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**HOUSE BILL 1477**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Thai, Street, Doglio, Berry, Chapman, Santos, Ryu, Alvarado, Ramel, Macri, Ormsby, Leavitt, Pollet, and Fey

AN ACT Relating to making changes to the working families' tax credit that clarify program qualification requirements, allow applications to be submitted for up to three years, and require a biennial program report from the department of revenue; amending RCW 82.08.02061; reenacting and amending RCW 82.08.0206; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 82.08.0206 and 2022 c 41 s 1 and 2022 c 33 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

(1) A working families' tax credit, in the form of a refund of tax due under this chapter and chapter 82.12 RCW, is provided to eligible low-income persons for sales and use taxes paid under this chapter and chapter 82.12 RCW after January 1, 2022.

(2) For purposes of the credit in this section, the following definitions apply:

(a)(i) "Eligible low-income person" means an individual who:

(A) Is eligible for the credit provided in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code; and

(B) Properly files a federal income tax return for the prior federal tax year, and was a Washington resident during the year for which the credit is claimed.

(ii) "Eligible low-income person" also means an individual who((~~:~~

~~(A) Meets~~)) meets the requirements provided in (a)(i)(B) of this subsection((~~;~~)) and

((~~(B)~~)):

(A) Would otherwise qualify for the credit provided in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code except for the fact that the individual filed a federal income tax return for the prior federal tax year using a valid individual taxpayer identification number in lieu of a social security number, and the individual's spouse, if any, and all qualifying children, if any, have a valid individual taxpayer identification number or a social security number; or

(B) Would otherwise qualify for the credit provided in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code except that the individual files their federal income tax return as married filing separately.

(b) "Income" means earned income as defined by Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code.

(c) "Individual" means an individual or an individual and that individual's spouse if they file a federal joint income tax return.

(d) "Internal revenue code" means the United States internal revenue code of 1986, as amended, as of June 9, 2022, or such subsequent date as the department may provide by rule consistent with the purpose of this section.

(e) "Maximum qualifying income" means the maximum federally adjusted gross income for the prior federal tax year.

(f) "Qualifying child" means a qualifying child as defined by Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code, except the child may have a valid individual taxpayer identification number in lieu of a social security number.

(g) "Washington resident" means an individual who is physically present and residing in this state for at least 183 days. "Washington resident" also includes an individual who is not physically present and residing in this state for at least 183 days but is the spouse of a Washington resident. For purposes of this subsection, "day" means a calendar day or any portion of a calendar day.

(3)(a) Except as provided in (b) and (c) of this subsection, for calendar year 2023 and thereafter, the working families' tax credit refund amount for the prior calendar year is:

(i) $300 for eligible persons with no qualifying children;

(ii) $600 for eligible persons with one qualifying child;

(iii) $900 for eligible persons with two qualifying children; or

(iv) $1,200 for eligible persons with three or more qualifying children.

(b) Except as provided in (f) of this subsection, the refund amounts provided in (a) of this subsection will be reduced, rounded to the nearest dollar, as follows:

(i) For eligible persons with no qualifying children, beginning at $2,500 of income below the federal phase-out income for the prior federal tax year, by 18 percent per additional dollar of income until the minimum credit amount as specified in (c) of this subsection is reached.

(ii) For eligible persons with one qualifying child, beginning at $5,000 of income below the federal phase-out income for the prior federal tax year, by 12 percent per additional dollar of income until the minimum credit amount as specified in (c) of this subsection is reached.

(iii) For eligible persons with two qualifying children, beginning at $5,000 of income below the federal phase-out income for the prior federal tax year, by 15 percent per additional dollar of income until the minimum credit amount as specified in (c) of this subsection is reached.

(iv) For eligible persons with three or more qualifying children, beginning at $5,000 of income below the federal phase-out income for the prior federal tax year, by 18 percent per additional dollar of income until the minimum credit amount as specified in (c) of this subsection is reached.

(c) If the refund for an eligible person as calculated in this section is greater than or equal to one cent, but less than $50, the refund amount is $50.

(d) The refund amounts in this section shall be adjusted for inflation every year beginning January 1, 2024, based upon changes in the consumer price index that are published by November 15th of the previous year for the most recent 12-month period. The adjusted refund amounts must be rounded to the nearest $5.

(e) For purposes of this section, "consumer price index" means, for any 12-month period, the average consumer price index for that 12-month period for the Seattle, Washington area for urban wage earners and clerical workers, all items, compiled by the bureau of labor statistics, United States department of labor.

(f) The percentage rate of remittance reductions in (b) of this subsection must be adjusted every year beginning January 1, 2023, based on calculations by the department that result in the minimum credit being received at the maximum qualifying income level.

(4) The working families' tax credit shall be administered as provided in this subsection.

(a) The refund paid under this section will be paid to eligible filers who apply pursuant to this subsection.

(i) Application must be made to the department in a form and manner determined by the department. If the application process is initially done electronically, the department must provide a paper application upon request. The application must include any information and documentation as required by the department.

(ii) ((~~Application~~)) (A) Except as provided in (a)(ii)(B) of this subsection (4), application for ((~~the~~)) a refund under this section must be made in the year following the year for which the federal tax return was filed, but in no case may any refund be provided for any period before January 1, 2022. The department must use the eligible person's most recent federal tax filing for the tax year for which the refund is being claimed to calculate the refund.

(B) A person may apply for any refunds for which they were eligible but did not claim for up to three years. An application may not be accepted more than three years after the end of the calendar year in which the relevant federal income tax return was filed. For applications for refunds under this subsection (4)(a)(ii)(B), the department must use the federal tax filing for the tax year for which a refund is being claimed to calculate the refund.

(iii) A person may not claim a credit on behalf of a deceased individual. No individual may claim a credit under this section for any year in a disallowance period under Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32(k)(1) of the internal revenue code or for any year for which the individual is ineligible to claim the credit in Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32 of the internal revenue code by reason of Title 26 U.S.C. Sec. 32(k)(2) of the internal revenue code.

(b) The department shall protect the privacy and confidentiality of personal data of refund recipients in accordance with chapter 82.32 RCW.

(c) The department shall, in conjunction with other agencies or organizations, design and implement a public information campaign to inform potentially eligible persons of the existence of, and requirements for, the credit provided in this section.

(d) The department must work with the internal revenue service to administer the credit on an automatic basis as soon as practicable.

(5) Receipt of ((~~the~~)) a refund under this section may not be used in eligibility determinations for any state income support programs or in making public charge determinations.

(6) The department may adopt rules necessary to implement this section. This includes establishing a date by which applications will be accepted, with the aim of accepting applications as soon as possible.

(7) The department must review the application and determine eligibility for the working families' tax credit based on information provided by the applicant and through audit and other administrative records, including, when it deems it necessary, verification through internal revenue service data.

(8) If, upon review of internal revenue service data or other information obtained by the department, it appears that an individual received a refund that the individual was not entitled to, or received a larger refund than the individual was entitled to, the department may assess against the individual the overpaid amount. The department may also assess such overpaid amount against the individual's spouse if the refund in question was based on both spouses filing a joint federal income tax return for the year for which the refund was claimed.

(a) Interest as provided under RCW 82.32.050 applies to assessments authorized under this subsection (8) starting six months after the date the department issued the assessment until the amount due under this subsection (8) is paid in full to the department. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, penalties may not be assessed on amounts due under this subsection.

(b) If an amount due under this subsection is not paid in full by the date due, or the department issues a warrant for the collection of amounts due under this subsection, the department may assess the applicable penalties under RCW 82.32.090. Penalties under this subsection (8)(b) may not be made due until six months after the department's issuance of the assessment.

(c) If the department finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence that an individual knowingly submitted, caused to be submitted, or consented to the submission of, a fraudulent claim for refund under this section, the department must assess a penalty of 50 percent of the overpaid amount. This penalty is in addition to any other applicable penalties assessed in accordance with (b) of this subsection (8).

(9) If, within the period allowed for refunds under RCW 82.32.060, the department finds that an individual received a lesser refund than the individual was entitled to, the department must remit the additional amount due under this section to the individual.

(10) Interest does not apply to refunds provided under this section.

(11) Chapter 82.32 RCW applies to the administration of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.08.02061 and 2014 c 97 s 317 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department must assess the implementation of the working families' tax ((~~exemption~~)) credit in a report to the legislature to identify administrative or resource issues that require legislative action. The department must submit the report to the finance committee of the house of representatives and the ways and means committee of the senate within ((~~eighteen~~)) 18 months of the implementation of the program. The report must also be made available on the public website of the department.

(2) The department must submit a report to the finance committee of the house of representatives and the ways and means committee of the senate on a biennial basis. The report must include relevant data collected from administration of the working families' tax credit, including demographic data, as well as a quantitative summary of challenges and success of program administration. The report must also be made available on the public website of the department. The first report under this subsection is due December 31, 2025, and every two years thereafter.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect January 1, 2024.

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