

CENTERSTONE FINANCIAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Centerstone

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Get Your Taxes Done For Free!



Get help filing your free tax return at one of 19 local sites across King County.

January 14th started the United Way of King County's Free Tax Preparation program. For the next 3 months, more than 700 trained volunteers will be helping households who earned less than \$52,000

in 2013 file their free tax returns. There are no hidden costs or fees associated with this program.

In 2013 United Way of King County's tax preparation volunteers helped prepare 14,900 tax returns, earning their clients over \$22 million in tax refunds, with the average tax refund equaling nearly \$1,500. Think of all the ways you could use that \$1,500!

As Seattle has one of the most diverse zip codes in the nation, the volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and can provide help in many languages.

You may also qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC is the largest and most well-known of the tax credits for low and moderate-income working families and individuals. The EITC is a refundable credit for workers and or families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. In order to claim the EITC, the filer must have earned income and must file a tax return.

The maximum credit depends on a number of factors, including filing status, the number of qualifying children, and annual household income.

To get help filing your taxes visit <http://www.uwkc.org/ways-to-volunteer/ongoing-campaigns/free-tax-services/tax-site.html>.

How to Save Money on Groceries



Buying food is one of the more expensive but necessary costs that go into daily life. You can cut back on driving to save gas money, you

can turn your heat down to lower your electric bill, but what can you really do about saving money on the cost of groceries?

Turns out, a lot! The following article lists 45 different ways to save money on groceries. You may already do some of these, but others might be new to you!

One idea that isn't listed, is purchasing your produce at a fruit stand instead of the grocery store. There are several located in North and South Seattle, including on Rainier Ave. South, 15th Ave. South, and NE 65th St. [Click here to read 45 different ways to save on your groceries!](#)



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Great Opportunities at Centerstone: Bike Works

Do you know someone (an adult) who is desperate for a bicycle but just can't afford one right now? If so, Centerstone can help!

Centerstone, in partnership with Bike Works is helping to identify 10 low-income adults who will receive a refurbished bike, bike lights, and helmet from Bike Works through their Bikes-for-All! program. The cost is \$10 to the recipient (if the \$10 fee is a barrier,

there is a sliding scale available). The only requirement is that the recipient must attend a 2 hour bike instruction class at Bike Works in Columbia city on April 5th. The class will cover repair and maintenance issues for bike owners, resources available and safety training.

To apply for a bicycle, please contact Tim Orth by emailing timothy@center-stone.org or by calling (206) 812-4998.



Bike Works builds sustainable communities by educating youth and promoting bicycling. Bike Works has been working for kids, bikes, and community since 1996. Our programs invest in young people and encourage bicycling as a clean and healthy transportation alternative. For more than fifteen years we've worked to educate and empower youth, and make bicycling accessible and affordable to the Seattle community.

<http://bikeworks.org/>

Next Financial Coaching Group Meeting:

February 12, 2014

6:30pm-8:30pm

Topic: Savings and Increasing Income

Helping people help themselves move from poverty to self-sufficiency since 1964.

The Self-Sufficiency Calculator



How much do you need to go from surviving to thriving?

The poverty line for a family of four in the United States today is \$23,550 in 2013-2014. But life doesn't magically get easier once a family crosses over the poverty line. In fact, it often gets harder, as public benefits and services are cut. In reality, a family of four cannot survive on \$23,550 without additional assistance.

Instead of looking at the poverty level as an adequate measure of how a family is doing, many in Washington State and across the country are embracing the idea of a "living wage," or a "self-sufficiency standard." This is often more than 300% of the poverty level, and it varies by family make-up, depending on how many adults, children, and teenagers are in each household.

The Workforce Development Council created a Self-Sufficiency Calculator for

Washington State to help you determine the amount of money it will take you to get to from surviving to thriving.

The Self Sufficiency Standard measures how much income is needed for a family of a given composition - ranging from a one person household to a large family - in a given place, to adequately meet its basic needs without any public or private assistance.

Using the Calculator you can look at your overall budget, see the Self Sufficiency Standard cost-of-living approximation for your family type, and learn about resources that can assist you in planning and making progress toward economic Self Sufficiency.

[Use the calculator here.](#)