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OIL Newsletter



A monthly publication of THE OKLAHOMANS for INDEPENDENT LIVING

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(918) 426-6263 V/TDD, OIL Web Page URL (www.oilok.org), www.facebook.com)

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wasted time.



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FREE TAX ASSISTANCE

The VITA (Volunteer Income
Tax Assistance) Program
provides free assistance to
anyone under \$50,000 annually
with basic income tax
preparation. The program helps
determine if you are eligible to
receive the Earned Income Tax
Credit and any other credits
that are available. They prepare
a simple tax form and then E-
File it for you. The service is
free to anyone that meets the
income guidelines. They started
assisting in January and will
continue through April 15th. Call
the Ki-Bois Community Action
Program in your area for an
appointment.

Pittsburg County 918 423-3525
Haskell County 918 967-3325
LeFlore County 918 647-3267
Latimer County 918 465-3381

The Southeastern Public
Library in McAlester also offers
free tax assistance and
volunteers will be available
beginning in February. Call
918 426-0930 for details or for
information on the program in
your library area.

TAX BENEFITS AND CREDITS FOR PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING WITH DISABILITIES

This publication presents basic
information about existing tax
credits and benefits that may be
available to qualifying taxpayers
with disabilities, parents of
children with disabilities,
parents of children with
disabilities, and businesses or
other entities wishing to
accommodate persons with
disabilities. More detailed
information on these topics can
be found in IRS Publication
907, Tax Highlights for Persons
with Disabilities, and in the
other publications cited below.

**AS A PERSON WITH A
DISABILITY**, you may qualify
for some of the following tax
deductions, income exclusions,
and credits. More detailed

information may be found in the
IRS publications referenced.

Standard Deduction: If you
are legally blind, you may be
entitled to a higher standard
deduction on your tax return.
See IRS Publication 501

Gross Income: Certain
disability-related payments may
be excluded from gross income.
Veterans Administration (VA)
disability benefits and
Supplemental Security Income
(SSI) may also be excluded
from your gross income.
See IRS Publication 525

**Impairment-Related Work
Expenses:** If you are an
employee and have a physical
or mental disability that
functionally limits your
employment, you may be able
to claim business expenses for
attendant care at your
workplace and other expenses
in connection with your
workplace that are necessary
for you to work.
See IRS Publication 529

**Credit for the Elderly or
Disabled:** You may be able to
claim this credit if you are 65 or
older or if you are under 65 and
you retired on permanent and
total disability.
See IRS Publication 524

Medical Expenses: are the costs of diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment, or prevention of disease, and the costs for treatments affecting any part or function of the body. They include the costs of equipment, supplies, and diagnostic devices needed for these purposes. They also include dental expenses.

See IRS Publication 502

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): is for certain people who work and have low earned income. A tax credit usually means more money in your pocket. It reduces the amount of tax you owe. The EITC may also give you a refund.

Many working individuals with a disability that have no qualifying children, who are at least 25 years of age but under 65 years of age, qualify for EITC.

Earnings for EITC purposes can include disability benefits you receive from your employer's disability retirement plan, until you reach minimum retirement age.

EITC has no effect on certain public benefits. Any refund you receive because of the EITC will not be considered income when determining whether you are eligible for the following benefit programs, or how much you can receive from these programs. However, if the amounts you receive are not spent within a certain period of time, they may count as an asset (or resource) and affect your eligibility.

Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Food stamps.

Low-income housing.

Temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) benefits may be affected. Please check with your state.

See IRS Publication 596

AS A PARENT OF A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY, you may qualify for some of the following tax exemptions, deductions and credits. More detailed information may be found in the IRS publications referenced.

Dependents: You may be able to claim your child as a dependent regardless of age if they are permanently and totally disabled.

*Permanently and totally disabled:

*He or she cannot engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a physical or mental condition.

*A doctor determines the condition has lasted or can be expected to last continuously for at least a year or can lead to death.

Dependent with a disability working at Sheltered

Workshop: You may be able to claim a dependency exemption for a qualifying child or qualifying relative. Gross income does not include income from services the individual performs at a sheltered workshop however they must still meet the other dependency tests.

See IRS Publication 501

Adoption Credit: You may be able to claim an adoption credit and exclude employer-provided adoption benefits from your income if you adopt a child with special needs.

See IRS Publication 907

EITC for parents of children

with disabilities: You may qualify for this credit if your qualifying child is permanently and totally disabled, regardless of age, as long as you meet the other requirements.

See IRS Publication 596

Child or Dependent Care

Credit: You may be entitled to this credit if you pay someone to come to your home and care for your dependent or spouse regardless of their age if they are unable to care for themselves. Persons who cannot dress, clean, or feed themselves because of physical or mental problems are considered not able to care for themselves. Also, persons who must have constant attention to prevent them from injuring themselves or others are considered not able to care for themselves.

See IRS Publication 503

Medical Conferences: You can include in medical expenses amounts paid for admission and transportation to a medical conference if the medical conference concerns the chronic illness of yourself, your spouse, or your dependent.

See IRS Publication 502

THREE EXTRA DAYS FOR IRS TAXES

Everyone will get this extra time to file their taxes this year. They will not be due on Friday, April 15th but Monday the 18th. The bonus days come thanks to Emancipation Day, a little-known Washington D.C. holiday that celebrates the freeing of slaves in the district.

Emancipation Day falls on Saturday April 16th but it is observed in D.C. on Friday, April 15th which prompted the IRS to extend the tax filing deadline.

Congress waited until late December to pass new tax policies which means that taxpayers who itemize their taxes on a Schedule A form cannot file until February.

**PRE-EXISTING
CONDITION
INSURANCE PLAN**

The Affordable Care Act created this new program to make health care coverage available to you if you have been denied health insurance by private insurance companies because of a pre-existing condition. This plan serves as a bridge until 2014 when insurance companies can no longer deny or limit coverage or charge higher premiums because of a pre-existing condition.

Eligible residents of Oklahoma can apply for coverage through the state's Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) run by the Oklahoma Health Insurance High Risk Pool.

To qualify for coverage:

- You must be a citizen or national of the United States or residing in the United States legally.
- You must have been uninsured for at least the last six months before you apply.
- You must have a pre-existing condition or have been denied coverage because of your health condition.

The PCIP covers a broad range of health benefits, including primary and specialty care, hospital care, and prescription drugs. All covered benefits are available for you, even if it is to treat a pre-existing condition.

Monthly Premium	\$137 to \$704
Medical Deductible	\$2,000
Drug Deductible	\$200
Out of Pocket Limit	\$5,950

To learn more about this program, please call 1-877-885-3717 or TTY1-800-735-2988.

**OKLAHOMA PARENT
CENTER BASIC
RIGHTS/IEP
WORKSHOPS**

Poteau – February 1st
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tulsa – February 7th
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Tulsa – February 21st
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Ardmore – Oklahoma Parent Center Conference - "Building Agreements, Creating Successful Change" on February 10th, 8:00 – 3:30 p.m.

"What You Need to Know About Special Education Workshop"
McAlester - March 8th, 5:30 – 6:00 p.m, McAlester Public Library
and in
Stigler – March 24th
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information call the Oklahoma Parents Center at 405 379-6015.

VALENTINE'S DANCE

The dance will be on Friday, February 11th from 7:00 -10:00 p.m. It will be held at the J.I. Stipe Center, 801 N. 9th Street in McAlester. Bring your sweetheart or maybe come and meet one! Please bring a 2 liter of soda pop or a package of chips/store bought cookies. Call for free local transportation.



**NUTRITION AND
COOKING CLASS**

Beginning on Friday, February 25th, the Oklahoma State University Extension Center will start another eight week

nutrition and cooking class for OIL consumers. It is not only an educational class but you are able to do hands on cooking activities. It is very important that you continue all classes once begun. The classes will meet each Friday, 1:00 p.m. at the OSU Center, 707 West Electric. OIL will be providing free transportation.

Transportation

OIL provides lift-equipped transportation in McAlester and the surrounding area, Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30. A twenty-four hour minimum notice is required. The cost is \$1 per pick up in McAlester and \$2 for Krebs and Frink Chambers. Outside this area, fees are based on actual costs of gasoline needed to provide the service.

*Prices are subject to change.



**Are you eligible for the
ADVantage Program?**

Are you a person with a disability who is at least 21 years of age?

If you said "Yes" then answer the following:

Do you require assistance?

1. On a daily basis in order to live, such as eating, toileting, grooming, bathing, dressing, and moving about to accomplish the task
2. In order to maintain or support daily functioning such as taking medication, preparing meals, paying bills, shopping, laundry, transportation, etc.
3. Are you at risk for nursing home placement?

The ADVantage Program may be able to help. Contact any OIL ADVantage case manager at 426-6220 V/TDD.

*Events are held at OIL unless otherwise noted

FEBRUARY EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 McAlester Shopping 7 – 10:45 am	4	5
6	7 Mental Health Grp. 1pm	8 HIV/AIDS Grp. 1 pm	9	10 Social 5:30 pm Boomerang Café	11 Valentine's Dance 7 pm J.I. Stipe Ctr.	12 Saturday Transportation
13	14 TBI Grp. 1pm	15 Men's Grp. 5 pm East Gourmet	16 Women's Grp. Noon Taco Bell	17 McAlester Shopping 7 – 10:45 am	18	19
20	21 OIL CLOSED for President's Day	22 Game Day 1 pm	23	24	25 Nutrition & Cooking Class 1 pm OSU Ctr.	26 Saturday Transportation
27	28 TBI Grp. 1pm					

***Low Impact Exercise Class** meets Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00 a.m., Stipe Center ***Alzheimer's Support Group**, 3rd Wed., 12:00 p.m., Main & OK Church of Christ, 423-4743 ***Cancer Support Group**, 3rd Thur., 1:00 p.m., The Van Buren House, 426-5600 ***Diabetes Support Group**, 1st Tue., 6:00 p.m., MRHC Wellness Ctr Conf. Room, 421-8656 *For information on **Men's & Women's Grief Support Groups** – call Hospice of McAlester at 423-3911 ***Bariatric Support Group**, 2nd Tue. MRHC Wellness Ctr. Con. Room, 5:30 p.m., 421-6600

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