



## FREE Tax Preparation Q&A

### 1. Who qualifies for the FREE tax preparation services?

Working families who made \$54,000 or less in 2016, persons with disabilities, veterans, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns can have their taxes prepared for FREE.

The service also is available to individuals without children. This 40+ year old federal program is called **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)**.

### 2. When will the services begin?

The services begin January 17, 2017 throughout Broward County.

### 3. Does this include electronic filing?

Yes. Electronic filing assures a quick return on their tax claims.

### 4. What is the VITA program?

The VITA program is an excellent opportunity for individuals and families to keep more of their money and save on tax preparation fees. This service is provided by trained IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers who will -in addition to preparing taxes for free - also determine an individual's eligibility for special tax credits such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly and education credits to assist tax payers in maximizing their returns refunds.

### 5. What is the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)?

The federal **EITC** for taxpaying low-to-moderate-income working people reduces the amount of taxes owed and refunds the difference if the credit is larger than the amount owed. The credit changes from year to year and is based on earnings, number of qualifying children and marital status.

### 6. How can families find out if they qualify?

Working families are encouraged to **call 2-1-1** or **(954) 537-0211** to find the closest VITA Tax Site.

**7. Will the 2-1-1 service be available in other languages?**

211 provides assistance in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, French, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese and sign-language at designated tax sites.

**8. How many people take advantage of this service and what is the average rebate?**

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Florida had more than 2 million individuals and the average rebate in 2013 was \$2,450.

In the 201 tax season, more than **5,816** Broward County taxpaying working families and individuals took advantage of the VITA program and had their income taxes prepared by trained VITA volunteers. More than **\$6.3 million** in taxes were refunded to working families. Nearly 40% of the individuals assisted last year qualified for additional tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

**9. Are individuals who have not taken advantage of the EITC in the past eligible for a credit?**

YES. Individuals who have not taken advantage of EITC in the past may be eligible for the credit for up to three years retroactively.

What are the EITC income requirements?

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), below are the EITC income requirements for the 2017 tax season.

**IRS: EITC Income Limits and Maximum Credit Amounts\***

[Earned Income](#) and adjusted gross income (AGI) must each be less than:

If filing...	Qualifying Children Claimed			
	Zero	One	Two	Three or more
<b>Single, Head of Household or Widowed</b>	\$14,880	\$39,296	\$44,648	\$47,955
<b>Married Filing Jointly</b>	\$20,430	\$44,846	\$50,198	\$53,505

**Investment Income Limit**

**Investment income** must be \$3,400 or less for the year.

## Maximum Credit Amounts

The maximum amount of credit for Tax Year 2016 is:

- \$6,269 with three or more qualifying children
- \$5,572 with two qualifying children
- \$3,373 with one qualifying child
- \$506 with no qualifying children

### **10. Do individuals have to wait until January to determine if they are eligible for EITC?**

No. They can visit the easy to use IRS site at: [Do I qualify for EITC?](#)

### **11. How many locations will provide the FREE tax preparation?**

The services will be provided throughout Broward County at more than 14 permanent tax sites at local nonprofit locations as well as via a tax mobile unit visiting 20+ partner sites.

### **12. What organizations in Broward are responsible for/support the services?**

In Broward County VITA/EITC services are provided through a community-wide, initiative made possible through funding and leadership from the Children's Services Council of Broward County (CSC), an independent taxing authority established to enhance the lives of Broward County's children, the IRS, Hispanic Unity of Florida and United Way of Broward County.

Other key partners and funders include: 211 Broward, Bank of America, Broward College, Broward County's Family Success Administration, Broward County Libraries, Community Access Center, DeVry University, HandsOn Broward, Nova Southeastern University, Sheridan Technical College, SunTrust Bank and Third Federal Savings & Loan.