



From Free Tax Preparation to a Special Tax Credit for Noncustodial Parents: Local Resources for Parents

For some parents the stress and confusion around taxes can feel overwhelming. Filing for a tax refund may not even seem worth it. As a result, some parents miss out on getting as full a refund as they might—or even any refund at all.

Here are a few tips that might help custodial parents, legal guardians, and others get the full amount they are due for 2025.

Finding Free Help with Preparing Taxes

New Yorkers who earned \$97,000 or less in 2025 can get free help preparing and filing their taxes. While this service is available to anyone who meets those requirements, we encourage custodial and noncustodial parents in particular to get the additional input provided by the certified tax preparers available across the city.

Qualified taxpayers can get help in two ways: with in-person, real-time meeting with a tax preparer or with drop-off services that let them pick up the materials at a later date.

Go to nyc.gov/taxprep or call 311 for information.

The deadline to file a tax return for your 2025 taxes is April 15, 2026.

The New York State Noncustodial Parent Earned Income Credit

One tax benefit open only to parents who support nonresident children is the New York State [Noncustodial Parent Earned Income Credit](#) (NCP EIC).

The NCP EIC is available to full-year New York State residents over the age of 18 who pay child support through the State's Support Collection Unit and meet certain other requirements. Those include:

- Earning less than \$50,434 in 2025 and having at least one child under the age of 18
- Not having claimed the [New York State earned income credit \(EIC\)](#)
- Paying at least the full court-ordered amount of child support during the tax year

Noncustodial parents who qualify for the NCP EIC can get up to \$1,623 back on their taxes.

Filing for the NCP EIC

To receive the NCP EIC, noncustodial parents must file their New York State tax return for 2025 and include [New York State tax form IT-209](#).

The forms and instructions needed to file these returns are available at tax.ny.gov/forms/income_credit_forms.htm.

Reminder: Pay It Off Returns between March 2–13, 2026

As we mentioned last month, this March noncustodial parents will once again have the chance to participate in our popular, time-limited debt-reduction program [Pay It Off](#).

Pay It Off matches self-payments of \$500 or more made toward child support debt permanently owed to the New York City Department of Social Services (NYC DSS). Nearly 5,000 noncustodial parents have already participated in the program, receiving an average reduction of \$4,800 per case.

Payments must be received no later than March 13, 2026 and cannot come through income-withholding or an enforcement process. As always, the amount of debt reduced cannot exceed the amount owed.

Visit nyc.gov/payitoff for more details about this program and how to participate, including:

- A **step-by-step guide** for noncustodial parents navigating the program
- A **short summary video**: youtu.be/u1L_vOzmBl8
- Downloadable copies, in 15 languages, of key Pay It Off documents

Free Upcoming Webinars

Pay It Off is also the focus of two free webinars: “Pay It Off! – How It Works” on February 24 and “Pay It Off! – All the Steps” on March 3.

On March 17 we will also offer “How to Prepare for Court: What to Bring, What to Expect.”

All sessions are presented by the OCSS Training Institute on Tuesdays, from 10:00–11:00 a.m., with additional time for questions. Go to www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/ocss-cbos.page to register and scroll to “Upcoming Presentations.”

Contact OCSS

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