

Why does saving at tax time matter?

Avoid Unnecessary Fees!

Many individuals that qualify for free tax preparation end up spending money on unnecessary fees to receive their tax refund. Here are some tips:

1. Avoid refund anticipation checks (RAC) that direct deposit IRS refunds into temporary bank accounts for a fee (often of around \$30 plus any cost of tax preparation).
2. YOU CAN E-file your tax refund & have it in 10-21 DAYS with DIRECT DEPOSIT. THIS IS FREE, SAFE, EASY AND QUICK!
3. You can e-file your tax return and receive your refund check in 3 weeks. (BUT, if you do not have a bank account, consider your check cashing fees.)
4. If you do not have a bank account, you may want to consider having your funds deposited on a pre-paid payroll card. However, be careful to find out any FEES for the card, for monthly service and for usage. These can add up! SHOP AROUND!

Keep your hard earned money! Get your taxes prepared for **FREE!** The VITA or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program offers free tax preparation to families earning less than \$50,000 or individuals earning less than \$26,000.

Find a **VITA** site near you, call **1-800-906-9887** or search VITA on www.irs.gov

2012 VITA sites include:

- TAP DeVry University.....Downers Grove
 - College of DuPage.....Glen Ellyn
 - Naperville Public Library.....Naperville
 - Loaves & Fishes.....Naperville
 - Kendall County Food Pantry.....Yorkville
- *Site information is subject to change.

How can I make the most of my earnings?

You may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)!

You may keep more of the money you earn with this refund or money back to individuals or families that qualify. To qualify, you must live in the United States at least half of the year, earn income and meet certain rules.

If you qualify, **YOU** may be eligible for cash! Here are some examples

Family Income up to	Number of Children	You may be eligible for
\$43,998 (\$49,078**)	3	\$5,751
\$40,964 (\$46,044**)	2	\$5,112
\$36,052 (\$41,132**)	1	\$3,094
\$13,660 (\$18,740**)	0	\$464

*Samples only. Subject to change. Visit www.irs.gov for more information. Must have investment income of less than \$3,150/year.
**Married filing jointly.

Get a head start on your savings at tax time!

Select to receive part of your refund in a **Series I Savings Bond**.

What is a Series I Savings Bond?

A Series I Savings Bond is a U.S. Treasury Security backed by the U.S. government.

Why might you want to buy a savings bond?

A Savings Bond is a safe way to save that gives you interest or extra money just for saving and helps to protect your money from inflation.

How can you buy a savings bond with your refund?

Ask to use IRS Form 8888 to purchase a savings bond with your tax refund in \$50 amounts.

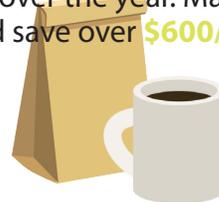
Budgeting to Save

How can you make the most of every dollar?

1. Take 30 days and track your spending – every penny! You might be surprised how much you spend.
2. Sit down with everyone in your house to make a family spending plan. Set a savings goal and celebrate when you reach your goal.
3. Save in a bank. Most basic bank accounts are a great place for emergency saving. They are FDIC insured and keep your money safe.
4. Comparison shop. Look at the lowest unit price (or price for the size of the item) get the best deal.
5. Don't shop without a list! Make lists to prioritize your spending and avoid unnecessary expenses.
6. Make use of your resources. Perhaps you can barter or trade with friends, relatives or members of your church. For example, they fix your car and you babysit.
7. Learn more about ways to save and set your own savings goal at www.AmericaSaves.org

Little Changes Save Big!

Bring a sack lunch to work and save over **\$1500** on average over the year. Make your coffee at home and save over **\$600/year** on average.



Tracking Your Spending

Do you have a hole in your pocket?

Take 30 days and track your spending – every penny! You might be surprised how much you spend.

Tracking Your Spending	
Item	Amount
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	
11)	
12)	
13)	
14)	
15)	

For **FREE** financial education classes about budgeting and credit, contact us at info@econcouncil.org.

For online resources, visit:
www.econcouncil.org
www.moneysmartweek.org
www.americasaves.org