Resource Companion: LIEAP & Free Tax Filing Resources

Integrated Care Rounds: Care Model Priorities for 2025

January 16, 2025

Document purpose:

This document is a companion to the shared slides from the Integrated Care Rounds on Care Model Priorities for 2025 on January 16, 2025. This document includes information about the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and free tax filing resources discussed during the January ICR.

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Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides one-time annual assistance with energy bills via payments made directly to vendors on households' behalf. Payments usually range from $300-500 depending on household size. **Applications are open to non-disabled, non-elderly applicants from January 1-March 31 or until funds run out.** Encourage families to apply ASAP before LIEAP funds are exhausted!

- Eligibility:
  - At least one US citizen or eligible non-citizen within the home (including citizen children of ineligible parents)
  - Household income ≤130% of FPL
  - **Note:** Households DO NOT need to be behind on bills to get help
- How to apply:
  - Online via ePASS (preferred option)
  - By phone or in person through county Dept. of Social Services

How Does Filing Taxes Help Child and Family Health?

Tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit can meaningfully boost working families' incomes. However, many low-income families either do not file at all or spend a lot of money preparing their returns. Low-income families have access to FREE online and in-person filing options, but many of these resources reach capacity quickly. Don't wait—help families make a plan to file their taxes for free this tax season.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Programs

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs offer free, in-person tax preparation support for low- and middle-income NC residents. **VITA spots fill up fast!** Help families gather needed documentation and find and make an appointment (or plan a walk-in visit) at a nearby VITA site.

- Alamance County (United Way of Alamance): Book online here or call 336-203-3332. Spanish-language appts. available on Thursdays. **Limited to Alamance County residents**.
- Durham (and Wake) County (Reinvestment Partners): Book online here or call 919-286-1822. Spanish-language help available at Raleigh Centro para Familias Hispanas location. **Open to all regardless of county.**
- Granville County (Granville County Libraries): **Walk-ins only** at South Branch (Creedmoor) on Mondays from 5-8 pm, Jan. 27-April 14 and at Thornton Branch (Oxford) on Saturdays from 10 am-2 pm, Jan. 25-April 12. **Open to all regardless of county.**
- Orange County (Orange County Department on Aging): Book online here or call Laura Prinzhorn, 919-245-4240. Spanish-language help available. **Open to all regardless of county**.

For other locations, use this IRS tool to search for active VITA programs by zip code: https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/jsp/vita.jsp

Tax Preparation Assistance for Older Adults

Many InCK children live with grandparents or other caregivers who qualify for senior services, including tax filing help specifically for older adults.

- Durham County (Durham County Public Library): **Walk-ins only. For Durham Co. residents aged 50+.** Walk-in sessions begin January 29th and continue through April 11th. See website for details.
- Granville County (Granville County Senior Center): **For Granville Co. residents aged 60+ only**. Call 919-693-1930 to schedule an appointment
- Vance County (Vance County Senior Center): **Vance Co. residents aged 55+ only**. Call 252-430-0257 to schedule an appointment

Free Online Filing Services

Ideal for families who feel comfortable filing *without* in-person support.

- Direct File: Newly-available IRS tool allowing many taxpayers to **file state AND federal taxes directly with the IRS for free**. Opens in late January. Check eligibility to use Direct File here.
- GetYourRefund: Free online tax filing program for families making less than $66,000/year. Filers receive support from IRS-certified tax preparers (services available in Spanish). Opens at **1 pm on January 31.** Sign up to be notified once the service is live or visit GetYourRefund.org on or after January 31.
- MyFreeTaxes: Free online self-filing option for people making less than $79,000/year. Does **NOT** include any filing assistance. Opens in late January.