

Promoting Tax Credits and Federal Benefits in Your Community



The Community VITA / EITC outreach program provides individuals and families with free assistance to prepare and file federal tax returns and identify eligibility for the Earned Income Tax and other credits. In addition to free tax help community VITA programs offer related financial services to eligible families. During the 2009 filing season, VITA / EITC outreach programs in West Virginia served over 150,000 taxpayers including eligible workers, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and rural populations to name a few.

Since 2003, the West Virginia Alliance for Sustainable Families (WVASF) has worked with IRS's Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) office to administer this program in partnership with seven Regional Coalitions for VITA /EITC outreach. West Virginia has over 80 VITA sites through non-profit organizations, churches, schools, community action agencies and financial institutions.

The IRS reports that an estimated 25% of eligible taxpayers are not claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The WVASF in partnership with seven Regional Coalitions are working to close this gap through various outlets one of which is by working with local and statewide employers.

Employee Outreach Benefits Employers

"Thirty to 80% of financially distressed workers spend time at their place of employment worrying about personal finances and dealing with financial issues instead of working." Garman, E.T. and others, March 2005 "Financial Stress Among American Workers"

"More than half of mid and large employers say they provide employee financial education because it improves their productivity by reducing financial stress." Ernst & Young LLP Human Capital Practice, 13, November 2004 The role that financial education companies play in participant behavior in 401(k) plans"

How Your Organization Can Help

- Distribute flyers to employees, customers, and clients
- Post information about VITA / EITC and other credits on your company's website
- Host a "roving" VITA site allowing volunteers to provide tax assistance to employees during tax season
- Talk about tax credits and benefits in staff meetings and make yourself available for employee questions
- Invite guest speakers for "lunch and learn" events to share information on financial awareness topics
- Help employees keep their entire refund by educating about free VITA sites which avoids fees and predatory refund anticipation loans



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Community VITA / EITC Outreach Impact

During the 2009 filing season, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program in West Virginia:

- Filed 16,200 federal tax returns and 4,000 EITC returns, which helped clients claim \$22 million worth of federal tax refunds
- Filed federal returns resulting in \$6 million EITC refunds and \$3 million in Child Tax Credit refunds
- Saved families an estimated \$3.3 million in tax preparation costs
- Pioneered asset development services for eligible taxpayers at sites across the state

Become a VITA Volunteer

- Interact with people by becoming a Tax Preparer, Greeter, or Quality Reviewer
- Attend free training for certification or train online via Link and Learn at the irs.gov website
- Give back to your community by assisting families and individuals in claiming credits and receiving free tax assistance

Become A VITA Site

- Identify a Site Coordinator to lead the site
- High speed Internet services allow for timely e-filing of tax returns
- Training for Site Coordinators and Volunteer Tax Preparers is provided free of charge

Quick Info

- 80+ VITA locations – dial 211 or visit www.wveitc.com
- IRS website – www.irs.gov

