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LEGAL SERVICES NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON 2024 FEDERAL INCOME TAX RETURNS

EDISON — Details for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans about filing federal income tax returns for 2024 are the focal point of the latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ).

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” is accessible online at www.lsnjlaw.org.

The focus on key aspects of federal income taxes is particularly timely since the April 15, 2025 tax filing deadline is fast approaching. The newsletter stresses that even though many people may have had incomes in 2024 below the threshold required for filing a tax return, they may want to file anyway by the April 15 deadline because they could still qualify for a refund or some other financial benefits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Potential recipients of the EITC must have incomes below \$66,819 and be citizens or resident aliens with Social Security numbers.

The newsletter includes a chart people can use to determine if they are required to file a return, as well as definitions and qualifying aspects of key IRS benefits and terms.

Another point stressed in the publication is that people with incomes under \$67,000 should avoid going to paid tax preparers because they can get such help free from Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) and others by going to Get Free Tax Prep Help at <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep> or calling 1-800-906-9887.

Additionally, anyone with adjusted gross incomes under \$84,000 can qualify for commercial tax preparation software and have their returns prepared and filed at no cost. Details can be found at <https://www.irs.gov/filing/irs-free-file-do-your-taxes-for-free>.

Meanwhile, individuals who need help with tax issues also may financially qualify for assistance from LSNJ's Tax Legal Assistance Project (TLAP) by calling 1-888-576-5529 or visiting www.lsnjlawhotline.org.

The newsletter advises that people anticipating refunds should steer away from firms that offer instant cash in advance of the refunds — actual loans from which fees and interest are deducted. It also is advised to choose private preparers carefully because some may not be well trained or fraudulent.

The publication notes a six-month filing extension is available if sought before the April 15 deadline.

Another article in the newsletter focuses on some of the risk factors associated with human trafficking and resources available to help victims, including the state's Victims of Crime Compensation Office.

More information is available from LSNJ'S PROTECT project at 1-866-576-5776.

The publication also offers an article detailing where and how people can apply for affordable rental housing and rental assistance.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of six independent nonprofit corporations that provides free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties.

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