



Tax Researcher

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David Letterman has his “Top 10” list every weeknight. But did you know that the Internal Revenue Service also has their own lists of ten, but on a less frequent schedule?

TEN THINGS THE IRS WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT

1. If you receive a letter or notice from the IRS which leads you to believe someone may have fraudulently used your Social Security Number, respond immediately to the name and address or phone number printed on the IRS notice.
2. If you receive a letter from the IRS that indicates more than one tax return was filed for you, this may be a sign that your SSN was used fraudulently.
3. Another sign that you may be the target of identity theft is an IRS letter indicating you received wages from an employer unknown to you.
4. The IRS has a department which deals specifically with identity theft issues. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is available if you have been in contact with the IRS about an identity theft issue and have not achieved a resolution.
5. You can contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit by calling the Identity Theft Hotline at 800-908-4490 Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm local time (Alaska and Hawaii follow Pacific Standard Time).
6. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is also available if you believe your identity may be at risk of being stolen due to a lost or stolen purse or wallet or due to questionable activity on your credit card or your credit report.
7. The IRS never initiates communication with taxpayers about their tax account through emails. If you receive an e-mail or find a Web site you think is pretending to be the IRS, forward the e-mail or Web site URL to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov.

8. The IRS has many more resources available to help inform taxpayers about identity theft on the IRS Web site at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov). On [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) you can access information on how to report scams and bogus IRS Web sites. You can also visit the IRS Identity Theft Resource Page, which you can find by typing Identity Theft Resource Page in the search box on the [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) home page.
9. The Federal Trade Commission is also available to assist taxpayers with identity theft issues. You can reach them at 877-ID-THEFT (877-438-4338).
10. Visit [OnGuardOnline.gov](https://www.onguardonline.gov) for protection tips from the federal government and the technology industry.

TEN THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The Earned Income Tax Credit is for people who work, but have lower incomes. Here are some things you may not know about the EITC.

1. A quarter of all taxpayers that qualify don't claim the credit. The Earned Income Tax Credit is money you can use to make a difference in your life. Just because you didn't qualify last year, doesn't mean you won't this year. As your financial situation changes from year-to-year you should review the EITC eligibility rules to determine if you qualify.
2. If you qualify, it could be worth up to \$4,800 this year. If you qualify, you could pay less federal tax or even get a refund. The EITC is based on the amount of your earned income and whether or not there are qualifying children in your household.
3. Your filing status cannot be Married Filing Separately. Your filing status must be married filing jointly, head of household, qualifying widow or single.
4. You must have a valid Social Security Number. You, your spouse (if filing a joint return) and any qualifying child listed on Schedule EIC must have a valid SSN issued by the Social Security Administration.
5. You must have earned income. This credit is called the "earned income" tax credit because you must work and have earned income to qualify. You have earned income if you work for someone who pays you wages or you are self-employed.
6. Married couples and single people without kids may qualify. If you do not have qualifying children, you must also meet the age and residency requirements as well as dependency rules.
7. Special rules apply to members of the U.S. Armed Forces in combat zones. Members of the military can elect to include their nontaxable combat pay in earned income for the EITC. If you make the election, the combat pay remains nontaxable, but you must include in earned income all nontaxable combat pay you receive.

8. You can visit the IRS Web site to estimate your credit online. It's easy to determine whether you qualify for the EITC. The EITC Assistant, an interactive tool available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov), removes the guesswork from eligibility rules. Just answer a few simple questions to find out if you qualify and to estimate the amount of your EITC. You will see the results of your responses right away.
9. E-file programs will figure the credit for you. If you are preparing your taxes electronically, the software program you use will figure the credit for you. If you qualify for the credit you may also be eligible for Free File. You can access Free File through the IRS Web site at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).
10. Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit. You don't have to wait until you file your tax return to receive your EITC. Advance EITC is a portion of the EITC that qualified workers may be able to receive in advance payments, added to their wages throughout the year. For more information, see Form W-5, Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate.

For more information about the EITC and Advance EITC see IRS Publication 596, Earned Income Credit. This publication (available in both English and Spanish) and Form W-5 can be downloaded from [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) or ordered by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676).

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