



For Immediate Release

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State and Local Partnership Offers Free Tax Help

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Serves Individuals and Families in Need

State and local officials are reminding people that free tax help is available in communities across the state, including 20 sites in Dane County alone. These Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites help serve low to moderate income residents, seniors, and people with disabilities prepare their tax returns.

The program offered at the Financial Education Center at 2300 South Park Street is a partnership among:

- Wisconsin Department of Revenue
- Dane County
- City of Madison
- United Way Dane County
- UW Extension Financial Education Center
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Last year, the VITA program in Dane County helped approximately 6,000 individuals and families prepare their taxes resulting in \$5,861,187 in refunds. More than 78% of the taxpayers surveyed at these VITA sites said they would use their refunds to pay household related bills and medical expenses.

Taxpayers can get help with e-filing their returns at more than 200 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (VITA/TCE) sites across the state. Call 211 to find a VITA or TCE site in your area.

Please be sure to bring the documents below to the volunteer tax site:

- All documents about the income you received during the year
- Any tax documents you got in the mail
- Legal names and social security numbers for everyone you will include on your tax return
- Signed rent certificate or property tax bill if you will file for Homestead Credit
- Your bank account numbers to get refunds deposited into your account (example: deposit slip)
- Your spouse must come if married and filing jointly

Free tax help is available at the VITA site located at 2300 Park Street - Madison on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 12:00 - 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This location also offers credit union representatives to open accounts for direct deposit, the ACCESS program to determine eligibility for FoodShare and other programs, as well as other community resources.

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Many of the VITA volunteers who help prepare the taxes are retired Wisconsin Department of Revenue staff. In addition, current Revenue employees staff the center to double-check the accuracy of returns prior to filing. The director of the Financial Education Center is paid in part by Dane County and state funding. The City of Madison donates the office space for the VITA site.

Below are comments from the partners involved:

Wisconsin Department of Revenue Secretary Roger Ervin

"It's an amazing partnership between state and local governments. All of the partners involved truly care about serving the people in our community. We all play a different role, but each tax season we join forces to help provide tax assistance for individuals, working families and our seniors."

Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk

"Tax time is no fun for anybody, and this is an excellent opportunity to get free help to do your taxes."

City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz

"This is a great partnership of state and local governments that will get tax assistance and benefits directly to people our community. I hope Madison residents will take advantage of this free service this tax season."

United Way Dane County President Leslie Ann Howard

"This great partnership helps us connect more area families to the tax credits and benefits they need during these challenging economic times. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit provides families with 3 children over \$450 a month to buy groceries, pay medical bills, and keep current on household expenses."

UW Extension Financial Education Center Administrator Deb Neubauer

"The UW Extension Financial Education Center is thrilled to be a partner on this great project. During these tough economic times, people need to save money where-ever possible. Getting their taxes done for free at a certified, accurate tax preparation site is just smart money management.:

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