



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION**

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**CONTACT:** [Jose A. Alvarez](#) (619) 515-6635

## **COUNTY OFFERS TAX ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES** *Services Available Countywide until Mid-April*

With about six weeks left until the April 15 tax filing deadline, the County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is reminding families and individuals that free tax assistance is available to help them claim their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

This year, more than 400 volunteers are providing free tax assistance at nearly 90 sites throughout San Diego County. The tax assistance will be provided countywide until mid-April.

The services are part of the annual EITC campaign, which helps San Diego County families and individuals take advantage of the EITC and reduces the amount of money that goes unclaimed each year.

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, approximately \$20-\$25 million of EITC dollars is left unclaimed in San Diego County every year. The figure jumps to more than \$1 billion statewide.

In 2003, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors launched a pilot program that provided free tax preparation to low-income workers. The program was expanded countywide the following year.

Since the initiative began, more than 35,000 returns have been filed and more than \$16 million EITC dollars have been returned to the regional economy.

Individuals and families who worked in 2007 and earned less than \$12,000 and \$39,000 respectively could recover as much as \$4,500. However, to qualify for the EITC, they must file a tax return.

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

<b>Central or East Region:</b>	<b>(619) 283-3624</b>
<b>North Central Region:</b>	<b>(858) 974-3603</b>
<b>North Coastal Region:</b>	<b>(760) 757-0118 ext. 305</b>
<b>North Inland Region:</b>	<b>(760) 489-6380</b>
<b>South Region:</b>	<b>(619) 420-3620 or (619) 472-2900</b>
<b>Internal Revenue Service:</b>	<b>(800) 829-1040</b>
<b>2-1-1 San Diego:</b>	<b>2-1-1</b>

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