



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **COUNTY HELPS RESIDENTS RECOUP TAX DOLLARS Campaign Brings Millions to Local Families and Economy**

In an effort to get more people to claim their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), about 600 volunteers are filing income tax returns at no cost for low-income families. The tax assistance is offered at 80 sites throughout the county as part of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency's (HHSA) 2009 EITC Campaign.



**Supervisor Bill Horn and Nick Macchione at the launching of the 2009 EITC Campaign.**

“Given the state of the economy, it’s imperative that low-income families claim the money they’ve earned. By doing so, they will not only help themselves, but also the local economy,” said Pam Slater-Price, Vice Chairwoman of County Board of Supervisors, at the campaign launch event outside the County Administration Center. “It’s great to see so many hard-working San Diegans recoup the money they deserve.”

Vice Chairwoman Slater-Price and Supervisor Bill Horn, together with Nick Macchione, HHSA Director, community service providers and working families encouraged more San Diego County residents to file their taxes and claim their EITC to put more money in their pockets.

Established in 1975, the EITC is the federal government’s largest cash assistance 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.



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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 initiative began, more than 52,000 state and federal returns have been filed and more than 23.5 million EITC dollars have been returned to the regional economy.

“The local EITC campaign helps working families and individuals increase their refunds. They are also able to keep more of their hard-earned money because there is no cost for filing their return,” said Supervisor Horn. “We encourage families to take advantage of this service and to avoid costly refund anticipation loans.”

This year, about a dozen agencies and organizations—including United Way, the IRS, and the AARP—will provide free tax assistance until April 15. Individuals and families who worked in 2008 and



Residents can have their taxes filed at no cost by calling 211.

earned less than \$12,880 and \$41,646 respectively could qualify for as much as \$4,824 in tax credit. However, they must file a tax return to qualify for the EITC.

“These are difficult economic times. This is an important opportunity for working families and individuals to add money to their piggy banks and pocket books,” said Macchione as he placed money into a piggy bank. “Call 211 to schedule an appointment to have your tax return prepared at no cost. You have 10 weeks to do it. You worked hard for this money. Claim it.”

For more information about the EITC Campaign or to set up an appointment to file a tax return, call 211.

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