



Free Tax Return Preparation and Filing

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The **IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals.

The VITA program has operated for over 50 years. VITA sites offer free tax help to people who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns, including:

- People who generally make \$60,000 or less
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Limited English-speaking taxpayers

In addition to VITA, the TCE program offers free tax help, particularly for those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

While the IRS manages the VITA and TCE programs, the VITA/TCE sites are operated by IRS partners and staffed by volunteers who want to make a difference in their communities. The IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

VITA/TCE services are not only free, they are also a reliable and trusted source for preparing tax returns. All VITA/TCE volunteers who prepare returns must take and pass tax law training that meets or exceeds IRS standards. This training includes maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all taxpayer information. In addition to requiring volunteers to certify their knowledge of the tax laws, the IRS requires a quality review check for every return prepared at a VITA/TCE site prior to filing. Each filing season, tens of thousands of dedicated VITA/TCE volunteers prepare millions of federal and state returns. They also assist taxpayers with the preparation of thousands of Facilitated Self-Assistance returns.

Before your visit

Before going to a VITA or TCE site, see **Publication 3676-B** for services provided and check out **What to Bring** to ensure you have all the required documents and information our volunteers will need to help you.

Note: Available services can vary at each site due to the availability of volunteers certified with the tax law expertise required for your return.

Some VITA sites offer **Certifying Acceptance Agent service** to taxpayers along with their VITA program.

Also, visit the **FDIC website** for information on where to find a bank that can open an account online and how to choose the right account for you, so that you can **Direct Deposit** your tax refund.

Find a VITA or TCE Site Near You

VITA and TCE sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls and other convenient locations across the country. To locate the nearest VITA site near you, use the **VITA Locator Tool** or call 800-906-9887. For TCE, use the **AARP Site Locator Tool** or call 1-888-227-7669. There are also **VITA Sites Serving Indian Country**.

The IRS's Free File Program is a public-private partnership between the IRS and many tax preparation and filing software industry companies who provide their online tax preparation and filing for free. It provides two ways for taxpayers to prepare and file their federal income tax online for free:

- **Guided Tax Preparation** provides free online tax preparation and filing at an IRS partner site. Our partners deliver this service at no cost to qualifying taxpayers.
- **Free File Fillable Forms** are electronic federal tax forms, equivalent to a paper 1040 form. You should know how to prepare your own tax return using form instructions and IRS publications if needed. It provides a free option to qualifying taxpayers.