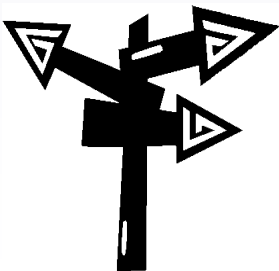


## There are Alternatives:

- If you support a family with two or more children and your total household income is less than \$40,000, you can **have your taxes prepared for FREE** at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site.
- You may also be eligible to receive an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) of up to **\$4,700!**
- **If you have a bank account, you can have your tax refund directly deposited within as little as 5-10 days!** Your refund can also be deposited into as many as three accounts.
- For a list of free and low cost checking accounts in California, and a guide to help you avoid overdraft fees on these accounts visit [www.calreinvest.org](http://www.calreinvest.org).

To find VITA sites located throughout California, call the IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040 or visit the Franchise Tax Board's website at:  
[www.ftb.ca.gov/individuals/vita/sites.asp](http://www.ftb.ca.gov/individuals/vita/sites.asp)

Bay Area residents can call 211 or 1-800-358-8832 to find a VITA site.



**Why spend money to get your tax refund when other options are FREE?**

**The nearest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Site in your neighborhood is:**

If you have been taken advantage of by lenders and would like to share your story, or for more information about how to avoid predatory lenders contact the California Reinvestment Coalition:

474 Valencia St., Ste. 230  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: 415-864-3980  
Fax: 415-864-3981  
[www.calreinvest.org](http://www.calreinvest.org)



**The California Reinvestment Coalition** advocates for the right of low-income communities and communities of color to have fair and equal access to banking and other financial services. CRC has a membership of more than 250 nonprofit organizations and public agencies across the State.

**You deserve ALL of the money from your tax refund...**



## Don't Give it Away

**Avoid Tax Refund Anticipation Loans**  
*Disguised as "Instant Cash"*

## They cost up to \$336!

 **California Reinvestment Coalition**

## Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL's)

RAL's are short-term, expensive loans made in the amount of a consumer's income tax refund. RAL's are disguised as instant money, but they aren't. They come with high interest rates and often cost hundreds of dollars in fees. Tax preparers like H&R Block and Jackson Hewitt partner with banks to offer these loans. RAL's are specifically marketed to low-income, working families, who need all of the money from their tax refund, and should not have to pay these big corporations to get it sooner.

## These Costly Loans are Dangerous

If the tax preparer makes a mistake and overestimates the amount of your refund, you will have to pay back the difference. And if you owe money from a previous RAL (even if it is from a different tax preparer) the outstanding loan balance will be subtracted from your current refund. Also, if the IRS denies or delays your refund, you still have to pay back the loan. If you can't make the payment, the lender can hurt your credit score and may send your account to a debt collector.

## Be Careful, RAL's are Offered in More Places than You Think

Besides well known tax preparers such as H&R Block and Jackson Hewitt, RAL's are also offered at rent-to-own outlets, through check cashers and even at used car lots! Prepaid debit cards may also be disguised as RAL's. Anyone offering you a tax refund in less than a week after filing may be charging you excessive fees for what is really an expensive and risky loan.



These are the average fees for a \$2,800 tax refund.

The RAL alone, not including tax preparation and check cashing fees, has a 229% APR.

The average amount tax preparers charge for RAL's, including a charge to open a temporary bank account in order to get the RAL.

Some tax preparers will charge this additional fee (called either an application fee or an administrative fee) to process your tax return.

You may also be charged to cash your refund check.