



FREE Tax Preparation Q&A

1. Who qualifies for the FREE tax preparation services?

Working families who made \$55,000 or less last year, 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 22, 2019 throughout Broward County until April 15, 2019.

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 in Broward and what is the average rebate?

During the 2018 tax season, \$6.3 million in taxes were refunded to Broward County working families and individuals and more than 6,011 people were served across 16 site locations in Broward.

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.

The maximum amount of EITC credits for 2019 is as follows:

\$6,431 with three or more qualifying children

\$5,716 with two qualifying children

\$3,461 with one qualifying child

\$519 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 [16 permanent tax sites](#) at local nonprofit locations as well as via a tax mobile units.

12. What organizations in Broward sponsor the services?

This Broward community-wide initiative is made possible by the Children's Services Council of Broward County (CSC), the IRS, Hispanic Unity of Florida, United Way of Broward County, and Citi. Other key partners and funders include: 211 Broward, Bank of America, Broward College, Broward County, Broward County Libraries, Community Access Center, HandsOn Broward, SunTrust Bank, and Third Federal Savings & Loan.

In 2018, Hispanic Unity of Florida (HUF) received national recognition by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in the Celebrating Champions of Caring: Partnership Innovation and Best Practices category for its service excellence in Broward County's VITA program.

For a list of tax sites, please visit the [VITA webpage](#) or contact 2-1-1.