

Federal health and tax officials are reminding small-business owners that they must apply soon in order to be eligible for tax credits.

“As the filing deadlines approach, we want to make sure that small-business owners don’t leave any money on the table,” said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman in a statement. “Small businesses that offer health insurance should learn about this credit and claim it if they are eligible.”

The Department of Health and Human Services sent an email to 2,000 agents and brokers Thursday telling them to pass on information about the credit to their small-business clients.

The deadline for claiming a tax credit on the 2010 tax returns is Sept. 15 for small companies that file on a calendar-year basis and requested an extension until that day. Sole proprietors who file Form 1040 and partners and S-corporation shareholders who report their income on Form 1040 have until Oct. 17 to complete their 2010 returns.

The credits are available for companies that have up to 25 employees, pay average annual wages below \$50,000 and provide health insurance. The tax credits may be worth as much as 35 percent of the cost of insurance. Nonprofits can get back up to 25 percent of their costs.