



15 Thousand Contra Costa County Residents Could Qualify For NEW State Earned Income Tax Credit

(Martinez, January 28, 2016) California's new Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) could benefit 15,000 low-income workers in Contra Costa County who earned less than \$14,000 last year. The challenge now is to make sure they know about it.

Governor Brown's 2015-16 Budget established the state's first EITC, designed to complement the federal EITC. California is the 26th state to implement a state-level earned income tax credit making the state's families now eligible for both benefits. With nearly \$400 million dollars available through the new state EITC, an estimated \$2.3 billion in EITC tax credits is available for Californians.

"Most hard-working Contra Costa residents may not be aware that there's a new state Earned Income Tax Credit, and if they're earning less than \$14,000 a year, they may have never filed taxes before," said Kathy Gallagher, Director of Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD). "We're working to raise awareness about this helpful benefit which can make a big difference for our county's most vulnerable families."

Workers who earned less than \$14,000 per year are eligible to apply for the California EITC, and depending on qualifications and number of dependent children, could receive up to \$2,653 in refunds. The average refund statewide is expected to be about \$900 per qualifying family.

And that's just for the California tax credit. The federal EITC is for workers earning less than \$54,000 per year. Combined, the two tax credits could result in tax returns exceeding \$5,000 – a significant amount of money for families struggling to make ends meet.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit lifts more children out of poverty than any other policy. Just a small boost in family income can improve children's development and school achievement," said Sean Casey, Executive Director of First 5 Contra Costa. "That's why the earned income tax credit is so important, and why it's critical to make sure families know about it."

There are free tax preparation sites throughout the county where low-income Contra Costa residents can file their taxes with help from IRS-trained volunteers. To learn more visit www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org or call 211.

To see how to qualify for California's earned income tax credit, visit www.caleitc4me.org.

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