

Financially Speaking

With Trisha Arndt

Claim your Wisconsin Child Sales Tax Rebate

Every year I wait until the last possible day to file my income taxes and write the state and federal checks for the additional amounts that I always somehow seem to owe. I know I am only satisfying myself by waiting until the last minute (and probably driving my CPA nuts) but I psychologically want to hold on to my money for as long as possible.

This year I'm happy to know that Wisconsin will be writing me a check back in the form of a Child Sales Tax Rebate. Between May 15th and July 2nd Wisconsin residents with a qualified, dependent child can receive a sales tax rebate of \$100. All you have to do to get it is submit a claim.

Governor Walker announced the Child Sales Tax Rebate during his State of the State address in January and is touting it as a way that taxpayers can benefit directly from Wisconsin's anticipated \$400 million budget surplus this year.

In addition, the Governor expanded the late-summer sales tax holiday that is intended to help parents save on back to school supplies from two days to five days. From August 1st to 5th there will be no sales tax charged on several specific items, up to certain dollar limits. These include clothing (up to \$75 per item), a personal use computer (up to \$750) and school supplies (up to \$75 per item). While this is intended to benefit families with children, retailers do not have to collect any information at the time of sale – purchases of those items during that time are exempt from sales tax for all customers.

To receive the Child Sales Tax Rebate, however, you have to submit a claim to the state and show that you have an eligible dependent child. The child must have been under 18, a Wisconsin resident and US citizen on December 31st, 2017 to qualify. Only one sales tax rebate will be paid per eligible child and it will go to the child's caregiver that was able to claim the child as a dependent on their 2017 tax return.

Claims can either be filed online at www.childtaxrebate.wi.gov or by phone at 608-266-kids (5437). Filing the claim takes only a few minutes. You just need to provide your identifying information, including your name, address and social security number, along with the same information for your spouse if you file jointly. Once you have done that you are taken to the form where you list each dependent child (include all of them in the same claim if you have more than one). Along with their name you will need to provide the child's birthdate and social security number and answer three questions about them – are they a US citizen, a Wisconsin resident and your dependent.

Once the claim is submitted you will receive a confirmation number for your reference. After 72 hours you can check the status of the claim on the same website and they expect most claims to be paid within 3 weeks.

If you have any questions or have a unique situation that you are unsure of there is a link to common questions available on the claim website. If you still aren't sure how to proceed you can call them during business hours, Monday to Friday.

File your claim and look forward to receiving a check from the government for once.

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