



## Changing tax laws can hide deductions

posted by: Ann King TaRhonda Thomas

### 9NEWS TAX SURVIVAL GUIDE

BROOMFIELD - Certified Public Accountant Fran Coet is facing the busiest time of the year. She and her partners are working with 1,300 clients who want to make sure they get every penny they deserve out of a tax return.

"It's a matter of taking advantage of every deduction and credit that they can be entitled to," Coet said.

However, she knows some people will miss some of those important deductions, many of which were added this year as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or stimulus bill, which was passed in early 2009.

"Unfortunately, tax laws change every year," she said.

One of the changes that filers should look for to maximize their refund is the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which benefits parents of college students and even adults who have decided to continue their education.

"If you spend \$4,000 on post-secondary tuition, you can qualify for a credit of up to \$2,500, and \$1,000 of that \$2,500 is refundable," Coet said.

Another provision would benefit business owners who have had a tough year.

"With businesses or people that have rental properties and had losses that exceeded their income in 2009, they are able to carry that loss back to a prior year and recoup some of the taxes they paid," she said, adding that filers could go back up to five years for business losses.

Many people who have been laid off or downsized may see a benefit at tax time. People who previously made too much money to qualify for an Earned Income Tax Credit are now finding themselves qualifying for the deduction.

"They're seeing increased refunds because they've never been eligible for the child tax credit or tuition credit," she said.

One item all taxpayers need to look for is the Making Workers Pay Tax Credit.

Here are 10 things the IRS wants you to know about this tax credit to ensure you receive the entire amount for which you are eligible:

1. In 2009 and 2010, the Making Work Pay provision provides a refundable tax credit of up to \$400 for individuals and up to \$800 for married taxpayers filing joint returns.
2. For taxpayers who receive a paycheck and are subject to withholding, the credit will typically be handled by their employers through automated withholding changes.
3. Taxpayers receiving less than the full amount of the allowable credit through reduced withholding will be entitled to claim any remaining credit when they file their tax return.
4. The amount of the credit actually received during 2009 in the form of reduced withholding will be reported on your 2009 tax return. Taxpayers who do not have taxes withheld by an employer during the year can claim the credit on their 2009 tax return filed in 2010.
5. Taxpayers who file Form 1040 or 1040A will use Schedule M, Making Work Pay and Government Retiree Credits to figure the Making Work Pay Tax Credit. Completing Schedule M will help taxpayers determine whether they have already received the full credit in their paycheck or are due more money as a result of the credit.
6. Taxpayers who file Form 1040-EZ will use the worksheet for Line 8 on the back of the 1040-EZ to figure their Making Work Pay Tax Credit.
7. In 2010, you may notice that your paychecks are slightly lower than in 2009. The slight decrease may be because of the Making Work Pay Credit. Most of the credit for wage earners is distributed through reduced withholding. The credit - which was spread out over nine months last year - is being spread over 12 months this year. A little less credit in each paycheck means slightly higher withholding. But don't worry, in the end it all adds up.

8. Certain taxpayers should review their tax withholding to ensure enough tax is being withheld in 2010. Those who should pay particular attention to their withholding include: married couples with two incomes, individuals with multiple jobs, dependents, pensioners, Social Security recipients who also work, and workers without valid Social Security numbers.

Having too little tax withheld could result in potentially smaller refunds or - in limited instances - small balance due rather than an expected refund.

9. To ensure your current withholding is appropriate for your individual situation, you can review Publication 919, How Do I Adjust My Tax Withholding? You can also perform a quick check of your withholding using the interactive IRS Withholding Calculator on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

10. If you find you need to adjust your withholding, submit a revised Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate to your employer.

Visit [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) for more information about the making Work Pay Tax Credit, Schedule M, Form W-4 or Publication 919. You can also call 800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676) to order forms and publications.

**For more help with your taxes, visit the [9NEWS Tax Survival Guide](#).**

(KUSA-TV © 2010 Multimedia Holdings Corporation)