



MICHIGAN LAW
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic at The University of Michigan Law School

August 25, 2021

Agenda

- Who we are
- How we work
- What we can do for your organization
- What we can do for your clients
- What we can't do for your clients
- Typical scenarios

Who We Are

- Student clinic at The University of Michigan Law School
- Funded by a grant overseen by the National Taxpayer Advocate to provide tax controversy and tax literacy education services

How We Work

- Students are “first chair,” but closely supervised
- Academic schedule rhythm to the year
- No cost
- Grant requirements (income no more than 250% of the federal poverty level; no more than \$50K per tax year in controversy); still may not be able to take everyone
- Call us at 734-936-3535 to get started

What We Can Do For Your Organization

- Educational presentations for your organization's staff and/or for groups of your clients
- Potential topics include basic tax literacy (how our federal tax system works, deductions and credits helpful for your clients, avoiding scammers and fraudulent preparers), overview of tax controversies, etc.

What We Can Do For Your Clients

- Full representation with regards to individual income tax controversies (when there's a disagreement between the person and the IRS with regards to how much a refund or liability should be or with regards to how much a person can pay)
- This can include representation during an audit, at IRS appeals, in litigation in U.S. Tax Court, or in dealings with IRS Collections
- Handle Michigan Treasury matters ancillary to federal tax matters

What We Can't Do for Your Clients

- Represent people or with regards to matters that fall outside of the scope of our grant
- File current year tax returns or catch non-filers up on multiple back tax years
- Refer people to private tax preparers or representatives
- Lobby
- Property tax issues
- Corporate tax issues (ex., businesses with inventory or employees, that don't flow through onto an individual tax return)

Typical Scenarios

- Establishing that the client was entitled to claim dependents for the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, etc.
- Cleaning up returns that incorrectly stated earned income, causing problems with Section 8 housing or SSDI eligibility
- Correcting the record when clients didn't report debt write-offs (from credit card companies or home foreclosures) or self-employment, gambling, or 401(k) distribution income, then were assessed liabilities that didn't take into account applicable deductions and exclusions
- Establishing that clients can't afford to pay anything, can only pay installments, or is eligible for a debt reduction
- Establishing that the client is entitled to innocent spouse or injured spouse consideration