

**From:** [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#)  
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**Subject:** IRS Tax Tip 2018-17: How Taxpayers Across the Country Can Have their Taxes Prepared for Free  
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IRS Tax Tips

February 1, 2018

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### Issue Number: IRS Tax Tip 2018-17

#### Inside This Issue

### How Taxpayers Across the Country Can Have their Taxes Prepared for Free

Millions of families get their taxes done every year for free through two programs sponsored by the IRS. These help people with lower and moderate incomes:

- **The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance:** This program is also known as VITA. It offers free tax return preparation to eligible taxpayers who generally earn \$54,000 or less.
- **Tax Counseling for the Elderly:** TCE is mainly for people age 60 or older, but offers service to all taxpayers. The program focuses on tax issues unique to seniors. AARP participates in the TCE program through AARP Tax-Aide.

The IRS works with local community groups to train and certify thousands of volunteers. Eligible taxpayers should consider taking advantage of these free programs. This includes people with disabilities and people who speak limited English.

Here are some additional details about these two volunteer programs:

- **Free Tax Prep Around the Country.** The IRS works with community organizations to offer free tax help at thousands of sites nationwide. These sites usually begin opening in late January and early February.
- **Free Electronic Filing.** VITA and TCE provide free electronic filing. E-file is the safest, most accurate way to file a tax return. Taxpayers can combine e-file with [direct deposit](#) for quicker refunds.
- **Volunteer Preparers Trained to Help Find Tax Benefits.** The IRS certifies the VITA and TCE volunteers. They help people get all the tax benefits for which they are eligible. These include the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#), [American Opportunity Tax](#)

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- [Credit](#), the [Child Tax Credit](#) or the [Credit for the Elderly](#).
- **Bilingual Help.** Some VITA and TCE sites provide bilingual assistance.
  - **Help for Military.** Many military bases have VITA sites. These sites offer free tax assistance to members of the military and their families. Volunteers can help with [military tax topics](#). Some of these include special rules and tax benefits that apply to those serving in [combat zones](#).
  - **Self-Preparation Option.** At many VITA sites, people who earn \$64,000 or less may be able to prepare their own tax returns. They can do this using free web-based software. This option is for those who do not have a home computer or do not need much help.
  - **Site Information Available on IRS.gov.** Taxpayers can find the nearest VITA site by using the [VITA Locator Tool](#) at IRS.gov. They can also do so by downloading the IRS2Go app. Site information is also available by calling the IRS at 800-906-9887. Find more on AARP Tax-Aide locations by using the [AARP Locator](#).

Share this tip on social media -- #IRSTaxTip: How Taxpayers Across the Country Can Have their Taxes Prepared for Free.

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