



NEWS

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Heart of Florida United Way's Tax Initiatives Give Central Floridians an Economic Boost

30 Free Tax Prep Sites Available in Central Florida to Assist Taxpayers

ORLANDO, Fla. (February 27, 2018) – The IRS estimates that about 1 in 5 eligible taxpayers don't claim the credits they deserve. In Florida, that translates to more than \$1.1 billion in potential refunds being “left on the table.” To address this issue, Heart of Florida United Way has deployed multiple efforts to keep hard-earned dollars in the pockets of Central Floridians.

Throughout Central Florida, nearly 30 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites are available to help individuals and families make the most of their refund. Each of these locations has on site IRS-certified trained volunteers available to personally assist clients to file their taxes. Heart of Florida United Way is committed to ensuring that people in Central Florida can easily and accurately file their taxes to receive the refunds and credits they deserve.

Clients should visit www.HFUW.org/Taxes or dial **2-1-1** to find their nearest VITA location and hours of operation, hours vary per site. Some locations are walk-in, while others require appointments.

In order to receive assistance from the IRS-certified trained volunteers at any VITA location, you must be prepared to present:

- Valid photo ID
- Copy of your 2016 tax return, if available
- Social security card or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number for you, your spouse and any children born before 12/31/2017
- Income documentation, including W-2 forms for all jobs held during 2017, and any 1099 forms showing other income for the year
- Bank account information (including routing and account numbers) or a blank check for direct deposit, if applicable
- Health Care 1095A

Additionally, for those who feel comfortable filing online, United Way teamed up with H&R Block to offer **MyFreeTaxes.com** to individuals making less than \$66,000 last year. This safe, secure and free option allows residents to keep more dollars in their pockets.

“We know that nearly half of Central Floridians are working hard, but are still not able to make ends meet,” said Jeff Hayward, president & CEO of Heart of Florida United Way, citing the 2017 ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) Report. “We fight every day for the financial stability

of ALICE. Every penny we can save them or return to them, we want to do so. It's our hope that everyone who qualifies for these tax services take advantage of them."

Through both tax services – in-person VITA locations and MyFreeTaxes.com – filers are encouraged to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is a federal credit claimed with lifting more people out of poverty than any other initiative.

Criteria to qualify for the EITC are:

- Your income in 2017 must be less than
 - *If you are SINGLE...*
 - \$48,340 if you have three or more qualifying children
 - \$45,007 if you have two qualifying children
 - \$39,617 if you have one qualifying child
 - \$15,010 if you have no qualifying children
 - *If you are MARRIED filing jointly...*
 - \$53,930 if you have three or more qualifying children
 - \$50,597 if you have two qualifying children
 - \$45,207 if you have one qualifying child
 - \$20,600 if you have no qualifying children
- Tax filers can receive up to:
 - \$6,318 with 3 or more qualifying children
 - \$5,616 with 2 qualifying children
 - \$3,400 with one qualifying child
 - \$510 with no qualifying children

To learn more about United Way's tax assistance or EITC, visit www.HFUW.org/Taxes. Dial 2-1-1 to speak with a call specialist to locate a VITA site close to you.

About Heart of Florida United Way

Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) is Central Florida's most comprehensive health and human services charity and the largest provider of funds to the region's most critical health and human service programs. Last year, it raised and managed \$24.4 million throughout Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. HFUW is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income, health and basic needs. It operates United Way 2-1-1, Central Florida's information and assistance, crisis, suicide and referral helpline; Volunteer Resource Center; Gifts In Kind Center; Emergency Homelessness Services; and the Ryan White Part B program, which administers more than \$2 million to provide HIV/AIDS services and referrals. HFUW impacts more than 650,000 individuals annually through its direct service and funded programs. United Way partners with local businesses, government, other charities to increase awareness of local health and human service issues and to inspire hope, provide options and create possibilities for people in need. Visit www.HFUW.org for more information, or call (407) 835-0900.

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