Note From Our President

Josh Fryday, President, Golden State Opportunity

We have lots of activity to share with you in this newsletter, including two pieces of exciting news!

First, to date, nearly 2 million low-income workers claimed over $350 million through California’s Earned Income Tax Credit (Cal EITC) during the 2019 tax season. That’s a whopping 41% increase in claims over all of last year. These numbers will continue to rise as our year-round EITC outreach continues.

Second, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature reached a deal to more than DOUBLE the Cal EITC next year making it a $1 billion program. Now we’ll just need to make sure everyone claims the new available money!

We look forward to continuing our work together to implement innovative and creative ways to help struggling workers take full advantage of all California’s anti-poverty programs.

Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Note From Our President

We also know the benefits of the EITC extend well beyond just the finances, because studies show that children in households that receive the Earned Income Tax Credit do better in school, are more likely to attend college, and have better health outcomes,” said State Controller Betty Yee during a recent webinar we hosted for our partners.

In the News

A Year-round Opportunity To Fight Poverty in California

By JOSH FRYDAY

“For most Californians the stress of mid-April has subsided as tax-season has ended. At CalEITC4Me our work to fight poverty is just beginning. Most don’t realize that hard-working Californians can claim the Earned Income Tax Credit they’ve earned at anytime throughout the year.”

San Francisco Chronicle

California lawmakers pass tax change to help working poor

California lawmakers have agreed to reduce business tax write-offs to raise more than a billion dollars a year to pay for an expanded tax credit for the working poor.

Click here to read full article
New Campaign Launch: MyPublicBenefits.org

Too many Californians are struggling to make ends meet, yet many aren’t getting assistance from the public benefits programs that are intended to give them a boost when it comes to affording life’s basic needs such as food, health care, housing and transportation.

Building off our success promoting the Cal EITC with our CalEITC4Me campaign, we’re applying the same proven outreach and education tools to other safety-net services in California, such as food assistance, through a new website, MyPublicBenefits.org.

People who qualify for the Cal EITC are also likely eligible for CalFresh food assistance and a range of other public benefits. By creating a a new website with direct links to these programs, we hope to raise awareness that a suite of complementary public benefits exist to help propel people toward financial security and general well-being.

In conjunction with promoting the new site, we’ll be rolling out a pilot program in Los Angeles by working with community groups that could benefit the most to host outreach and enrollment events, with a special focus on CalFresh. That’s because starting in June 2019, 500,000 Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries in California are now newly eligible for CalFresh. Of that total, 200,000 are in Los Angeles County!

Year-round Outreach

Even though April 15th has passed, it’s not too late to file. Eligible recipients can still claim the credit throughout the year!

This is why Golden State Opportunity’s year-round organizing model focuses on increasing our outreach, education, and advocacy efforts post-Tax Day so we can reach the maximum number of families and individuals who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit. As a partner, you can help us continue reaching eligible families and individuals who have difficulty accessing much needed services throughout the year!
In March of this year, we partnered with California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom and United Way Fresno & Madera Counties to put on a family resource fair with more than 20 local community partners, and a food drive distributed groceries to more than 250 people. We had close to 500 attendees throughout the day stop by to learn about the Cal EITC.

“Every dollar matters for working mothers doing all they can to care for their families. This tax credit has a positive impact on not only their health and well-being, but the health and well-being of their children, too,” Siebel Newsom said during her remarks at the event.

This event brought together a diverse cross-section of Fresno, including families, local officials, police and firefighters, as well as community groups such as Planned Parenthood and Junior Achievement. At a roundtable, Siebel Newsom and our team were able to hear directly from local mothers about the challenges they face.

We partnered with Asm. Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-San Bernardino), a long-time EITC champion, as well as the United Way and the San Bernardino Unified School District to host a summit to help dissect how poverty manifests in the Inland Empire. More than 100 community members came out to join the discussion.

“Currently just over 345,000 people in San Bernardino County are living in poverty. These are our family members, neighbors, and friends,” Reyes told the attendees. “I made it my mission this year to do two things: ensure everyone is included at the table and ensure everyone receives their fair share. Today, we take one step closer to this mission.”

Blanca Lopez, CalEITC4Me Inland Region Campaign Director, announced new grants to community groups for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance events that will allow us to continue helping workers file their taxes for free and claim their Cal EITC refund. The summit was a powerful reminder of why we do this work, and how it impacts the communities we serve.
Back-to-School Outreach

We know that children whose families receive a boost in income from EITC perform better in school and have better health. We also know that more than $9 out of $10 Cal EITC dollars go to families with children. Parents are able to use their EITC refund to pay for basic needs like food and school supplies for their children. Because the EITC is so beneficial for many families, GSO is once again partnering with school districts, faith-based groups, and regional partners to spread the word, so that families are able to put money back in their pockets for everyday needs.

The 2020 Census

The work being done for the 2020 Census is critical to ensuring that every Californian receives the care and services that they need. The results of the 2020 Census will directly impact our state’s most vulnerable individuals for the next 10 years, as the count designates the amount of funding the government puts into public benefits programs in each county across the state.

In order to provide proper access to housing, medical, and other services to low-income individuals, we need an accurate count. GSO will be partnering with organizations throughout the state to provide our extensive experience running a multi-layered outreach and education campaign using sophisticated targeting strategies to reach those “Hard-to-Count” (HTC) populations. Stay tuned for updates on our 2020 Census involvement!

From Our Partners...

Currently, two million — or one out of five — children in California live in poverty, and 450,000 live in deep poverty. That’s the highest child poverty rate of any state in the nation.

We joined the End Child Poverty in California (ECPCA) campaign for their bus tour across the state to push a legislative agenda developed by the state’s Lifting Children and Families out of Poverty Task Force. Expanding the Cal EITC is a major part of that agenda, along with other targeted proposals to end deep child poverty and cut overall child poverty in half during the next five years. Other groups participating in the tour included CA Interfaith Coalition, Children’s Defense Fund CA, Dolores Huerta Foundation, Mission Economic Development Agency, Western Center for Law & Poverty, Youth Policy Institute.

At stops from Chula Vista to Sacramento, Californians who grew up in poverty or are struggling with it today, spoke about how it has impacted their lives, and public officials, including Gov. Gavin Newsom, attended media events to push the task force’s legislative plan.

CalEITC4Me was honored to participate in this deeply moving road trip, and to have the opportunity to share how the Cal EITC plays a major role in lifting children out of poverty by making work pay better for parents.