



# CALIFORNIA INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES

Spring 2012 Newsletter

## FOCUS ON THE CILS FISCAL GROUP

CILS developed the Fiscal practice group to focus on specific issues critical to taxation in Indian country. While advocates can and do represent income eligible individuals with tax issues related to Indian country, limited resources prevent CILS from representing every person in need. CILS aims to make an impact through other means like monitoring and commenting on pending legislation pertaining to the applicability of sales tax on Tribes and individual Indians, use tax exemptions, fuel and cigarette taxes, and state income taxation. The group is also responsible for creating fiscal and tax-related self-help information guides available on our website. Check out our brochure, [State Income Tax and Native Americans](#).

One of the Fiscal practice groups' more visible projects is the annual ICAN!<sup>TM</sup> E-File service, which provides free federal and state tax return preparation for income eligible clients. ICAN!<sup>TM</sup> E-File is created and maintained by the [Legal Aid Society of Orange County](#) (LASOC). Early in the program's development CILS collaborated with LASOC to develop a series of questions that allows for Indian income – whether it be per capita or Revenue Sharing Trust Fund income – to be properly reported and excluded as taxable income on state tax returns, where applicable. The ICAN!<sup>TM</sup> E-File tax module guides tax payers through a series of questions and results in the completion of state and federal tax returns and even offers free e-filing. CILS first partnered with LASOC in 2004 to increase accessibility to ICAN!<sup>TM</sup> E-File and has since served thousands of tax payers.

---

“I get satisfaction from checking the updated information on the [LASOC] website (which tracks the total number of clients and refunds for ICAN!<sup>TM</sup>E-File partners). When the dollar amount goes up, that means more and more people are getting assistance.” – *Mark Vezzola, Fiscal Project Group Manager and Escondido Directing Attorney*

---

