

## Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (559 word count)

*Post the following article on your websites and/or use in other communication vehicles to let your customers know how they can find a FREE tax preparation site near them.*

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### Find FREE tax preparation near you

FREE tax help is closer than you think, probably right in your neighborhood. [IRS-sponsored tax preparation programs](#) can help you complete and electronically file your tax return for free, and will share information about tax credits and deductions for which you may qualify.

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program offers free tax help to people who generally make \$52,000 or less.

The Tax Counseling for the Elderly program offers free tax assistance for all with priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement issues unique to seniors.

At select tax sites, you have an option to *prepare your own* free basic federal and state tax return using Web-based tax preparation software this year. This is helpful if you do not want to wait in line or need a little help to get started or do not have access to a computer or the internet.

There are IRS-certified volunteers at all VITA and TCE sites who are trained in basic tax law. Many locations have volunteers who speak other languages and can assist those who have difficulty communicating in English. Volunteers are also available to help visitors complete and file their own returns.

In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, VITA and TCE sites provide free electronic filing.

The IRS has partnerships with many nonprofit groups, government agencies and organizations that host tax preparation sites in local communities. With thousands of these sites throughout the nation, there is a very good chance there's one conveniently located near you.

As a supplement to the traditional face-to-face approach for return preparation, some IRS partners have leveraged the power of technology to provide increased access to free tax preparation for individuals and families. Known as Virtual VITA/TCE, this program uses video chat software and secure file sharing technology to connect taxpayers and volunteer preparers in different geographic locations. Partners establish a convenient location for you to complete the required paperwork (including a consent form outlining the process). Your information is then securely transmitted (by scanner, fax, etc.) to an IRS-certified volunteer at another location to complete the return. To guide you through the return preparation process, you'll be able to communicate "virtually" with the preparer using video chat software or other technology provided by the sites.

So, how do you find these free help sites? The locations and hours of operation of sites near you can be found once tax filing season begins using the [VITA locator tool](#) on [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and on the [IRS2Go](#) mobile application. The VITA/TCE sites will begin to appear on the locator tool approximately three weeks before they are scheduled to open. Most sites open around the end of January. You can typically find locations and hours for these volunteer tax preparation sites through city and local community organization hotlines. You can also call the IRS toll-free at 1-800-906-9887.

A majority of the TCE sites are operated by the AARP Foundation's Tax Aide Program. To locate the nearest TCE site or AARP Tax-Aide site, use the [AARP Site Locator Tool](#) or call 888-227-7669.

FREE tax help is closer than you think, and finding it just a matter of a few easy clicks. Please share information about these programs and how to find a site with your neighbors, family and friends who may qualify for this service.

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**Note to the editor:**

VITA/TCE sites are generally operated from the beginning of the tax filing season through April and appear on the locator tool as they open.

**Tweet these messages:**

IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program offers **#FreeTax Prep** if you earn \$52,000 or less. [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), key word **#VITA #IRS**

Tax Counseling for the Elderly offers **#FreeTaxPrep** with priority assistance if you are 60 years of age and older [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). **#IRS #TAX**

Why wait to prepare and file your federal taxes? IRS-certified volunteers can do it now for Free. <http://go.usa.gov/R1S> **#IRS #FreeTaxPrep**