


Before you begin: See the instructions for Form 1040A, line 41, or Form 1040, line 64, to make sure that (a) you can take the EIC and (b) you have a qualifying child.

- 
 - If you take the EIC even though you are not eligible, you may not be allowed to take the credit for up to 10 years. See back of schedule for details.
 - It will take us longer to process your return and issue your refund if you do not fill out this app for each qualifying child.
 - Be sure the child's name on line 1 and social security number (SSN) on line 2 agree with the child's social security card. Otherwise, at the time we process your return, we may reduce or disallow your EIC. If the name or SSN on the child's social security card is not correct, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

Qualifying Child Information		Child 1	Child 2	
Child's name	First name	Last name	First name	Last name
If you have more than two qualifying children, you only have to list two to get the maximum credit.				
Child's SSN				
The child must have an SSN as defined on page 44 of the Form 1040A instructions or page 46 of the Form 1040 instructions unless the child was born and died in 2002. If your child was born and died in 2002 and did not have an SSN, enter "Died" on this line and attach a copy of the child's birth certificate.				
Child's year of birth	Year		Year	
	If born after January 1, 1984, skip lines 4a and 4b; go to line 5.		If born after January 1, 1984, skip lines 4a and 4b; go to line 5.	
If the child was born before January 2, 1984—				
a Was the child under age 24 at the end of 2002 and a student?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Go to line 5.	<input type="checkbox"/> No. Continue	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Go to line 5.	<input type="checkbox"/> No. Continue
b Was the child permanently and totally disabled during any part of 2002?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Continue	<input type="checkbox"/> No. The child is not a qualifying child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Continue	<input type="checkbox"/> No. The child is not a qualifying child.
Child's relationship to you (for example, son, daughter, grandchild, niece, nephew, foster child, etc.)				
Number of months child lived with you in the United States during 2002				
• If the child lived with you for more than half of 2002 but less than 7 months, enter "7".				
• If the child was born or died in 2002 and your home was the child's home for the entire time he or she was alive during 2002, enter "12".				
	Do not enter more than 12 months.		Do not enter	

THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECOND HARVEST FOODBANKS



The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF) is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger. OASHF provides food and funding to support the infrastructure of Ohio's 12 Second Harvest Foodbanks.

- ♦ In 2001, these foodbanks distributed over 72 million pounds of food and groceries to over 2,800 member charities.
- ♦ Over 80% of these member charities - including food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other food assistance organizations - have operating budgets of less than \$25,000 per year and are largely volunteer operated.
- ♦ During 2001, these member charities served over 4.4 million low-income Ohioans in 1.9 million households.
 - **42%** of the individuals served were children.
 - **96%** of the households had household incomes below the poverty level.
 - **46%** of the households included at least one elderly or disabled adult.

GIVE OHIO A BOOST: PROMOTE THE EITC - TABLE OF CONTENTS:

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INTRODUCTION

You don't need to be a tax expert to do EITC outreach! There are lots of people and organizations out there to assist your efforts. **This booklet is your first step toward becoming an EITC advocate!**

During 2002 and 2003, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks initiated an EITC outreach campaign via the emergency food assistance network. OASHF coordinated with all twelve Regional Foodbanks and their member agencies to deliver the EITC message to eligible low-income Ohioans.

This guide aims to continue and broaden EITC outreach throughout Ohio. Additionally, OASHF hopes to develop "EITC Coordinators" in each Foodbank region. These individuals would work with their Regional Foodbank and OASHF to help organize EITC efforts in their Foodbank region. If you are interested in learning more about this role, please contact OASHF.

Thank you for being a part of this outreach network! Please consider OASHF as a resource to complete this important outreach. Contact us with any questions or comments that you have concerning this publication and EITC outreach.

OASHF would like to thank all of the Foodbanks and their Agency Relations staff for working on EITC outreach across Ohio. And, thank you to the many agencies who posted EITC fliers in their facilities and helped promote the EITC to their clients. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

What is the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned income Tax Credit (EITC) is a special tax refund program for low-income working families and individuals. The EITC rewards part-time or full-time workers with reduced taxes and a possible refund. *It's a wage support for the people who need it most!*

This program is funded by the federal government and is administered by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Since its inception in 1975, the Earned Income Tax Credit has grown to become one of the United State's largest programs to support low-income families and individuals.

For the 2001 tax year, over 19 million taxpayers claimed the EITC, which totaled more than \$31 billion in returns. These EITC refunds help working families meet their basic needs, such as housing costs, groceries, heating bills, and car repairs.



FACTS ABOUT THE EITC

- ♦ The EITC is not welfare or cash assistance: EITC recipients do not need to visit their local County Department of Job and Family Services office to receive this tax credit.
- ♦ In most cases, the EITC will not affect a recipients public benefits: The EITC does not qualify as income when determining eligibility for Food Stamps, Ohio Works First, Medicaid, SSI, or public housing. Please contact OASHF for more information.
- ♦ EITC dollars help stimulate state and local economies: In 2002, the EITC brought over \$1 billion into Ohio's economy. These dollars are spent and invested in low-income communities, which support businesses, jobs, and community stability.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE EITC? HOW MUCH IS THE EITC WORTH?

As most Americans know, taxes are never simple! Qualifying for the EITC depends on the taxpayers income level and number of children. Likewise, the refund amount also depends on these factors.

Tax Year 2002 Earned Income Tax Credit Eligibility Guidelines and Maximum Credit Amounts

# of Children in Family		Maximum Income			Maximum Refund Amount
		Single	Married		
2 or more		\$33,178	\$34,178		\$4,140
1		\$29,201	\$30,201		\$2,506
0		\$11,060	\$12,060		\$376

In addition to the above eligibility guidelines, there are other factors that determine EITC eligibility. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- ♦ Social Security Numbers (SSN) - All taxpayers and all qualifying children must have valid SSNs.
- ♦ Qualifying Children - The EITC has unique tax rules that determine the number of qualifying children. These tax rules are different from those that determine qualifying dependents and head of household status. Please contact either the IRS or the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (202.408.1080) for more information on this topic.

Why Do Earned Income Tax Credit Outreach?

"I have received the Earned Income Credit for over 10 years now. This credit has helped my family tremendously. By receiving this credit, it puts more money into my paycheck.

I am very grateful to our government for such a credit. I hope that through public awareness, more people will become familiar with the tax credits they are eligible for.

Missing out on these credits is like missing out on growth and independence."

~ Charlotte Cook, EITC Recipient
Dayton, Ohio

Low-income working families and individuals need your help! Every year, many eligible taxpayers in Ohio miss out on claiming the EITC, because they either don't know about it or they don't know how to file for it.

In fact, studies estimate that nationwide 15-20% of those who qualify for the EITC fail to claim it. Doing EITC outreach in your community will help eligible taxpayers increase their incomes by claiming the EITC.

EITC outreach can range from simply posting a flyer to organizing a community wide media campaign to helping low-income workers file their taxes for free.

☑ **Remember:** Starting small is okay! Set goals that you can achieve, and build on your successes from one year to the next.

REACH TARGET POPULATIONS

Certain groups of eligible EITC recipients are less likely than others to know about the EITC. These groups include:

- Non-English speaking citizens and legal immigrants
- Recently unemployed taxpayers
- Workers who owe no federal income tax
- Foster parents
- Working grandparents raising grandchildren
- Current Ohio Works First (OWF) recipients

EITC outreach that targets these specific groups of workers will enable your efforts to reach the people who need this information the most.

FREE TAX FILING ASSISTANCE - VITA

Receiving the EITC requires *both* knowing about it *and* filing for it.

To make sure that your EITC outreach is most effective, promote free tax filing sites! This helps EITC recipients keep the full value of their EITC refund.

Throughout Ohio, the IRS works with community partners to operate Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. These sites are open each year during the tax filing season, which begins in mid-January and ends on April 15th. VITA sites will serve anyone with an income under \$35,000 - for FREE.

The IRS can provide you with a full list of VITA sites in your area. AND, they can also help you establish a new VITA site in your community. Contact the IRS or OASHF with your VITA questions.

OUTREACH TIP

In addition to the EITC, many working families also qualify for the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The CTC is a refundable federal tax credit and is worth up to \$600 per child under 17 yrs. old. A worker must make at least \$10,350 per year to qualify for the CTC.

☑ **Remember:** The CTC and the EITC have different eligibility requirements.

Claiming the CTC can further increase a worker's tax refund. For more information on how to promote the CTC, contact the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Who to Work With: Developing Partnerships

COMMUNITY PARTNER: THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS)

Get excited about working with the IRS! Because the EITC is a federal tax credit, the IRS is the designated federal agency to oversee the EITC program. In addition to regulating EITC tax law, the IRS dedicates some of its staff and time for EITC-related outreach.

Stakeholder, Partnerships, Education, and Communication (SPEC), part of the Wage & Investment Division, is the IRS office devoted to promoting the Earned Income Tax Credit, establishing VITA sites, and supporting other tax-related programs for low-income taxpayers.

There are approximately 47 SPEC Territories nationwide, and the State of Ohio is split into three different SPEC Territories: Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus. Each of these three territories has a SPEC Territory Manager and a team of Tax Specialists who work to support community-based and city-based EITC campaigns. The below map outlines the three Ohio SPEC territories.

SPEC offices can connect you with other community partners in Ohio and can help you access free EITC promotional materials. They can also help you start a VITA site. Feel free to contact them with your questions!

CLEVELAND TERRITORY:

Territory Manager: Gloria McGhee
phone: 216.328.2851
email: Gloria.J.McGhee@irs.gov

COLUMBUS TERRITORY:

Territory Manager: Vickie D. Fairley
(Acting Manager)
phone: 513.263.5658
email: Vickie.D.Fairley@irs.gov

CINCINNATI TERRITORY:

Territory Manager: Vickie D. Fairley
phone: 513.263.5658
email: Vickie.D.Fairley@irs.gov



"SPEC Territory Managers work with stakeholders to leverage resources and to build community coalitions. Our community based partnership model consists of three components: Awareness and Education; Tax Preparation Assistance; and Asset Building.

"By educating low income workers on tax laws and various credits, such as the EITC and the Child Tax Credit, promoting free tax preparation and providing tax filing assistance at community based tax preparation sites, we aim to help taxpayers move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

"If you are interested in starting a community-based coalition to coordinate tax-related services for low-moderate income families, please contact the SPEC Territory Manager in your area."

~ Vickie Fairley
SPEC Territory Manager - Cincinnati and Kentucky

COMMUNITY PARTNER: CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES (CBPP)



Based in Washington D.C., the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is widely recognized as *the* source for information concerning EITC outreach. Since 1989, the CBPP has been helping organizations across the country do EITC outreach.

Every year, the Center publishes a comprehensive outreach toolkit: **Help Workers Boost Their Paychecks!** This toolkit is annually updated and mailed out in mid-late December. Outreach materials

- including posters, flyers, and envelope stuffers - are available in English, Spanish, and many other languages.

Toolkit sections include:

- ♦ Facts about the EITC
- ♦ How to Promote the EITC
- ♦ Facts about the New Child Tax Credit
- ♦ Linking Workers with Free Tax Filing Assistance

Anyone doing EITC outreach should request this tool kit!

Phone: 202.408.1080

Email: eickit@cbpp.org

Website: www.cbpp.org/eic2003

Contact Person: John Wancheck

OUTREACH TIP

Collaborating is always a good idea. It helps your efforts reach more people with less work. A great way to get connected with others doing EITC outreach is to ask the CBPP for their toolkit mailing list in your area. You never know - a new partner might be right next door!



COMMUNITY PARTNER: CENTER FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS (CEP)

Need a crash course on the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax issues?

The Center for Economic Progress (CEP) operates a nationally-known EITC campaign and free tax filing program in Chicago, Illinois. It works with the City of Chicago to help over 25,000 eligible taxpayers claim all the tax credits they qualify for.

CEP also helps coordinate the **National Community Tax Coalition**. This new initiative works nationwide to expand the working poor's access to tax benefits. Through the coalition, organizations and individuals throughout the United States also collaborate on identifying tax policies that benefit low-income Americans. The Coalition works together and shares information in many ways, including:

- ♦ **A group email list-serve.** Members can post questions to other organizations doing similar work and get email updates about tax-related issues. News articles and press releases are also circulated on this list-serve. Contact CEP to sign up for this service.
- ♦ **National conferences and trainings.** In 2002, the Coalition held its first conference full of workshops, networking, and outreach information. The next conference will take place in June 2003 - contact CEP for more information as it becomes available.

For more information, please contact:

Julie Kruse - Director, National Community Tax Coalition

29 E. Madison, Suite 910 - Chicago, IL 60602

phone: 312.252.0280 - email: jkruse@centerforprogress.org

website: www.centerforprogress.org

COMMUNITY PARTNERS: CITY-BASED COALITIONS IN OHIO

EITC outreach campaigns are sprouting in cities from Tulsa, OK to Philadelphia, PA to right here in OHIO! These efforts include the help of local city governments and a large number of community partners, such as:

- ♦ Regional Foodbank
- ♦ The United Way
- ♦ The IRS
- ♦ Certified Public Accountants Organizations
- ♦ Faith-Based Organizations
- ♦ The Area Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Economic Development Organizations
- ♦ Local Non-Profit Organizations, and Charities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is working with city governments and EITC coalitions across the country to help spread the Earned Income Tax Credit message. Contact the NLC to learn more about how to start a city-based EITC coalition in your area: Abby Hughes Holsclaw, phone: 202.626.3107 and email: holsclaw@nlc.org

Check out the following campaigns that are already happening in Ohio!

DAYTON, OHIO

For the past two years, City Commissioner Dean Lovelace, the City of Dayton and over 20 other organizations have been working together to conduct EITC outreach. This coalition also aims to significantly increase the convenience and capacity of free tax preparation services within the City of Dayton.



The Dayton Coalition uses the EITC flyer and poster designed by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and with their permission, modified it to include Dayton-specific information. Dayton's two-sided flyer includes the following information:

- ♦ EITC eligibility criteria
- ♦ EITC HelpLink Information Line phone number
- ♦ Contact information for Coalition-sponsored tax preparation sites
- ♦ List of documents that the taxpayer must bring to the tax site

CLEVELAND, OHIO

The Cleveland Economic Opportunity Coalition (CEOC) coordinates EITC outreach throughout Cleveland. This coalition is led by the Cleveland SPEC office and the City of Cleveland.

In February of 2003, the CEOC sponsored a Super Saturday VITA event at the Cleveland City Hall Rotunda. This one-day event aimed to draw in large numbers of taxpayers to a centralized location.

Cleveland Saves, a local organization that helps low-income individuals achieve financial security, was also on site to offer financial counseling and seminars.

Contact Gloria McGhee for more information about the CEOC:

phone: 216.328.2851

email: Gloria.J.McGhee@irs.gov

Pre-tax season outreach targeted EITC-eligible families involved in Head Start, Section 8 housing, the IDA Program and Ohio Works First. This part of the campaign was designed to urge the use of the free tax preparation services in the community and discourage the use of high cost "Rapid Refund Loans."

During tax-filing season, the Coalition implemented a broad community education campaign. It included fliers and posters distributed throughout the community; bus placards; articles, news segments and editorials in the print and broadcast media; articles in various employer, neighborhood, and agency newsletters and church bulletins; government and public access cable television programs; public affairs radio programs; and recorded messages on HelpLink's EITC Information Line.

For more information on the Dayton EITC Coalition, contact LaShea Smith at (937) 333-3809 Clsmith@cityofdayton.org

COLUMBUS, OHIO

In 2002, the City of Columbus worked with the IRS and with local businesses to promote the EITC.

Clear Channel Outdoor donated the use of billboard space throughout Columbus, which saved almost \$10,000 in advertising costs!

The Columbus coalition also worked with local organizations representing the African-American, Somali, and Hispanic communities in Columbus. Many of these groups provided translation services at VITA sites in Columbus.

EITC fliers specific to the mid-Ohio region were produced and widely distributed to local businesses and non-profits.

To get involved with the Columbus coalition, contact Angela Mingo at:

Phone: 614.645.2537

Email: ammingo@cmhmetro.net

"2002 was a tough year for many Central Ohio families. Many local workers found themselves without a job for the first time.

"Columbus City Council is committed to creating economic opportunities for our residents and assisting those who need help getting back on their feet during these extraordinary times.

"For families who worked last year in low-income jobs and those who found their wages reduced because of layoff or lower pay, the EITC is a way to bring home more of the money they earned. Unfortunately, many people who qualify for the federal EITC failed to take advantage of it.

"Our goal is to encourage Central Ohio families to take advantage of the EITC and boost their incomes."

~ Matt Habash

President of Columbus City Council &
Director of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank

Free Tax Filing Services: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

"After you have the volunteers needed to prepare returns at a VITA site, running the site becomes easy. The site manager has time to do the other things necessary for running a site.

"Once you start preparing tax returns, you realize that all the time and effort spent setting the site up has paid off. All it takes is the first time you see the face of a mother with three children get back over \$2,000 as an EITC refund.

"VITA sites help working families. And, free tax services help low wage earners keep all the money they are due back on their tax return."

~ Debra Davenport

VITA Site Manager - Dayton, Ohio

VITA sites are free tax-filing sites that use volunteer tax-preparers to provide tax-preparation services to low-income individuals and families at no cost.

The SPEC division of the IRS oversees this program. All VITA volunteers take an IRS sponsored course on tax-preparation and pass a certification test. There are thousands of VITA sites throughout the United States.

WHY IS VITA SO IMPORTANT?

Tax law is becoming increasingly complicated. An increasing number of tax laws apply to low-income taxpayers, including the EITC and the CTC. Instead of preparing tax returns themselves, many of these individuals turn to others for assistance.

However, instead of going to VITA sites, many low-income taxpayers are paying commercial businesses to have their taxes prepared. This is costly for low-income workers who need and deserve every dollar of their tax refund.

These businesses often charge high fees for their filing services and provide "rapid refunds" or "fast cash" tax returns. These fees drastically reduce the value of EITC refunds for low-income taxpayers. VITA sites enable low-income taxpayers to keep their full tax return by avoiding costly preparation and loan fees.

NO. OF VITA SITES PER OHIO COUNTY

County	#VITA sites	County	#VITA sites
Adams	0	Licking	0
Allen	0	Logan	0
Ashland	0	Lorain	0
Ashtabula	1	Lucas	7
Athens	3	Madison	0
Auglaize	1	Mahoning	2
Belmont	0	Marion	1
Brown	0	Medina	1
Butler	1	Meigs	0
Carroll	0	Mercer	1
Champaign	0	Miami	0
Clark	2	Monroe	0
Clermont	1	Montgomery	16
Clinton	0	Morgan	0
Columbiana	0	Morrow	0
Coshocton	0	Muskingum	3
Crawford	0	Noble	0
Cuyahoga	26	Ottawa	0
Darke	0	Paulding	0
Defiance	0	Perry	1
Delaware	0	Pickaway	0
Erie	2	Pike	0
Fairfield	0	Portage	1
Fayette	0	Preble	0
Franklin	19	Putnam	0
Fulton	0	Richland	1
Gallia	1	Ross	1
Geauga	2	Sandusky	0
Greene	6	Scioto	0
Guernsey	0	Seneca	2
Hamilton	9	Shelby	0
Hancock	3	Stark	3
Hardin	0	Summit	1
Harrison	0	Trumbull	1
Henry	1	Tuscarawas	1
Highland	0	Union	0
Holmes	0	Van Wert	0
Huron	0	Vinton	0
Jackson	1	Warren	1
Jefferson	1	Washington	0
Knox	1	Wayne	0
Lake	0	Williams	0
Lawrence	0	Wood	3
		Wyandot	0
		Total:	128

WHAT ARE "REFUND ANTICIPATION LOANS"?

When taxpayers receive a "fast cash" or "rapid refund" tax-return, in many instances, they have actually been issued a loan. These loans are known as Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs). The taxpayer is actually borrowing money through the commercial tax-preparer based on the anticipated dollar amount of their tax-return.

RALs are issued at high rates of interest - sometimes as high as 150-300% APR. These rates are much higher than bank interest rates or even credit card interest rates. Many individuals are not aware that they're actually receiving a loan when they pay for these services.

In 2001, the cost of RALs reduced the overall value of the Earned Income Tax Credit by an estimated \$324 million due to these loan fees.

PROMOTE VITA SITES

Not enough eligible people use VITA sites to file their taxes and receive the EITC. Part of the problem is that not enough people know about VITA or where the closest VITA site is. Call your SPEC Territory Manager and learn more about the VITA sites in your community. Spread the word about VITA sites as a portion of your EITC campaign.

- ☒ **Remember:** Aim to have VITA site publicity in place by mid-January. This ensures you reach low-income taxpayers early in the tax-filing season and before they go to a commercial preparer.

START NEW VITA SITES

In many areas, there aren't enough VITA sites to meet the potential demand for free tax filing services. Consider starting a new VITA site in your community.

- ♦ Ohio only has 128 VITA sites in the entire state.
- ♦ 58% of Ohio counties have zero VITA sites

Rural areas are more likely than urban areas to not have any VITA sites. This puts low-income rural residents at a disadvantage in obtaining free tax filing services. The IRS can help you establish VITA sites in your area. They can provide training classes for volunteer tax-preparers, software for doing electronic filing on computers, and other technical support.

In addition to VITA sites, the IRS also coordinates Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) sites, which serve low-income seniors. Most TCE sites in Ohio are affiliated with AARP. Because AARP/TCE sites only serve low-income seniors, VITA sites are the primary free service for low-income individuals of any age. Contact the IRS to get a complete list of AARP/TCE sites in your area.

Outreach Strategies

There are lots of options in designing an EITC outreach campaign. Tailor your EITC outreach to your community's needs.

- ☑ **Remember:** Keep in mind which target populations you are trying to reach. Make sure to set achievable goals!

START EARLY!

EITC outreach is a time-sensitive matter. A well-timed EITC campaign needs to focus its efforts around the month of January. Although taxes aren't due until April 15th, tax-filing season begins in mid-January when all workers receive their W-2s.

Planning should begin several months before January. Your outreach campaign should concentrate on doing outreach in January and early-February and should continue through April 15th. Most low-income taxpayers file their taxes in January, so time is of the essence.

- ☑ **Remember:** Tax-filing season begins right after the Holiday season ends. Be sure to plan accordingly!

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK.

Don't do your outreach alone! Your efforts will be most successful when working with other people and organizations.

Talk to folks with EITC outreach experience. This booklet is full of names and phone numbers of people with EITC experience. Contact them and learn about their successes and failures. Also, many organizations will share their resources, publicity materials and information - just ask!

Contact other Health and Human Services organizations. Consider your target populations and outreach goals when partnering with these groups:

- ♦ Work with your local County Department of Job and Family Services to reach Ohio Works First recipients.
- ♦ Collaborate with cultural, ethnic, and racial organizations to reach non-English speaking residents in your area - including legal immigrants. These groups can help provide translation services.
- ♦ Contact the unemployment office to reach recently unemployed workers.
- ♦ Partner with HeadStart to reach low-income single parents
- ♦ Talk with local food pantries and emergency food providers to reach the working poor with low-wage jobs.

Join forces with the local business community. The EITC is a tax refund program for people who WORK. Targeting employers and businesses is a natural fit for this outreach. This strategy will help you spread the word to low-wage earners.

Check out these websites for more information about the EITC!

www.irs.gov

search for EITC

www.eitc.info

www.taxpolicycenter.org

click on low-income households

www.chicago-eitc.org

www.financeprojectinfo.org

click on Making Wages Work

According to the 2000 Census, the following Ohio counties have the highest percentages of residents of Hispanic heritage.

Defiance	7.2%
Sandusky	7%
Lorain	6.9%
Fulton	5.8%
Henry	5.4%
Lucas	4.5%
Ottawa	3.7%
Huron	3.6%
Seneca	3.4%
Cuyahoga	3.4%
Hancock	3.1%
Paulding	3%
Mahoning	3%

- ♦ **Chamber of Commerce:** Your local Chamber can connect you to employers and industries that can promote the EITC to their own employees. Chambers of Commerce are involved in EITC outreach across the country.
- ♦ **Banks:** All banks are mandated by the Community Reinvestment Act, a federal law, to provide services to low-income neighborhoods and individuals. Banks are often involved with local EITC campaigns through donations of time, money and/or resources. Consider asking a local bank for money to cover your photocopying expenses or for a computer to use at a VITA site.
- ☑ **Remember:** The EITC works to boost local and state economies. EITC refunds help support businesses and help create new jobs due to increased spending. Supporting EITC outreach is a good investment for local businesses.

OUTREACH TIP

Encourage anyone with an IRS notice to act immediately!

If an EITC recipient - or any other taxpayer - receives an audit or error notice from the IRS, advise them to contact your local legal aid office.

Ignoring an IRS notice can result in the loss of appeal rights. Many legal aid offices in Ohio operate Low Income Tax Clinics (LITCs) that specialize in tax-related disputes.

To find your nearest legal aid office, call the toll-free number 1-866-LAWOHIO or go to the Ohio State Legal Services Association webpage at www.oslsa.org

CAPTURE OUTCOMES

Spend time after your outreach efforts are complete to reflect on your successes and failures.

Pass out surveys to your community partners asking for their thoughts on the campaign. Ask for things they would do again and items that could be improved upon in the future.

Request that local VITA sites ask individuals how they heard about the VITA site and the EITC. This way, you know whether your efforts led to increased VITA use and EITC awareness.

Do PUBLICITY.

Decide the best ways to reach eligible EITC recipients with your message. Use the resources available to you. Here are some options to consider:

- ♦ **Flyers:** Place EITC flyers in high-traffic areas, such as waiting rooms, bulletin boards, bus stops, and community agencies. For example, in 2002, the FreeStore FoodBank included EITC information flyers in every bag of food distributed during their Holiday food distribution. This effort reached hundreds of low-income Cincinnati residents
- ♦ **Print Media:** Place your EITC message in community newsletters and other mailings. Reach out to non-English community newspapers in your area.
- ♦ **Meetings:** Get on the agenda of community meetings in your area. These might include, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Head Start parent meetings, and Boys and Girls Club meetings.
- ♦ **Faith-based Community:** Work with the churches and other religious organizations in your town. Consider speaking to pastors, Sunday school classes, church governing bodies, and congregations about the outreach you are working to do.
- ♦ **Editorials:** Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed column for your local newspaper. This can generate lots of community-wide attention, and its free!

- ☑ **Remember:** Don't get overwhelmed. Congratulations on contributing to EITC outreach in your community. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.



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