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Volunteers Needed by IRS for Tax Season

Every year, the IRS initiates programs to assist people who require help in preparing their tax submissions. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs are programs where the IRS solicits help from volunteers who want to learn about taxes and help others by preparing their federal income tax returns. The aim of these programs is to provide free tax return preparation assistance for low-to-moderate income taxpayers, senior citizens, people with disabilities and taxpayers who are not conversant in English.

IRS spokesman Gregg Semanick says, “The IRS and its partners are once again looking for volunteers that are interested in taking a little time to learn about taxes and then helping others by preparing federal income tax returns for free. Volunteers are certified to prepare simple tax returns for people whose incomes are \$50,000 or less. People of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to volunteer. There is a role for anyone who is interested and wants to help.”

These programs will kick off in January and go on until the tax submission deadline in April. Last year, more than 88,000 people volunteered and helped prepare more than 3 million tax returns.

If you are interested in volunteering, here are some of the pertinent points you should know:

The IRS will set up special VITA/TCE sites where those seeking help in tax preparation would go to obtain these services. These centers are usually community or

neighborhood centers, libraries and schools or other convenient locations. Most of the centers will also provide free electronic tax filing facilities.

The volunteer program is not limited to the actual work of tax preparation. There are 3 separate capacities you can serve in, namely tax preparer, greeter and site coordinator. Site coordinators may also do tax preparation while greeters basically distribute forms and answer people's questions.

You will receive special training in order to fit into your assigned role. The IRS will provide free tax law training, e-file training and all the materials needed to prepare basic individual income tax returns.

Upon successful completion of your training you will be awarded a certificate. Your training will take place between November and January and is conducted online. Visit www.irs.gov/app/vita for more information on the Link and Learn Taxes Program, which is the online tutoring program for volunteers. The IRS may also organize classroom teaching.

You will be required to serve an average of 3 to 4 hours a week during tax season. If you have any questions about this program, you can contact Jodonna Powell by email at Jodonna.G.Powell@irs.gov.