



Businesses and Employers

Since the EIC and the CTC are tax benefits for people who work, employers are logical and important partners in any campaign. Partnering with local businesses that cater to low- and moderate-income consumers can reach customers, as well as employees. Government agencies and nonprofit groups are employers too. Their workers often earn modest wages and could qualify for the credits.



United Way of
Brevard County
(UWBC) in Cocoa, Florida

presents its Financial Stability Program, which provides financial education classes and free tax filing assistance, to the employees of its 403 corporate partnerships including Boeing, NASA, Publix Corporation and Lockheed Martin. The Financial Stability Class series, held at different locations throughout the year, includes a segment about the EIC and CTC. At the request of the corporate partners, UWBC also conducts half-day seminars eight times a month on financial issues such as building credit history and how to avoid credit scams. To deliver free tax preparation services, UWBC partners with AARP Tax-Aide and the IRS. In 2009, the Financial Stability Program completed 6,899 tax returns worth a total of \$1,770,459.

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Strategies

- Interest local businesses in conducting tax credit outreach by stressing that they have a stake in boosting EIC and CTC participation: Promoting the credits helps stabilize the workforce. When employees have the money they need to get to work, pay for child care and address their families' day-to-day needs, they are more likely to keep their jobs. Tax credits mean more money in the pockets of community residents. Customers are better able to pay their bills. Community leaders can think of the credits as an economic development tool.
- Enlist a business organization to deliver the message about the importance of the tax credits. Gaining the support of the Chamber of Commerce, merchants' associations, trade groups or other business organizations will give your campaign credibility with employers and will provide a link to large networks of businesses.
- Persuade local businesses to use tax credit promotional materials. Stores can display posters and flyers. Family restaurants can print tax credit messages on tray liners or placemats. Department stores can play announcements on in-store public address systems. Utility companies can include tax credit information with their monthly bills.
- Show employers effective ways to inform employees about the tax credits. Incorporate tax credit information with employee paychecks, December through March. Display posters and flyers where employees check in at the beginning and end of each day, and in the employee lounge or lunchroom. Publish an article about the tax credits in employee newsletters. One large government employer ran an EIC message as a computer screensaver. Another placed an EIC reminder on the telephone recording that plays when a caller is "on hold." Another business made EIC information available through its employee "resource line," an internal hotline employees can call for information about company benefits and other services.

- Encourage employers to inform workers about the Advance EIC payment option and make it easy for them to obtain and complete IRS Form W-5 to start Advance EIC payments.
- Train managers to deliver information about the EIC and the CTC to employees they supervise and to new hires. Include tax credit information in employee manuals.
- Direct employees to free tax filing sites. Employers with many low-wage employees can provide a list of nearby VITA sites or they can arrange to have VITA volunteers visit the worksite to help employees file their tax returns.

Progress Through Business works with corporate Human Resources Departments to coordinate free tax preparation services for employees of companies such as Staples office supply company, hospitals and credit unions. Progress Through Business can help Outreach Campaigns contact businesses anywhere in the country to arrange for volunteer tax preparers to complete tax returns before, during or after the workday. For more information, contact: Dr. John Hoffmire, (608) 345-5111, or hoffmire@wisc.edu.



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