

Millions of Taxpayers Can Still Cash In on Last Year's Rebate

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In Tough Economy, Rebates Could Mean Hundreds of Additional Dollars

KANSAS CITY, MO, Feb 02, 2009 (MARKET WIRE via COMTEX) -- An estimated 25 million -- or 1 in 5 -- taxpayers may have a second chance to cash in on rebate money still available from last year's economic stimulus plan, even if they received money last year, according to The Tax Institute at H&R Block.

Eligible taxpayers are taking home hundreds of additional dollars on their federal returns. Last year's stimulus payment netted most eligible taxpayers an additional \$600 for single filers; \$1200 for joint filers, plus an additional \$300 for each qualifying child.

H&R Block (NYSE: HRB) alerts taxpayers to speak with a professional to see if they're eligible. Among those who may qualify for additional rebate money this year:

- First-time filers
- Taxpayers who had a child in 2008
- Taxpayers whose net tax liability increased in 2008 vs. 2007
- Taxpayers who got married or divorced in 2008
- People who share custody of a child, claiming on alternate year.
- The 2.6 million who lost their job in 2008
- People who aren't required to file -- and didn't file a tax return last year

"In this tough economy, taxpayers want to get the most out of their refund," said Amy McAnarney, executive director of The Tax Institute at H&R Block. "With last year's tax law changes designed to boost the economy -- and leftover money from the rebate -- many taxpayers are taking home a windfall they really need."

When Americans received their rebate checks last year, those payments were based on 2007 tax return information. Taxpayers whose circumstances changed in 2008 may now qualify for the recovery rebate credit or qualify for additional money at a critical economic time.

In addition, taxpayers who don't typically file a return -- and failed to last year -- may still be able to cash in on the rebate. Qualifying income such as Social Security or VA disability benefits of at least \$3,000 could mean a minimum credit of \$300 for single filers or \$600 for joint filers.

Rather than sent as a separate check like last year's stimulus payment, the rebate will be included as part of a 2008 refund or used to reduce a tax liability. Eligible taxpayers who have already filed their return this year -- but failed to cash in on last year's rebate -- could file an amended return and still receive funds.

One caveat: taxpayers need to verify with the IRS the amount they received last year. An erroneous entry could delay processing, so taxpayers are encouraged to check a special IRS Web site when they prepare their tax return or their tax professional can provide the necessary help.

Last year's stimulus payment was actually an advance payment of the credit. If this year's credit is calculated to be less than the stimulus payment the taxpayer received, the taxpayer does not have to pay the extra amount back. But if this year's amount is more, the taxpayer can claim the additional amount. Also, the economic stimulus payments are not considered federal taxable income for 2008.

For more information about filing a tax return to get the recovery rebate credit, visit www.hrblock.com. To find a local, year-round H&R Block office, call 1-800-HRBLOCK.

About H&R Block

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