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# Volunteer Income Tax Assistance starts Friday; refunds averaged \$2,000 last year

By Jondi

Santa

Posted: 5:58:37 PM PST

SANTA CRUZ — Starting Friday, IRS-certified volunteers will offer free tax preparation services to help workers claim more than \$57,000 last year see if they qualify for the "earned income tax credit."

Last year, 18,309 Santa Cruz County taxpayers claimed the credit, receiving an average refund of \$2,056, bringing \$37.6 million into the local economy, according to IRS spokesman David Tucker.

IRS estimates one out of every four eligible people fail to claim the earned income tax credit, either because they don't know about it, don't know they qualify or are unaware of free tax filing assistance.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is offered locally at 15 sites and facilitated by nonprofits Project SCOUT, Santa Cruz Community Ventures and United Way of Santa Cruz County.

This is the 45th year for Project SCOUT's involvement and 25th year for Community Ventures.

Irma Ranzuglia of Santa Cruz Community Ventures and Jan Shirchild of the Seniors Council pointed out refunds can help families pay expenses such as utilities, rent, child care, as well as reduce debts and start long-term saving goals.

Locations are:

- Santa Cruz Community Credit Union: 324 Front St., Santa Cruz., noon to 5 p.m. Fridays and 1 to 7 p.m. Thursdays.
- Watsonville Public Library, 275 Main St., Watsonville, 3 to 5 p.m. Fridays and 4 to 7 p.m. Mondays.
- Highlands Park Senior Center, 8500 Highway 9, Ben Lomond, 10-11 a.m. Fridays.

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- Santa Cruz Public Library, 224 Church St., Santa Cruz, upstairs, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays Feb. 2 and 16, March 2, 16 and 30 and April 6 and 3 to 6 p.m. Tuesdays, and 1 to 5 p.m. April 15.

- Louden Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays Feb. 9 and 23, March 23 and April 13 and 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Thursdays.

- Immigration Project, 406 Main St., Watsonville, 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays by appointment only. Call 831-724-5667.

- Live Oak Senior Center, 1777 Capitola Road, Santa Cruz, 10 a.m. to noon Mondays (closed April 1).

- Live Oak Family Resource Center, 1740

17th Ave., Santa Cruz, 2 to 5 p.m. Mondays by appointment only, Call 831-662-0305.

- Workforce Santa Cruz, 18 W. Beach St., Watsonville, noon to 5 p.m. Mondays.
- La Manzana Community Resources, 521 Main St., Watsonville, 10 a.m. to noon Thursdays.

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scnewsmom: Santa Cruz High won county mock trial competition. #scsnews  
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- Watsonville Senior Center, 114 E. Fifth St., Watsonville, 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesdays.
- Mid-County Seniro Center, 829 Bay Ave., Capitola, 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesdays.
- Aptos Library, 7695 Soquel Ave., Aptos, 1 to 3 p.m. Thursdays.
- Scotts Valley Senior Center, 370 Kings Village Road, Scotts Valley, 1 to 3 p.m. Thursdays.


At senior centers, senior citizens will get priority. No services will be available on Feb. 18, Presidents' Day. For information call 211 or 877-FRE-TAXS or go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or [www.scccu.org/our-community](http://www.scccu.org/our-community)


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