Note From Our President

Josh Fryday, President, Golden State Opportunity

As we launch the 2019 tax season, there is tremendous opportunity and momentum to help lift working people out of poverty.

This year, we hope to reach over two million working Californian families with the Cal EITC, including the newly expanded population of young workers between the ages of 18-24 and older workers over 65.

In addition, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s proposal to more than double California’s Earned Income Tax Credit in the coming year demonstrates the importance of this program to lifting up working people. His commitment to continue expanding this program is helping fuel our urgency to effectively reach those who can benefit from this important program.

This year, we will also continue to find new, innovative and creative ways to leverage our growing statewide network to help struggling workers take full advantage of all California’s anti-poverty programs.

We have the tools to lift working people out of poverty and help them cover their basic needs. Let’s make sure everyone has access to these tools. Join us!

Sincerely,

In the News

“Governor doubles down on one of best tools to fight poverty”

By JOE SANBERG and JOSH FRYDAY

This is the year to double down on bold initiatives so that hard working, low-income Californians have the chance to forge a better future – for themselves and for a stronger California.

Click here to read full article: https://bayareane.ws/2TXk1qH

“Governor doubles down on one of best tools to fight poverty”

By JOE SANBERG

Americans are working longer hours, for less money and fewer benefits. For them, the problem isn’t finding employment—it’s that a job alone is no longer enough to provide for a family or even stay out of poverty. That’s why I’ve spent the last four years working to expand and promote the earned-income tax credit, or EITC.

Click here to read full article: https://bit.ly/2sJovX7
Gov. Gavin Newsom Doubles Down on Cal EITC

In Gov. Gavin Newsom’s State of the State address, he noted that “when it comes to making life in California more affordable, cost is only one side of the equation, the other is income.” Newsom is looking to give workers “a cost of living refund” and boost incomes dramatically by expanding the Cal EITC.

In his 2019 budget, Newsom proposed more than doubling the Cal EITC to $1 billion. The expansion would offer an additional $500 to EITC-eligible families with children under six. The income limits would also be increased to reach all full-time workers making $15 an hour, reaching an estimated one million additional people.

The increase for families is especially significant because research shows that for every additional $3,000 in income a family receives before a child reaches age 6, their annual earnings increase by 17 percent between ages 25 and 37.

We applaud Gov. Newsom’s commitment to expanding the Cal EITC, as it is one of the strongest tools to lift workers out of poverty. Our organization is excited to work with legislators in both parties this session to ensure families keep more of what they make and especially the one million more Californians who are eligible for this tax credit.

New This Year

Last year, the Cal EITC covered self-employed workers for the first time, and now we are excited to kick off 2019 with a brand new expansion of the Cal EITC. Starting this year, young adult workers age 18 to 24 and older adult workers age 65 and over are eligible for the Cal EITC for the first time. Using our aggressive campaigning and proven multi-layered approach, we hope to reach more than two million low-income families in 2019, an increase of more than 700,000 from last year.

Public Benefits Approach

We will be coordinating outreach efforts with existing benefits that have helped millions of low-income Californians, allowing us to get even more of the right resources to workers. Starting this year, we are excited to launch our Public Benefits Approach!

If you are eligible for the Cal EITC, you are likely eligible for other benefits, as well - unfortunately, many of those additional benefits are underutilized. For example, while more than 4 in 10 students at Cal State and the University of California reported experiencing food insecurity, very few receive CalFresh benefits, according to the California Budget and Policy Center. With college students newly eligible for the Cal EITC, this presents an excellent opportunity to promote both programs on campuses across the state. With a launch event at Santa Barbara City College, we’re planning an all-hands-on-deck effort to help working students understand they’re not struggling in isolation, and that help is available.
Webpages

Visit CalEITC4Me.org to find our newly updated calculator, VITA site finder, and partners page. Our updated partners page features a brand new form for organizations interested in assessing the ways in which they can engage with us, including co-hosting events or webinars, co-branding our collateral materials, or committing to sharing our resources and updates on their social media platforms.

Tools and Resources page

Starting this year, we will be introducing our materials in additional languages. In addition to English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, our materials will be newly available in Russian, Korean, and Tagalog.

Webinars

In an effort to further engage with our partners, we are hosting webinars on the first Friday of each month that will provide updates on our work, upcoming events, as well as feature partners throughout the year. For more information, and to sign up, visit our partners page at https://caleitc4me.org/be-our-partner/?id=2019NL.

Events

CalEITC4Me and our partner organizations are off to a roaring start in the 2019 tax season with hundreds of free tax prep events planned or executed in the first quarter of the year spanning the state. At these events, filers can find out if they’re eligible to receive both the state and federal EITC as well as connect with other services for which they may qualify.

We’re also hosting five text message trainings that will reach 50 community partners across the state as we prepare to send three million targeted text messages to EITC-eligible workers throughout California.

To participate in our March 1 text training webinar, email our Texting Manager: Sebastien Chaubard, sebastien@goldenstateopportunity.org.

From Our Partners

In 2019, the California State Treasurer’s office is launching CalSavers, a new retirement program for private-sector workers. CalSavers will allow workers whose employers don’t offer a retirement plan to save for retirement through a simple payroll deduction. The accounts will be portable and employees will be able to contribute throughout their career even if they change jobs.

As part of our mission to leverage our outreach efforts to help EITC-eligible workers benefit from the full spectrum of California social welfare offerings, it only makes sense that we spread awareness of this potent new tool for financial security.

We are excited to partner this tax season with EARN, a national nonprofit helping families prosper through savings. Close to half of all Americans cannot access $400 in an emergency without going into debt or selling something. EARN’s savings technology programs help people take control of their financial lives.

CalEITC4Me is partnering with EARN’s SaverLife financial coaching platform to offer prizes for people taking the SaverLife pledge to save part of their tax refunds! Make a commitment to save and you could win instantly.
Meet Our New Team Members!

As 2019 promises to be our most impactful year to date, and in order to meet our ambitious goals for the year, we’re excited to introduce new team members!

Sandra Lyon
State Director

Lyon has vast experience working with and providing strategic counsel to principals, elected officials, political candidates, and organizations at the federal, state and local level. Her portfolio of work in electoral politics, operational management, and event production spans nearly two decades.

Lyon’s background includes work at the Democratic National Committee and state party committees in Florida and Connecticut, leading national direct mail firms, and the American Federation of Teachers. She served as the national director of President Barack Obama’s direct mail operation in 2012 and on the creative team of Obama’s 2013 inaugural committee. She most recently served as Managing Director of the national Need to Impeach campaign, based in San Francisco.

Morgan True
Communications Manager

A Seattle native, True graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and went on to spend a half-decade as an investigative reporter in New England, mostly with the public interest nonprofit VTDigger. More recently True worked as a strategic communications consultant for nonprofits, including the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont.

Selena Lomeli
Inland Organizer

Lomeli graduated from UCLA with a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science, concentration in International Relations, and minor in civic engagement. Lomeli served as office administrator to a legal aid non-profit where she helped coordinate free legal clinics throughout Los Angeles County. In addition, Lomeli has been actively involved with grassroots campaigns as a political organizer including Gil Cisneros’s 39th congressional district. She also worked for Mayor Eric Garcetti in the Gang Reduction and Youth Development Program for Los Angeles Office of Public Safety.

Abigail Kilcullen
Finance and Program Associate

Kilcullen is a native of the Washington D.C. area, having moved out to the Bay Area in August of 2017. She graduated from Boston College with a degree in Applied Psychology and Human Development, minoring in Sociology. As a way to channel her passion for social justice, she went on to complete a year of volunteer service in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps upon graduation, working as a Housing Rights Advocate at the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, a nonprofit law firm in San Jose. Afterwards, she spent a few months doing prospect research at the Lieber Institute of Brain Development.