

IRS**News Release****Media Relations Office****Tel. 617-316-2224****Peggy Riley****ME-2008-10****Fax: 617-316-2244****For Release: Immediate****February 20, 2008**

IRS Partners Host Free Tax Help for Low-Income, Elderly Taxpayers

Augusta... Nearly 12,000 free tax preparation sites will be open nationwide this year as the Internal Revenue Service continues to expand its partnerships with nonprofit and community organizations performing vital tax preparation services for low-income and elderly taxpayers.

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program offers free tax help to people who earn less than \$40,000. The Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Program offers free tax help to taxpayers who are 60 and older.

Volunteers are trained in basic tax law and are familiar with the qualifications for tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit. The EITC is already the government's largest cash assistance program targeted to low-income Americans. However, not all eligible taxpayers may be aware or claim the credit.

Taxpayers need to bring to the VITA/TCE sites the following items:

- ◆ Photo identification
- ◆ Valid Social Security cards for the taxpayer, spouse and dependents
- ◆ Birth dates for primary, secondary and dependents on the tax return
- ◆ Current year's tax package, if received
- ◆ Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, from all employers
- ◆ Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- ◆ A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- ◆ Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- ◆ Other relevant information about income and expenses
- ◆ Total paid for day care
- ◆ Day care provider's identifying number

Trained community volunteers can help eligible taxpayers with all special credits, such as the Child Tax Credit or Credit for the Elderly. Also, many sites have language specialists to assist people with limited English skills.

In addition to free tax return preparation assistance, most sites use free electronic filing (e-filing). Individuals taking advantage of the e-file program will receive their refunds in half the time compared to returns filed on paper — even faster if taxpayers have their refund deposited directly into their bank accounts. To file taxes electronically on a Married Filing Jointly tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

As part of the IRS-sponsored TCE Program, AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program at nearly 8,000 sites nationwide during the filing season. Trained and certified AARP Tax-Aide volunteer counselors help people of low-to-middle income with special attention to people age 60 and older. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, call 1-888-227-7669 or visit AARP's Internet site.

Note to Editors: A listing of volunteer sites for your area is available upon request.