

# IRS News Release

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## Free Tax Help Available Nationwide

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WASHINGTON — More than 12,000 free tax preparation sites will be open nationwide this year as the Internal Revenue Service continues to expand its partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations. The sites provide vital tax preparation services for low- to-moderate-income and elderly taxpayers.

Today, partners and local officials will host news conferences or issue news releases nationwide to highlight the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and their free tax preparation programs. The EITC is one of the federal government's largest benefit programs for working families and individuals. Workers must file a tax return, even if they do not have a filing requirement, and specifically claim the credit to get the benefit.

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offers free tax help generally to people who earn \$53,000 and less. The Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Program offers free tax help to taxpayers who are 60 and older.

Taxpayers need to present the following items to have their returns prepared:

- Proof of identification (photo ID)
- Social Security cards for you, your spouse and dependents
- An [Individual Taxpayer Identification Number](#) (ITIN) assignment letter may be substituted for you, your spouse and your dependents if you do not have a Social Security number
- Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statements (Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc) from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Proof of bank account routing and account numbers for direct deposit such as a blank check
- To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms

- Total amount paid for daycare services and the daycare provider's tax identifying number such as their Social Security number or business Employer Identification Number
- [Forms 1095-A](#), Affordable Health Care Statement, if applicable
- Copies of income transcripts from IRS and state, if applicable

Trained and certified community volunteers can help eligible taxpayers with credits, such as the EITC, Child Tax Credit or Credit for the Elderly. Also, many sites have multilingual volunteers who can assist people with limited English skills.

As part of the IRS-sponsored TCE Program, AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program at more than 7,000 sites nationwide throughout the filing season. Trained and certified AARP Tax-Aide volunteer counselors help all taxpayers with special attention to people age 60 and older.

Before going to a VITA or TCE site, taxpayers should review [Publication 3676-B](#) for services provided. To locate the nearest free tax preparation site taxpayers can use the online [locator tool](#) on IRS.gov or download the free IRS smartphone app, IRS2GO.

The [military](#) also partners with the IRS to provide free tax assistance to military personnel and their families. The Armed Forces Tax Council (AFTC) consists of the tax program coordinators for the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The AFTC oversees the operation of the military tax programs worldwide, and serves as the main conduit for outreach by the IRS to military personnel and their families. Volunteers are trained and equipped to address military specific tax issues, such as combat zone tax benefits and the effect of the EITC guidelines.

In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, most sites will file returns electronically for free. E-file, when combined with direct deposit, is the fastest way to get a refund. The IRS expects to issue more than nine out of 10 refunds in less than 21 days. It takes longer to process paper returns and due to a reduction of the IRS budget, it will likely take an additional week or more to process paper returns meaning that those refunds are expected to be issued in seven weeks or more.

Taxpayers who file electronically also can opt to file now and pay later. If taxpayers owe, they can [make a payment](#) April 15, 2015, using one of many secure methods, like the [IRS Direct Pay](#) free service or by choosing an approved payment processor.

For taxpayers who want to prepare and file their own tax returns electronically, there is IRS Free File. Everyone can use Free File, the free way to prepare and e-file federal taxes either through brand-name software or online fillable forms. Individuals or families with 2014 adjusted gross incomes of \$60,000 or less can use Free File software. Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms, has no income restrictions. For either service, taxpayers must go through [www.irs.gov/freefile](http://www.irs.gov/freefile) to access the programs.