

GOVERNOR STEVE BESHEAR

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Governor Steve Beshear's Communications Office

Governor Launches Campaign to Urge Kentuckians to Apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit

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Contact Information: Jay Blanton
Jill Midkiff
502-564-2611

Unveils Web Site Listing Free Tax Preparation Locations

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 5, 2009) – Governor Steve Beshear announced today a campaign to encourage more Kentuckians to apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refundable federal tax credit for low- and middle-income working individuals and families.

"The EITC is one of our best anti-poverty tools, and I want to make sure every eligible Kentuckian takes advantage of it and gets the money they deserve," Gov. Beshear said in announcing the campaign.

Specifically, Gov. Beshear announced a list of nearly 200 free tax preparation sites serving 90 counties across the state where volunteer tax preparers who have been trained and are IRS-certified will assist Kentuckians with their taxes and help them apply for the EITC.

Information about these sites, including addresses and phone numbers, is available on the Web site Gov. Beshear unveiled in October -- www.assistance.ky.gov. These sites will begin offering their services on various dates between mid-January and February 1, and their hours vary by site. Therefore, Gov. Beshear encouraged Kentuckians to call the sites before visiting. He also noted that the Kentucky Department of Revenue provides free online tax assistance, and their link can also be found on the Web site.

Eligibility for the EITC is based on income, as is the amount of the credit. Workers who earn up to \$41,000 may be eligible, and credits can be as high as \$4,824.

In tax year 2005, the most recent year available, Kentuckians filed more than 345,000 EITC claims for a total of \$633.4 million in benefits statewide. Unfortunately, an estimated 20 percent of eligible workers still do not claim their EITC benefits, according to the Internal Revenue Service, mostly for lack of awareness.

Gov. Beshear also noted the impact the EITC has on local economic growth. Nearly all of the funds from the credit, 97 percent, are infused into local communities.

Kentuckians can also find out information about the sites by calling this toll-free phone number provided by the United Way of Kentucky: (877) 566-4968. Or, workers who live in Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Bullitt, Spencer, Nelson, Henry, Trimble, Carroll, Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Grant, Scott, Woodford,

Anderson, Jessamine, Fayette, Bourbon, Montgomery, Clark, or Madison counties should dial 2-1-1.

As part of Gov. Beshear's campaign, he has recorded a radio public service announcement, and the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) will distribute EITC and free tax preparation site information to more than 300,000 existing clients.

In addition to participation by DCBS and DOR, several private groups are assisting in this effort, including the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Tax Aide Program, the United Way of Kentucky, the Kentucky Asset Success Initiative, the Louisville Asset Building Coalition and the Northern Kentucky Asset Building Coalition. Representatives of these organizations joined the Governor for today's event.

"AARP volunteers are excited and ready to help Kentuckians with their tax returns," said Delores Wathen, Kentucky AARP Tax Aide Program coordinator. "We are thrilled that Gov. Beshear has organized this campaign to let more Kentuckians know about free tax preparation sites, and encourage more to apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit."

Participating sites will also have available applications for other need-based government assistance, such as the Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program (KCHIP), Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP) and food stamps.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit is one of the most effective ways hard-working Kentuckians can increase their income," said Harmony Little, program manager for LexLinc, a member of KASI. "In spite of the numerous benefits of the EITC, it remains a hidden treasure unknown to many who are eligible to receive the credit. For those who do take advantage of the credit, it can give a significant boost to their income."

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