

City of Phoenix Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)



Frequently Asked Questions

What is VITA?

- VITA provides **free** tax preparation services to low or limited income individuals and families.
- VITA volunteers are certified by the IRS to prepare basic tax returns.

How is the City of Phoenix Involved in VITA?

- The City of Phoenix partners with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and other community partners to support VITA sites within the City of Phoenix.
- Our goal is to increase public awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other available tax credits, provide free tax preparation services, and promote asset building resources.

How does VITA help the community?

- During the 2018-19 tax season, 4,744 households had their taxes prepared at City of Phoenix VITA sites and received over \$6.2 Million in federal tax refunds. This represents dollars that go back into the community where we live and work!

How can I get involved?

Volunteer Job Descriptions:

- Do-It-Yourself Guide** – Assist tax payers in completing their own taxes, utilizing free VITA tax software.
- Greeter/Screenener** – Greet taxpayers and create a welcoming atmosphere. Perform a screening process prior to the client meeting with a tax preparer.
- Interpreter** – Provide interpretation assistance to clients seeking tax preparation services.
- Instructor** – Teach tax law and use of tax preparation software to VITA volunteers.
- Tax Preparer** – Prepare basic 1040 tax returns and guide clients with utilizing the “Do It Yourself” software.
- Site Coordinator** – Provide coordination, organization and supervision of VITA site and volunteers.

What is expected from me?

1. Register and sign up for a New VITA Volunteer Information Session on the City of Phoenix’s volunteer website: volunteer.phoenix.gov. Information sessions are held in October, November and December.
2. After completion of the New VITA Volunteer Information Session, register online to attend trainings for the volunteer position of your choice. All trainings are free and are offered at various times and locations through November, December and January.
 - Tax Preparer - 21 hours of IRS sponsored in-classroom training or self-paced on-line training to obtain IRS certification.
 - Site Coordinator and Instructor - the above training and certification plus 10 hours of site coordinator and instructor’s specific training.
 - Greeter/Screenener - 3 hour in-classroom training.
3. Volunteer a minimum of 4 hours per week during the tax season, mid-January through mid-April.

What if I make a mistake on someone’s tax return?

All volunteers are protected by the Volunteer Protection Act if they comply with IRS and City of Phoenix standards of conduct and use due diligence when preparing taxes. In addition, each tax return undergoes a quality review process before being transmitted.

For more information contact Sanida.Starr@phoenix.gov or call 602-262-4948 or visit our website phoenix.gov/eitc