

*Type of Agency/Organization Coordination/Operating the Initiative:*  
State Government

***Mission/Goal of the Initiative:***

IRS figures showed 352,000 Indiana taxpayers claimed the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in tax year 2000, receiving \$560 million in refunds. Using this data as a foundation, the Indiana Family and Social Service Agency (FSSA) developed “county profiles” to show the effect of the EITC on each of Indiana’s 92 counties. Using IRS estimates that approximate how many people qualify for EITC but don’t claim it, FSSA discovered that as many as 117,000 people statewide failed to claim the credit in tax year 2000, even though they qualified. As a result, FSSA began the 2003 Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign.

By using the average refund in Indiana of \$1,531, the agency estimated that as much as \$180 million went unclaimed in 2000. County-specific data was then figured to develop county profiles, which were used to identify areas in need of the greatest outreach. Secretary Hamilton and FSSA’s communications staff used the profiles to steer media and agency partners to specific information on their counties.

***Components of the Initiative:***

***Teamwork:*** FSSA collaborated with the state’s Department of Health, Department of Education and Department of Workforce Development to circulate EITC information across the state. As a result, outreach information was sent to statewide Workforce Development offices, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) offices and Indiana’s school superintendents and principals.

***Public Service:*** FSSA sent one-time notices to TANF recipients promoting the EITC and telling them how to apply. Similar notices were printed on child support checks throughout the tax season. The agency’s 92 county public assistance offices also received EITC outreach kits, allowing caseworkers to further educate public assistance clients about the credit. Additionally, approximately 32,000 envelope stuffers were distributed to FSSA employees and providers, including childcare providers and Section 8 tenants and landlords.

***Community:*** Using a network of local advocates, providers and employers, the agency mailed 350 letters to state legislators, private and public universities and service organizations urging them to educate their employees, clients and community members about the EITC and local VITA sites. Secretary Hamilton contacted a handful of these agencies (Association of Township Trustees, Association of Indiana Counties, Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, Indiana Association of County Commissioners, Indiana Township Association, Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Urban League of Northwest Indiana, Indianapolis Urban League) as a follow-up to the outreach letter. The follow-up resulted in EITC information being disseminated to communities across the state, via association newsletters.

FSSA was a partner in the state's largest EITC community partnership, the Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign, with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Mayor Bart Peterson's Office and Congresswoman Julia Carson's Office. The campaign launched its initiative to promote the EITC using promotional fliers, bus ads and cooperation with banks, businesses and other community social service agencies. The campaign also created "Super Saturdays," where taxpayers visited VITA sites to have their taxes prepared for free. The city of Fort Wayne, the second largest city, followed FSSA's lead and created its own EITC campaign. And in Scott County, community groups and FSSA paired up to promote the EITC among some of the state's more rural residents.

***Media:***

During the 2003 tax season, Secretary Hamilton generated 58 stories/interviews in 40 different outlets on television, radio and in newspapers about EITC as he traveled the state promoting the federal and state EITC and local VITA sites. Visits to local newspaper editorial boards were most effective, as were sound bites or short interviews with radio stations in the state's largest markets. FSSA also created a public service announcement that aired on the state's largest radio network, Network Indiana.

***Internet:***

FSSA created an EITC website that included county profile information, as well as EITC tax forms, voluntary income tax assistance sites and links to outreach kits, available in both Spanish and English.