



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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\$5.9 MILLION RETURNED TO REGION BY COUNTY CAMPAIGN ***Tax Assistance Provided to Low-Income Families in County***

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) today launched the 2010 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign, an effort to get more low-income families and individuals to take advantage of the federal government's largest cash assistance program.

"The local EITC campaign helps working families and individuals increase their tax refunds," said Vice-Chairman Bill Horn from the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. "These are tough economic times. I would like to encourage more families and individuals to take advantage of their EITC. It's your money. You earned it. Get it back."

Established in 1975, the EITC is a federal program designed to lift low-income families and individuals out of poverty by helping them keep more of their hard-earned wages. However, the IRS estimates that about 20 to 25 percent of eligible individuals don't claim the credit.

In 2003 the San Diego County Board of Supervisors launched a pilot program to provide no-cost tax preparation assistance to low-income workers. The program was expanded countywide the following year. Since the campaign began, more than \$29 million EITC dollars have been returned to local families.

Last year, more than 18,000 federal tax returns were filed, bringing about \$18 million in refunds to working families and the local economy. Nearly \$5.9 million were EITC dollars.

This year, about two dozen agencies and organizations—including United Way, the IRS, and the AARP—will provide no-cost tax assistance until April 15 at more than 70 sites throughout the county.

Individuals and families who worked in 2009 and earned less than \$48,000 could qualify for as much as \$5,600 in tax credit. However, they must file a tax return to be eligible for the EITC.

"Getting access to these tax funds is simple," said Nick Macchione, HHSA Director. "All you have to do is file an income tax return and you can do that at no cost."

For more information about the EITC Campaign, call 2-1-1.

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