



News Release

Maryland Comptroller Creates State Campaign to Increase Tax Credit Uptake in Maryland

Preliminary research to inform statewide outreach campaign

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (July 17, 2025) – Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman, alongside Governor Wes Moore, House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, Carmel Martin, Special Secretary for the Governor’s Office for Children, and researchers from the Urban Institute and Tax Policy Center, announced a new state initiative to encourage more Marylanders to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). At least 99,000 eligible tax filers in Maryland did not claim the state EITC during the 2023 tax season.

“This is more than a program — it’s an investment in Maryland’s future. Every family that claims the EITC is a family with greater stability, more opportunities, and increased potential to contribute to our communities. Every child whose family benefits from these credits has a better chance at educational success and economic mobility,” Comptroller Lierman said. “Together, we’re not just administering tax policy — we’re opening doors, creating opportunities, and building the foundation for a more prosperous Maryland where every resident can thrive.”



Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman discussed the agency's commitment to helping eligible Marylanders claim the EITC during a press conference Thursday.

In January, the Office of the Comptroller launched the **Earned It** campaign, which aimed to educate Marylanders about tax credit eligibility and how to claim tax credits. The Comptroller's Office developed accessible, streamlined information about the EITC and CTC in the form of fact sheets, fliers, emails, social media posts, and website communications. The Governor's Office of Children helped to coordinate across state agencies, including the Maryland Department of Health, Department of Labor, Department of Human Services, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, and the Department of Civic Service and Innovation to disseminate these materials to the public. This collective effort resulted in 3.2 million touchpoints and more than 33,000 visits to the Comptroller's Earned It webpage. Tax data for the current tax year (TY 2024) reveals a 7.8% increase in EITC filers since TY 2023.

"At a time when we see the federal government abandoning working families and children in poverty, Maryland is stepping up," Governor Moore said. "The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are two of the most effective poverty-fighting programs we have. In partnership with Comptroller Lierman, we are studying the data to ensure that every Marylander who is eligible for these critical financial supports can access them, easily and effectively."

"The Moore-Miller Administration is working hard to ensure that government works for people. We know there are busy working families who may be receiving some resources from the state, but don't know about all the assistance that is available, including through tax credits," said Secretary Martin. "Through the Earned It campaign, we leveraged existing state agency networks – reaching people through American Job Centers, healthcare consumer assistance sites, and local departments of social services in order to improve awareness and utilization of the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits by meeting Marylanders where they are."

The Comptroller of Maryland has partnered with The Urban Institute and Tax Policy Center to lead a Maryland-focused research project around tax credit uptake, to build upon the initial success of the Earned It Campaign. The Urban Institute has been examining anonymized tax data and demographic patterns, along with convening stakeholder interviews and focus groups with tax filers in Maryland to identify who is missing out on key tax credits like the EITC, barriers preventing Maryland residents from accessing state tax benefits, as well as identifying the most effective forms of outreach, community engagement, and the tax filing supports to help increase the uptake of tax benefits for eligible Marylanders. Preliminary findings will inform how the Office of the Comptroller will deploy funding for the second year of its Earned It campaign.

Phase 2 of the Earned It campaign will be funded with over \$300,000 provided by the General Assembly and Governor to increase awareness of individual income tax credits and free filing resources that Marylanders are entitled to, and to improve equitable administration of the tax code.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are some of the strongest anti-poverty tools we have to make life more affordable to Maryland's working families,"

Speaker Jones said. “The General Assembly is proud to support Comptroller Lierman’s efforts to improve access to these critical resources and ensure that all Marylanders can receive the benefits they are entitled to.”

The Urban Institute is conducting research with guidance from an advisory group, comprised of government leaders, tax practitioners, policymakers, and others involved in promoting tax credits and administering programs for low- to moderate-income Marylanders.

“Our research approach enabled us to examine both barriers to and solutions for improving access to Maryland’s EITC and CTC,” shared Luisa Godinez-Puig and Aravind Boddupalli, senior research associates at the Urban Institute who co-led the research project. “We used data to quantify the uptake gaps and conducted stakeholder interviews with state- and local-level government and non-profit leaders involved in tax filing and benefits outreach to learn from their experiences. Most importantly, we spoke directly with diverse taxpayers across Maryland to hear, in their own words, what barriers they face and what solutions they propose to improve the tax credit claims process.”

Key findings to date include:

- Most eligible Marylanders who may be missing out on the state EITC live in six counties: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Kent County, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County. These counties have high representation of underserved populations like single parents, nontraditional caregivers, non-citizens, Black Latine, and Asian American and Pacific Islander households. Credit uptake patterns suggest these communities may face distinct barriers in accessing tax benefits, including a lack of information and inaccurate information.
- Barriers to claiming tax credits include:
 1. Not knowing where to go for tax preparation services.
 2. Difficulty paying for tax preparation services
 3. Fear of owing money or penalties.
 4. Complexity of filing a tax return or an amendment.
- Tax information should be disseminated year-round in partnership with local organizations, trusted messengers, and other government entities.
- Outreach efforts to inform residents about tax benefits must be accompanied by the availability of quality, free tax filing support.
- There is a general awareness of *federal* tax earned income and child tax credits, but limited awareness of state-level tax credits among Marylanders.
- Marylanders want to be empowered with more knowledge about tax policy and the tax filing process.
- Many research participants experienced fraud or had negative experiences with paid and free tax preparers which fueled distrust in the tax system.

The Office of the Comptroller will engage in several activities identified by the Urban Institute in their preliminary findings, including:

- **Pairing outreach with easily accessible tax filing services:** The Office of the Comptroller has focused on providing multiple modes of tax filing available to Marylanders who may not be able to afford expensive tax preparation services. In 2024, Comptroller Lierman secured funding from the Maryland General Assembly to provide additional funding for low-income tax clinics and continues to support long-term partners like the CASH Campaign each tax season.
- **Continuing to leverage partnerships with other government agencies and community partners to reach eligible Marylanders with tax information year-round.** The agency will design and deploy targeted communication materials, guided by findings from the Urban Institute's focus groups with unique to varied demographic groups and geographies, through new and established partnerships to enhance outreach and tax credit uptake through Phase 2 of the Earned It Campaign.
- **Empower residents through education programs on tax filing and tax credits.**
- The [Stop Scam Tax Preparers Act](#), which became law in 2024, allows the Comptroller's Field Enforcement Bureau to **pursue financial penalties against individuals engaging in scams and unregistered tax preparation services.**

Funding for the research project is provided by: the Annie E. Casey Foundation, T. Rowe Price Foundation, Greater Washington Community Foundation, and Abell Foundation. A comprehensive final report from the Urban Institute will be released in December.



Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman poses with (left to right) Aravind Boddupalli, senior researcher for the Urban Institute, Governor Wes Moore, Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, Special Secretary for the Governor's Office for Children Carmel Martin, and Luisa Godinez-Puig, senior researcher for the Urban Institute.

###

Media Contacts

Robyne McCullough

rmccullough@marylandtaxes.gov

410-980-0139 (cell)

Barbara Sauers

bsauers@marylandtaxes.gov

410-212-9414 (cell)

Comptroller of Maryland, 80 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, United States