items:**

- [FS-2018-01](#), Qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit
- [IRS.gov/eitc](#), Detailed EITC eligibility rules
- EITC Central at [www.eitc.irs.gov](#), Helpful resources for IRS partners and anyone interested in spreading the word about this benefit.
- [Pub. 596](#), Earned Income Credit (EIC)
- [Tax Professionals](#), Another place for valuable EITC resources and assistance.