



## State of New Jersey

Department of the Treasury

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### Now's the Time: Early New Jersey Tax Filers Get Quicker Refunds, Access to Programs That Benefit Low-Income Residents

*Taxpayers Can Check Box to Donate to Community Food Pantries, Prevent Hunger*

**TRENTON** – State Treasurer Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff, Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez and Agriculture Secretary Douglas Fisher want income-tax payers to know that filing early speeds refunds and can help New Jersey's most-vulnerable residents access important benefits.

"Low-income residents can speed up refunds or payments from the Earned Income Tax Credit program," Treasurer Sidamon-Eristoff said. "One great way to make tax filing easier and faster is to take advantage of Division of Taxation's free, online resources."

Commissioner Velez pointed out that New Jersey makes it easy at tax time for low-income filers to enroll their children in the NJ FamilyCare program. Filers can simply check a box on their tax forms that indicates they have uninsured children at home.

"The Express Lane Eligibility Initiative helps children get the immunizations, regular checkups, prescriptions and dental care they need to grow up healthy and strong," Velez said. "So far, we estimate 5,000 children have joined the program because of the check-off program." For information on FamilyCare, see [www.njfamilycare.org](http://www.njfamilycare.org).

This year, New Jersey taxpayers again have the opportunity to donate a portion of their 2011 income tax refund or make a contribution to the Community Food Pantry Fund, through a check-off on state income tax forms, Secretary Fisher said. The fund, administered by the Department of Agriculture, is used exclusively for food purchases and distributed to NJDA-contracted emergency feeding operations through the State Food Purchase Program.

"Hunger continues to be a major issue for many New Jersey families this year," Secretary Fisher said. "The Community Food Pantry Fund check-off is a convenient way for taxpayers to donate and know that their money is going toward direct relief to those in need." Last year, \$33,495 was donated by taxpayers. For more about the State Food Purchase Program, [www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/fooddistrib/foodpurchaseprogram.html](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/fooddistrib/foodpurchaseprogram.html).

Filing accurately and earlier is easier than ever before for everyone, regardless of income, Treasurer Sidamon-Eristoff said.

“The Division of Taxation has assembled valuable information online that can make it quicker and less stressful to file a return correctly the first time,” he said.

To quickly link to New Jersey income tax resources go to Division of Taxation’s home page at [www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/) and click on “Important Information for Tax Year 2011” at the top of the page. The site is open to taxpayers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visitors can access forms, instructions, and help guides as well as get answers to their questions. Filers also can avoid delays and penalties by using this checklist of frequently made tax mistakes:

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/pdf/2011ReturnPrep.pdf>

“One common error is to assume that New Jersey and the Federal government use the same rules in determining income,” Sidamon-Eristoff said. “In many cases, the amount of taxable income for New Jersey purposes differs greatly from the Federal number.”

Like the federal government, Sidamon-Eristoff reminded taxpayers, New Jersey has an Earned Income Tax Credit that pays working families, either by increasing a refund check or providing a direct payment for low-income families with members who work.

“Most New Jersey residents who are eligible and file for a Federal earned income credit can also receive the New Jersey credit,” Treasurer Sidamon-Eristoff explained. “The New Jersey Earned Income Tax Credit, which can be as much as \$1,150, reduces the amount of New Jersey tax due and may also give the filer a refund, even if they don’t owe any tax to the State.” Information on the NJEITC can be found at

<http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/eitcinfo.shtml>

New Jersey also provides a number of ways that senior citizen (65 years or older) or disabled taxpayers can reduce their taxable income. Each can claim an additional exemption of \$1,000. In addition, seniors and disabled taxpayers may be eligible for income exclusions which reduce their taxable income from pensions, annuities, IRAs, and other sources. Information on exemptions, exclusions, and other topics is available on the Division of Taxation’s Web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/freqqiti.shtml>

Taxpayers who need help completing their returns can contact the Division of Taxation’s Customer Service Center by calling (609) 292-6400. They can also visit one of the Division’s Regional Offices located throughout the State. A list of the offices, as well as directions to the locations, can be found on the Division’s Web site at [www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ot1.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ot1.shtml)

Taxation Regional Offices are located at the following addresses:

**Camden**..... 2 Riverside Drive, Suite 200

**Fair Lawn**..... 22-08 Route 208 South

**Neptune**..... 1828 West Lake Avenue, 3rd floor

**Newark**..... 124 Halsey Street, 2nd Floor

**Northfield**..... 1915-A New Road (Route 9)

**Somerville**..... 75 Veterans Memorial Drive East, Suite 103

**Trenton**..... 50 Barrack Street, 1st Floor Lobby

Division representatives are available by phone or in person 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Taxpayers have until Tuesday, April 17, to file their 2011 returns and pay any tax due. Those who request an extension will have until October 15 to file their returns.