

The Impact of VITA in Florida¹

For over 45 years, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs have been providing **free tax preparation services** to millions of taxpayers—including low to moderate income households, the elderly, people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency. Volunteers are trained and certified annually using an IRS-approved curriculum and certification test, and adhere to IRS standards and Quality Site Requirements that result in high quality tax returns with a 94% accuracy rate nationally.

How does Florida benefit from VITA?

According to the National Society of Accountants, the 2015 national average for tax preparation cost was \$273. For low to moderate income families, the savings alone of a \$273 tax preparation fee alone can put household essentials - like groceries, a medical or utility bill, or a contribution to an emergency savings account – within reach.

VITA programs are a powerful vehicle for delivering high-quality tax preparation and access to strong, effective, community-based programs that provide individual attention and ongoing support along their path to financial independence. Many VITA programs connect hard-working taxpayers with financial capability services and programs like *Save Your Refund* to help families claim and invest their tax credits.

Across the country, there are over 4,000 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites where eligible taxpayers can have their taxes prepared and filed by IRS-certified volunteers at no cost. Across Florida, there are 268 sites ready to help taxpayers claim the federal and state credits, like the EITC, they are eligible for. In 2017, 74,917 taxpayers in Florida (including 21,078 EITC-eligible taxpayers) received a total of \$108,142,893 in federal refunds, in addition to saving an average of \$273 on the cost of tax preparation by having their taxes prepared at a VITA site.

Support VITA in Florida!

Federal, state and local policymakers can help low-income, EITC-eligible taxpayers by supporting VITA sites that provide high-quality tax preparation, financial stability services and connections to other community services at no cost. Over the years, the tax code, EITC eligibility requirements and household situations have increased in complexity. VITA sites are poised to meet the growing needs of taxpayers by helping them claim federal and state credits like the EITC, but will require additional volunteer and financial resources to do so.

VITA serves hard-working families and individuals. Stand with us to show your recognition that #VITAWorks is a crucial service for building and securing a stronger financial future.

¹ All data sourced from IRS data from VITA programs using IRS-provided software

Total VITA Returns in FL

74,917

VITA Refund Dollars in FL

\$108,142,893

Average VITA Refund in FL

\$1,444

Average VITA Taxpayer AGI in 2017

\$24,693

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