

VALUABLE TAX CREDIT AVAILABLE FOR SOME LOW TO MODERATE INCOME WORKERS

People who work but don't earn a lot of money may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The IRS estimates that 20 to 25 percent of eligible taxpayers fail to claim the credit which could put as much as \$4,824 into the pockets of a family with two children, or send as much as \$2,917 to a family with one child, or up to \$438 for a worker with no children. The Earned Income Tax Credit is the federal government's largest program benefiting lower earning workers.

"The extra dollars eligible taxpayers can get through EITC can make their lives a little easier," said Brenda Janke of Lincoln County UW Extension Family Living, "but they must file tax returns, even if they aren't required to file, and claim the credit to receive it."

Janke said some individuals and families may qualify for the credit for the first time because of unemployment or other changes in their financial, marital or parental status during the past year.

You may qualify if your income was under \$41,646 last year and you, or your spouse, had income from wages, self-employment, farming, or, if under the minimum retirement age, from disability retirement benefits paid under an employer plan. Taxpayers with the earnings of or below \$38,646 (\$41,646 if married filing jointly) for families with two or more children; \$33,995 (\$36,995 married filing jointly) for families with one child or \$12,880 (\$15,880 married filing jointly) if there are no children should check to see if they qualify.

To get the EITC you earned, you must 1) file a federal income tax return and 2) claim the EITC.

Find more information at www.irs.gov, Keyword: EITC. The online EITC Assistant can help determine your eligibility and the amount of your credit. More information is provided by going directly to the IRS website: <http://www.eitc.irs.gov/rptoolkit/main/>

UW Cooperative Extension, Family Living Education also offers a website with information that may help families with tax credits available to them. It is:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/economics/assistance.cfm>