

# Earned Income Tax Credit and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

**Quick Look:** The **Earned Income Tax Credit** refunds a certain amount of money to people who qualify for this credit. For those who need help filing their taxes, the IRS offers trained volunteers through its **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** program.

This fact sheet contains information on two separate programs administered through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to help taxpayers who are seniors or who may have lower incomes. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable tax credit. For those individuals who need help with their taxes, the IRS offers Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA).

## **EITC and VITA**

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### **What Is the Earned Income Tax Credit?**

- The EITC is a federal, refundable tax credit. That means qualifying taxpayers will get money back, even if they don't have any tax withheld from their paychecks. To claim the credit, you must file your federal taxes, even if you don't earn enough to owe taxes.
- To qualify for the EITC, you must work and have earned income beneath a certain threshold. The actual amount of the credit varies based on your income and family size.

To qualify, your earned income and adjusted gross income must each be less than the maximum amount of credit for Tax Year 2025 (filed in 2026) is:

- \$8,046 with three or more qualifying children
- \$7,152 with two qualifying children
- \$4,328 with one qualifying child
- \$649 with no qualifying children

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### **The EITC Checklist**

There are a few things to remember:

- You must have a valid Social Security number.
- You must have earned income.
- Your filing status cannot be married, filing separately.
- You must be a U.S. citizen. You may also qualify if you are a citizen of another country. \*
- If you don't have any qualifying children, you must:
  - be age 25 but under 65 at the end of the year.
  - live in the U.S. for more than half the year.
  - not qualify as a dependent of another person.

*\*There are special rules for certain groups. These can get complicated, so check with the IRS.*

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To determine if you are eligible to claim this credit, use the IRS online tool, the [EITC Assistant](#).

### **Can I Get Help to File My Taxes?**

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help from trained volunteers to low-to-moderate income taxpayers (usually those who make \$67,000 or less and who need assistance filing their taxes). VITA sites are available at many community locations and provide basic income tax return preparation.

Volunteers prepare Form 1040A, Form 1040EZ, Form 1040, and more. They can also help you with special credits such as the EITC, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled if you qualify. Many VITA sites offer electronic filing, so you can receive your refund more quickly.

*The IRS also offers a program known as [Tax Counseling for the Elderly](#),*

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*which is designed to help people who are 60 or older by preparing returns and answering questions about pensions and retirement funds. IRS-certified volunteers who provide counseling are often retirees themselves who are affiliated with non-profit community assistance and social service organizations. For more information, see the IRS guide [“IRS Certified Volunteers Providing Free Tax Preparation,”](#) Publication 3676-B.*

Source: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov). Reviewed by the Center on Community Living and Careers.

**For more information, contact the  
Indiana Benefits Information Network  
812-855-6508 | [www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cclc)**

**Indiana's Work Incentive Planning and  
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