

A third of eligible Mon County residents miss out on tax credit

BY JUDY BEAVAN

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Working families have not taken advantage of the federal earned-income-tax credit, with 34 percent in Monongalia County missing out on the extra tax.

The North Central EITC Coalition is mobilizing a group of volunteers who will be trained to help those families file income taxes and claim the credit due.

Barbara Evans-Fleischauer, who chairs the promotional committee for the EITC Coalition, said Tuesday in a meeting with *The Dominion Post* Editorial Board that the group starts offering tax assistance and tele-file opportunities for low-income families in late January, in the hopes of reducing the number of families who are missing out on the credit.

"We started a little late. We found that lower-income families file early, and we missed the opportunity to get the word out. We are starting early now, in the hopes of training volunteers who will be



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Barbara Evans-Fleischauer discusses the earned income tax credit with *The Dominion Post* Editorial Board.

certified to file income tax for those families," she said.

Josh DeFelice, from Community Action, said, "My goal is to have as many volunteers as our demand needs for our free assistance. Usually low-income families need their (tax) return back as soon as possible, and our goal is to help that along."

"More volunteers are needed,"

DeFelice said. "That way we can accommodate those even on a walk-in basis, instead of appointments."

Both Fleischauer and DeFelice agree that the IRS forms refer the taxpayer to a worksheet to determine eligibility for the earned-income-tax credit or the child tax credit.

"Those are individuals who avoid the tax-credit worksheets because the sheets are, well, intimidating," DeFelice said.

"I feel that the 34 percent are doing their own taxes, or if they didn't make enough, not filing, figuring it's safer that way, and not claiming the credit, even though they are due it," he said.

"Because," he said, "if they fill out the tax credit, it may come out that they are owed a refund of \$2,000 to \$4,000 and they figure that's not possible, so they don't file."

The committee expects to meet in September to finalize plans to recruit volunteers.

Info: North Central Community Action at 291-6795.