

CFEP Chronicles - Tips, tools, and the people of VITA El Paso

Dear volunteer,

The fourth quarter of 2009 has begun and tax season is rapidly approaching. We are beginning to prepare for 2010, and of course all our planning begins and centers around you. Last year was a very successful year thanks to the skill, dedication, and kindness of our volunteers. Over 11,500 returns were prepared (including VITA, AARP, and Military sites), which resulted in almost 19 million dollars in refunds to El Paso families. You are a big part of the nationwide VITA campaign, including the 100,000 volunteers who prepared 2.8 million returns last year. We are proud of our success in expanding our program and reaching out to many families who benefit from our services. We can't adequately express our gratitude to all the professionals, retirees, students, single parents, and generous people who make up our volunteer pool. We hope that last year was an enjoyable, educational experience and we would be very pleased if you were to donate your time and talents once again this year.

While we continue to plan for the 2010 tax season we would like to keep you updated and involved with the VITA program. This newsletter is a way for us to keep you informed but more importantly it is a place for you to share any stories, ideas, or suggestions about your volunteer experience. We would love to hear from you! Contact Brittany Kellerman at bkellerman@epcuah.com with your input. You can also look on our website for a wealth of knowledge concerning the VITA program. Please visit our website at <http://www.freetaxescelpaso.org>.

Coalition for Family Economic Progress



Training Schedule:

Please email us (bkellerman@epcuah.com) or call us (838-9608) to register for the courses or to sign up for your books to complete Link and Learn. Returning volunteers may either attend the Returning Volunteer Training or complete Link and Learn (see instructions on page 4). Also, all volunteers are welcome and encouraged to attend the Intermediate and Advanced trainings. This is the first year we will be offering a Greeter's Orientation; it is highly recommended that all Greeters attend. We will be providing breakfast for the Saturday classes, starting at 8am.

Training::	Dates and Times:	Location::
Returning Volunteer	Nov. 21 Sat. 9:00-12:00pm	Northeast YMCA, 5509 Will Ruth
WinterMester— Basic, Inter., and Advanced	Dec. 1-17 T,W, TH 6:00-9:00pm	Project Bravo, 4838 Montana Ave OR Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, 11100 Santos Sanchez
Basic Training	Dec. 5 & 12 Sat. 9:00-5:00pm	Security Services FCU, 545 N. Americas OR Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, 11100 Santos Sanchez
Bilingual Basic Training	Dec. 5 & 12 Sat. 9:00-5:00pm	Internal Revenue Service, 700 E San Antonio
Bilingual Basic Training	Dec. 1-10 T, W, TH 6:00-9:00pm	Houchen Community Center, 609 Tays
Basic Training	Jan. 5-14 T, W, TH 6:00-9:00pm	El Paso Affordable Housing, 6801 Viscount
Basic Training	Jan. 5-14 T, W, TH 5:30-8:30pm	Cultural Learning Center, 7000 Fifth St, Canutillo, TX
Basic Training	Jan. 9 & 16 Sat. 9:00-5:00pm	El Paso Affordable Housing, 6801 Viscount OR Security Services FCU, 545 N. Americas
Greeter Orientation	Jan. 7 TH 6:00-8:00pm	El Paso Affordable Housing, 6801 Viscount
Greeter Orientation	Jan. 12 T 6:00-8:00pm	El Paso Affordable Housing, 6801 Viscount

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First Time Homebuyer Credit Amendment

The First Time Homebuyer Credit has been amended to include homes purchased before April 30, 2010. For these purchases taxpayers qualify for a refundable credit of 10 percent of the purchase price, up to \$8,000. The credit does not have to be repaid if the purchased property remains your main home for 36 months after the purchase date.

You are considered a first-time homebuyer if you or your spouse have not owned a main home in the past three years.

For homes purchased between December 31, 2008 and December 1, 2009 taxpayers can elect to take the credit on their 2008 tax return. Homes purchased after April 9, 2008 and before January 1, 2009 are still

only eligible for the \$7,500 credit that needed to be repaid.

Taxpayers can claim their First-time homebuyer credit using tax form 5405. The form will also provide information on who is eligible to receive the credit as well as information concerning income limitations and credit repayment.



On February 17, 2009 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 was signed into law. ARRA includes key provisions that impact individuals and families.

Making Work Pay Tax Credit

In 2009 and 2010 the Making Work Pay Tax Credit will be available to working individuals. The credit is a refundable credit of \$400 for individuals and \$800 for married taxpayers. The credit is available for individuals who earn less than

\$75,000 and married couples who make less than \$150,000. Self-employed individuals are also eligible for the credit. ITIN holders are not eligible for the credit, you must have a valid SSN (for married couples one SSN is required). De-

pendents are not eligible.

Most taxpayers have already received part if not all of their credit through their paychecks. If taxpayers have not received the credit they should claim it on their tax return.

EITC Expansions

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides a temporary increase in the earned income tax credit (EITC) for taxpayers with three or more qualifying children. The maximum AGI for married families with three or more children is \$48,279 with a maximum EITC of \$5657. ARRA also increases the beginning point of the phase-out range for the credit for all married couples filing a joint return, regardless of the number of children. These changes apply to 2009 and 2010 tax returns.

IRS estimates that 20 to 25 percent of qualifying workers miss out on thousands of dollars every year because they fail to claim their EITC. Let's do our best to help more families claim their EITC this year!

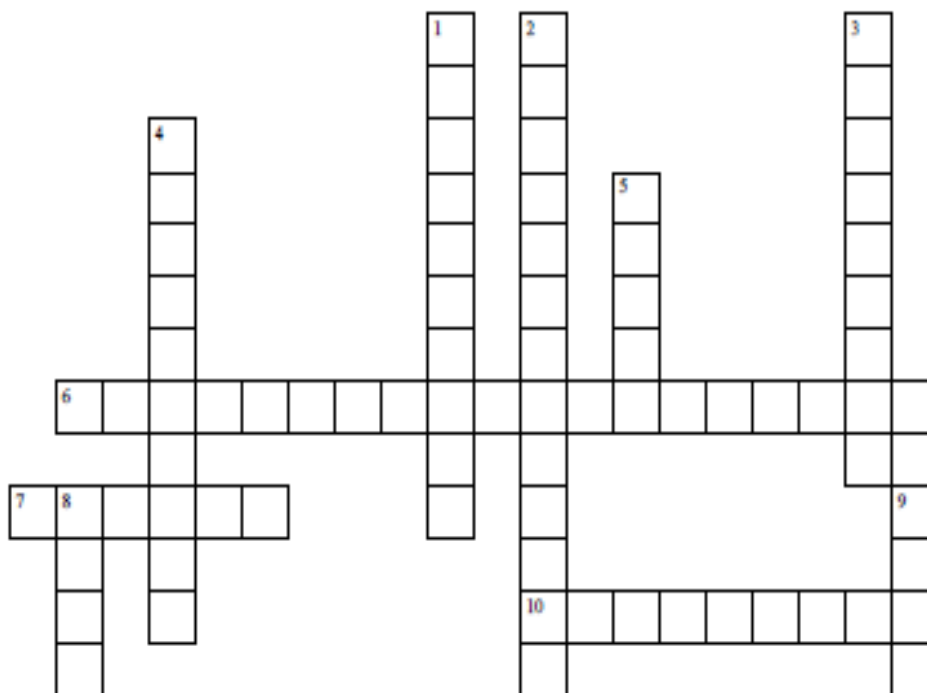
American Opportunity Tax Credit

The education Hope Credit under the American Opportunity Tax Credit has undergone temporary changes for tax years 2009 & 2010. Required course materials now qualify as legitimate expenses. The term of the credit has been expanded from the first two years to the first four years for post-secondary education. Also a portion of the credit may be refundable.



Put your knowledge to the test! You may surprise yourself with all that you know about taxes and tax law!

Taxing Questions



ACROSS

- 6 \$8000 Tax Credit
7 April 15th
10 Form 1040X

DOWN

- 1 CFEF's most valuable asset
2 Increase in paychecks
3 Form 2441
4 American Opportunity Tax Credit
5 Maximum number of children for EITC
8 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
9 2010 Tax Tables Increased

Can the IRS stump you? The challenge is on...

1. Ana Sharapova bought a previously owned automobile for \$10,000 on January 31, 2009. Can she deduct the sales tax she paid on the Schedule L, Standard Deduction, of her 2009 tax return?
- A) No, because the vehicle must be new to qualify
B) Yes, she can deduct the sales tax on either her Schedule A or Schedule L.
C) No, because she purchased the vehicle before the effective date of the statute
2. The American Opportunity Credit is a modification of what provision?
- A) Hope Credit
B) Lifetime Learning Credit
C) Tuition and Fees Deduction
D) American Opportunity Credit is not a modification of any other provision

If you think you know the answers to these stumpers e-mail your answers to bkellerman@epcuah.com. The first respondent that correctly answer both questions will win a prize.



Coalition for Family
Economic Progress
Building Strong Families for El Paso's Future!

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6801 Viscount Blvd Ste A
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Please contact us with any
questions/suggestions at
915-838-9608 or
bkellerman@epcuah.com

Visit our website:

[http://
www.freetaxeselpaso.org](http://www.freetaxeselpaso.org)

Type address here or use Mail Merge
(under Tools) to automatically
address this publication to multiple
recipients.



Link & Learn Online IRS Certification

For those individuals who choose to obtain their certification online, those individuals can use the Link & Learn online courses offered on the IRS web site at: <http://www.irs.gov/app/vita>

This site will allow you to certify for any level you chose to certify.

The courses offered are Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Military, International, & Puerto Rico. Each course features a full certification track for each certification level. Returning volunteers can alternatively take a returning volunteer course at: http://www.irs.gov/app/vita/returning_student.html

At the end of each section you will presented with a test to obtain your IRS certification to prepare returns. All tests are open-book, open notes tests, allowing you to refer to any IRS publication and self-prepared notes to complete the exam successfully.