



New Mexico Legal Aid, Inc.

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IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO THINK ABOUT TAX SEASON

Who do I call for free income tax preparation? After January 15 (when lists are updated), call:

- AARP Tax Aide, 888-227-7669.
- Tax Help New Mexico (“THNM”), 505-224-4829.
- Additional Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (“VITA”)/Tax Counseling for the Elderly (“TCE”) sites, 800-906-9887.

Is “free” any good? Income tax preparers at the AARP, THNM and other VITA/TCE sites go to tax classes and pass a stiff IRS exam. There are far too many unqualified paid preparers who will charge you hundreds of dollars to prepare a simple return. Don’t be a victim!

Why file? If you work and have children, you may receive (even if you don’t owe any tax):

- earned income credit (EIC) of up to **\$6,557**;
- additional child tax credit (ACTC) of up to **\$1,400** per child; and
- New Mexico working families tax credit equal to **17%** of your EIC.
- There is also a New Mexico low income comprehensive tax rebate and/or a property tax rebate (for those 65 and older).

See the attached flyer for more on the earned income credit and the New Mexico working families tax credit.

If your withheld taxes are more than your income tax liability, you will receive a “return” of that excess as well.

Should I file now and get a holiday refund loan? Some paid preparers will pressure you to file as early as November or December—so that they can charge you high (and often disguised) fees for various “return”-related products. Remember:

- The IRS will not start processing individual income tax returns until late **January 2020**.
- Families expecting cash from earned income or additional child tax credits will get their “returns” at **the end of February at the earliest**.
- The longer you wait for your “return,” the larger and more expensive advance refund fees from paid income tax preparers will be.

What should I do with my refund? If at all possible, save some portion of your “return” for a “rainy day.” Remember: your “return” can help you throughout the year if you don’t spend it all at once.

If you have questions about any of this—please do not hesitate to call Grace Allison at 505-768-6134 or Anne Rothrock at 505-545-8543.

Our best wishes to you for a happy and financially sound 2020.