

# QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

“I can’t afford to file my taxes.”



This quick reference guide provides information and resources to guide individuals if they experience the barrier identified in the handout.

## Free Tax Preparation Services

*The average amount a taxpayer saves as a result of free tax preparation: \$261*

There are many free tax preparation options available. Each program has different eligibility options and must be verified individually for qualifications. However, on average, households with an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$64,000 or less will qualify for free tax preparation and filing. Eligibility criteria can change from year to year, so check the options for eligibility with the service you choose prior to utilizing. To learn more about free tax preparation services, go to [irs.gov](http://irs.gov).

## IRS Trained Certified Volunteer Assisted Sites

- ➔ VITA - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance is generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls and other convenient locations across the country.
- ➔ AARP Tax-Aide: The AARP Foundation runs the Tax-Aide program, providing free tax preparation at more than 5,000 locations.
- ➔ TCE - Tax Counseling for the Elderly sites are operated by the AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide Program.
- ➔ Virtual VITA: Uses same process as traditional VITA/TCE, except the preparer and taxpayer are not face to face, but connect via internet, fax and video.

## Tools and Resources from the *Hands on Banking*® Curriculum

- Filing tax forms: [bit.ly/2wXMTV5](http://bit.ly/2wXMTV5)
- Service members & taxes: [bit.ly/2w435rp](http://bit.ly/2w435rp)

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To find a local site providing services in your community, use the IRS VITA Locator Tool at [irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep](https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep) or United Way 2-1-1 at [211.org](https://211.org).

### Self-Tax Preparation Model

MyFreeTaxes ([unitedway.org/myfreetaxes/](https://unitedway.org/myfreetaxes/)) provides self-paced, step-by-step guidance to file tax returns online with assistance from IRS certified tax volunteers via hotline or online chat if needed.

Free File ([bit.ly/2w3AGBJ](https://bit.ly/2w3AGBJ)) is available in two formats:

- ➔ Free File Software - Self-paced, step-by-step guidance to file tax returns online.
- ➔ Free File Fillable Forms - Fillable forms for tax filers to complete their taxes and e-file.

### Become an IRS Certified Volunteer Tax Preparer

Are you interested in learning to prepare taxes and make a difference in your community? Consider volunteering to help your community by preparing taxes free of charge with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) or Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs.

You will receive training to provide free tax help for low- to moderate-income families who need assistance preparing their tax returns. As a volunteer, you will join thousands of others who prepare millions of tax returns each year at thousands of tax sites nationwide.

As a tax volunteer, you'll be assigned to work with an organization, first to receive training and then to begin volunteering at a location in your community. Training is offered both online and in the classroom. Tax sites are generally open nights and weekends and the hours are flexible.

For additional information and next steps, submit your inquiry now using the VITA/TCE Volunteer and Partner Signup and you will be one step closer to becoming a VITA or TCE tax volunteer and giving back to your community. Sign up at [bit.ly/2uV0qLI](https://bit.ly/2uV0qLI).

## OVER 70 PERCENT OF AMERICANS QUALIFY FOR FREE TAX PREPARATION

### Expanding MyFreeTaxes to Taxpayers with Disabilities

Since 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has selected a number of states to participate in the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities. The DEI is the first USDOL initiative to incorporate asset development as a major strategic component toward enhancing the economic self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities. Under the DEI, Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) implement asset development approaches within American Job Centers (AJCs), including promoting awareness and access to free tax preparation services.

AJCs may serve as VITA or MyFreeTaxes sites to help raise awareness among workforce staff, partners and customers on the benefits and options of free tax preparation, eligible tax credits and impact of refunds on federal benefits.

Find an AJC near you and inquire if they are implementing DEI and/or free tax preparation:

**American Job Centers:** [bit.ly/2uV3Z4z](https://bit.ly/2uV3Z4z)

## 28 Million People/Families Received Over \$66 Billion in Earned Income Tax Credit in 2015

### What is the EITC and who is eligible?

- ➔ Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the federal and state income tax credit available to low- and moderate-income working families and individuals. To learn more about EITC, go to [bit.ly/2nTAxsl](https://bit.ly/2nTAxsl).
- ➔ EITC gives working families a financial boost they need. Working families can use the extra money to make rent or mortgage payments, buy needed food, medicine and other essentials, improve their quality of life and contribute to the economy. To learn more about EITC and Disability, go to [bit.ly/2w3H3oF](https://bit.ly/2w3H3oF).
- ➔ The credit changes every year and is based on earnings, number of qualifying children and marital status.
- ➔ A qualifying child is determined by age, relationship to the filer, how long the filer and child have lived together in the U.S. and whether the child has filed a joint return.

Provided to you by National Disability Institute [www.realeconomicimpact.org](https://www.realeconomicimpact.org)  
These materials were created in collaboration with Wells Fargo Hands on Banking®.

For more information about this Reference Guide, please send an email to [ask@ndi-inc.org](mailto:ask@ndi-inc.org).