

Ten Things to Know about Free Volunteer Tax Help

Each year millions of people have their tax returns prepared for free by IRS-certified volunteers. The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs provide free tax help in communities across the country.

Here are 10 things the IRS wants you to know about these programs.

1. The IRS sponsors both the VITA and TCE programs and works with community organizations to train and certify volunteers.
2. The VITA program offers free tax help and return preparation to people who generally earn less than \$51,000.
3. The TCE program offers free tax help and tax return preparation with priority assistance given to people who are age 60 or older. The AARP Tax-Aide program is part of TCE and helps low to moderate income taxpayers. The IRS certifies this group of volunteers to specialize in retirement issues unique to seniors.
4. The VITA and TCE programs provide free electronic filing. An e-filed tax return means an accurate return. E-file combined with direct deposit is the fastest way to get your refund.
5. Using VITA and TCE can help ensure you get all the tax credits and deductions you may qualify to claim. For example, credits could include the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and the Credit for the Elderly.
6. The IRS continues to expand partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations to offer these vital services. Thousands of free tax preparation sites around the nation are opening in late January and early February.
7. Some sites have bilingual volunteers to assist people who speak limited English.
8. The IRS partners with the military to provide free tax assistance to military members and their families. Volunteers receive training on tax issues related to the military. These include special rules and tax benefits for those serving in combat zones.
9. This year at select sites, you have an option to prepare your own simple federal and state tax return. This option allows you to use web-based tax preparation software for free. This service can help people who need a little help or don't have computer access prepare their own tax return. Volunteers at these sites guide taxpayers to help them prepare and file their own simple tax returns.
10. Local VITA site information is also available at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov). Search the word "VITA" and then click on Free Tax Return Preparation for You by Volunteers. Site information is also available by **calling the IRS at 800-906-9887**. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, visit [aarp.org](https://www.aarp.org), or **call 888-227-7669**.