

News

Watch Your Mailbox for New AFT Membership Card

Beginning in late January, AFT members across the country will start receiving their new AFT membership cards in the mail. Once you receive your card—the entire mailing is scheduled to be completed by late February—you will want to validate it on the members section of the new AFT Web site. That will give you not only access to exclusive members-only discounts on retail shopping, entertainment, travel, magazine subscriptions, mortgage services and insurance, but also the chance to win prizes, including a \$500 cash prize.

Are You Eligible for the Earned Income Credit?

The earned income credit (EIC) is a refundable tax credit designed for low-income families and individuals. The EIC varies depending on your level of income and how many dependents you support. There is even the possibility that the tax credit can generate a tax refund larger than the amount of federal taxes you paid had withheld. If you qualify for the EIC, you can opt to receive part of the credit in your paycheck during the year through the Advanced Earned Income Credit (AEIC) instead of waiting until tax time to receive the entire amount.

To be eligible for the EIC, a worker must meet flowing criteria: Must have a valid Social Security number; must be U.S. citizen or resident alien for the entire year; cannot use the married filing separately filing separate; cannot be claimed as a qualifying child by someone else; cannot claim the foreign earned income exclusion (relates to wages earned while living abroad); you and your spouse (if married) are between the ages of 25 and 64.

The rules for qualifying children for the purpose of claiming the EIC are slightly different from the rules for dependents, which means that it may be possible that your child qualifies as a your dependent, but not EIC; or would qualify you for EIC even though the noncustodial parent claims the dependent. Qualifying children must meet the relationship test (birth, marriage, adoption and foster arrangement); the age test (18 or younger at year's end or 23 or younger full-time student) and residency test (child must live with you for more than 6 months and live in the U.S.). All children must have valid Social Security numbers.

Go to the IRS web site (www.irs.org) to see if you should file for the EIC.