

February 6, 2020

***Iowa Workers Get Free Tax Preparation Assistance***  
***Sites available throughout the state***

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

Funding for this initiative comes from a two-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 services for the underserved, in both urban and non-urban locations.

DHS contracts with the Iowa Center for Economic Success to promote and deliver the tax preparation services through coalition partners across the state. You can find locations and times for tax preparation assistance at: <http://theiowacenter.org/taxes/> or at <http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>.

"Our volunteers train and certify with the IRS to prepare tax returns for Iowans and ensure they receive the credits and refunds for which they are eligible. Our focus remains on preparing accurate returns at no cost for Iowans who meet criteria for the program" said Michelle Bartusek with Iowa Center for Economic Success. "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."

During the 2018 filing season, over 141,000 Iowa families claimed over \$61.7 million in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC eligibility can be complex and varies by income, family size, and filing status.

By visiting a VITA site, Iowans can access IRS-trained and certified volunteers who can help them determine if they qualify for the EITC and other refundable tax credits, such as the Child Tax Credit or education credits. Volunteers at these sites also prepare and e-file (electronically file) tax returns at no cost. More than 740 volunteers prepared over 19,000 returns during last year's filing season.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit can be extremely helpful for working Iowans, providing them more money to help them pay for groceries, housing costs and other bills. We want to spread the word and encourage Iowans eligible to file a tax return, even if they don't owe any taxes, to take full advantage of the EITC," said DHS Director Kelly Garcia.

Number of federal returns prepared through the Iowa VITA program:

Tax Year	Federal Returns Prepared
2018	19,987
2017	19,875
2016	19,950
2015	20,002
2014	19,189
2013	14,579
2012	12,660
2011	11,700

\*Source: TaxWise Reports/Year-end Report Data from coalition partners to The Iowa Center

###

More details on Free Tax Preparation: <http://theiowacenter.org/taxes/>