



Iowa Department of Human Services

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DHS Reminds Iowa Workers of Free Tax Preparation Assistance Sites available throughout the state

(Des Moines, Iowa) - The Iowa Department of Human Services reminds low- to moderate-income Iowans, the elderly and those with disabilities that they can get free tax preparation services at sites throughout the state.

Funding for this initiative comes from a three-year grant through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Grant Program. VITA is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) initiative designed to promote and support free tax preparation service for the underserved, in both urban and non-urban locations.

Iowa DHS contracts with the ISED Ventures to promote and deliver the tax preparation services through local tax coalitions. You can find locations and times here:

<http://www.isedventures.org/services/free-tax-preparation/>

DHS is promoting the free tax preparation services in advance of Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Awareness Day on January 30. Last year, 212,000 Iowa workers received more than \$462 million in EITC refunds, with the average refund of \$2,182. If an Iowan worked last year and had income of less than \$52,427, they should check their eligibility for EITC.

"We want to get the word out to those who are eligible to file a tax return, even if they don't owe any tax, can claim the EITC," said Wendy Rickman, head of DHS's Adult, Children and Family Services which administers the VITA grant program in Iowa. "It's money Iowa workers can use for groceries, rent, utilities and other bills."

EITC eligibility can be complex, and varies by income, family size and filing status. By visiting a VITA site, Iowans can access IRS-trained volunteers who can help them determine if they qualify for the EITC and other refundable tax credits such as the Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. Volunteers at these sites, also prepare and e-file (electronically file) tax returns at no cost. More than 600 volunteers have offered their services in Iowa each year since 2010.

"Our community volunteers help Iowans get EITC and the maximum refund they're due," said Michelle Bartusek with ISED Ventures. "This is money Iowa families can save or use to pay off bills, buy a car to get to work, or make a down payment on a home."

Below are the number of federal returns prepared through the program.

Tax Year	Federal Returns Prepared
2013	14,579
2012	12,660
2011	11,700
2010	11,628

*Source: TaxWise Reports/Year-end Report Data to ISED from members

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More details on Free Tax Preparation: <http://www.isedventures.org/services/free-tax-preparation/>