

# THE TAX PICTURE

## A Federal Tax Credit for Working Taxpayers: Do You Qualify?

(NAPSA)—Each year, millions of working Americans qualify for some additional tax relief by claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), tax relief for people who work, but do not earn high incomes. Those who qualify can reduce their federal tax liability and potentially receive a cash refund. The EITC does not affect most other welfare and disability benefits.

For tax year 2002, more than 20 million taxpayers claimed the credit and more than \$36 billion dollars in tax credit payments were distributed to low-income workers around the country.

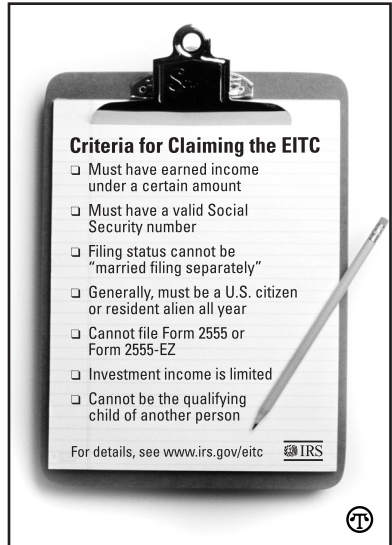
Before claiming the EITC, it's important to know if you're eligible. Taxpayers do not need to have children to claim the EITC, but must meet certain requirements. If you were employed for at least part of 2003, you may be eligible for the EITC if:

- You earned less than \$12,230, did not have any qualifying children, and were at least age 25 and under age 65 on December 31, 2003, or
- You earned less than \$30,666 and have one qualifying child, or
- You earned less than \$34,692 and have more than one qualifying child.

"An estimated 25 percent of people who qualify for the EITC don't claim it each year," said David R. Williams, Director, EITC at the IRS. "The credit was designed to help hard-working taxpayers get what they honestly deserve, and there are many resources available to help them with the process."

### Help is Available

If you believe you may qualify for the EITC, check IRS Publication 596, *Earned Income Credit*, which offers eligibility cri-



teria and instructions on how to claim the tax credit.

Copies of the publication are available in English and Spanish, and can be found on the IRS' Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling 1-800-TAX FORM (1-800-829-3676).

Taxpayers also can seek assistance from a tax preparer or from a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly site that offers free tax help for those who cannot prepare their own returns.

Operated by trained volunteers, these sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls and other convenient locations.

### File Federal Taxes for Free

Taxpayers may qualify to have their returns filed electronically for free and receive their refund faster.

Eligibility requirements can be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) in the free file section.