



For Immediate Release

United Way Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Begins Feb. 1 ***\$22.2 million refunded to Arizona taxpayers last year through free service***

Tucson, AZ (January 25, 2022) — The year 2021 meant continuing adaptations to preparing and filing annual income tax returns and 2022 presents many of the same challenges. Because of this fact, United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona will launch its annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program on February 1 with special COVID-19 protocols in place.

To assist taxpayers, free and professional filing assistance will be available through United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona for individuals and families earning up to \$73,000 annually. Once again, this year, United Way of Tucson's VITA program has partnered with GetYourRefund.org/uwtsa to offer its tax support from IRS-certified volunteers entirely online. This online system will help the VITA program reach more taxpayers, process returns more efficiently, and ensure the health and safety of volunteers and community members. VITA will also be offered at several tax return preparation sites across Southern Arizona run by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona and IRS Certified VITA volunteers. Appointments are required at most locations. Visit www.UnitedWayTucson.org/VITA to schedule an appointment.

VITA tax preparation helps taxpayers maximize their refund and saves an average of \$250 per return. The program helps taxpayers access all tax credits for which they are eligible – including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) and has become an essential service to thousands of Arizona residents. United Way's work through the VITA program will be important as ever this year, helping people access missing CTC advance payments and the remaining half of the credit, that can only be accessed by filing a 2022 tax return.

In 2021, VITA volunteers completed 13,024 tax returns for Arizonans. Those returns resulted in \$22.2 million in refunds, including \$6.6 million in Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Many Southern Arizonans also utilized the online service GetYourRefund.org last year when the program first helped keep VITA services available in the face of COVID-19. GetYourRefund.org services generated millions in refunds, credits, and Economic Impact Payments across 16 states, and United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona looks forward to expanding its reach in Arizona this tax season.

VITA is a community initiative led by United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, in collaboration with Catholic Community Services, and partners throughout Northern and Western Arizona. Together, the collaborative is the largest tax preparer in the state of Arizona, serving nine of Arizona's 15 counties.

The deadline to file taxes this year is April 18, 2022, and this tax year there are three no-cost options for taxpayers including:

- GetYourRefund.org – taxpayers can connect with VITA volunteers online
- In-Person Assistance –in-person assistance is available by appointment only at select sites. Make an appointment at www.UnitedWayTucson.org/VITA

- DIY Self-Prep Software – online services for those who feel confident in filing on their own.

“We saw and experienced so many disruptions in 2020 which continued into 2021. This year, as we face additional challenges from the continuing effects of the pandemic, United Way of Tucson continues to help Southern Arizonans rebuild by providing free tax services and other vital financial wellness support,” said Tony Penn, president and chief executive officer of United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. “As we prepare for this year’s tax season, we are committed to providing this essential free tax filing service to help those in our community who need it most. Our VITA program offers highly experienced volunteers who provide help in a safe and compassionate matter,” he concluded.

VITA volunteers must complete an intense IRS-sponsored certification program every year, and most return year after year. Individuals seeking tax assistance will have their respective returns prepared by a volunteer, with a second volunteer assigned to review the return before it is filed. With more complex cases, a third volunteer will triple-check the return.

*Access United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona’s online VITA services:
GetYourRefund.org/uwtsa*

*In-person sites include: (schedule subject to change)
No walk in’s will be taken, all appointments must be scheduled at
www.UnitedWayTucson.org/VITA*

City of Tucson – Ward III
1510 E. Grant Rd. 85719
Available by appointment ONLY

El Pueblo Neighborhood Center
101 W. Irvington Rd. 85714
Available by appointment ONLY

Literacy Connects
200 E. Yavapai Rd. 85705
Available by appointment ONLY

Truly Nolen at William’s Center
432 S. Williams Blvd. 85711
Available by appointment ONLY

Goodwill Job Connection
1703 W. Valencia Rd. 85746
Available by appointment ONLY

Interfaith Community Services
2820 W. Ina Rd. 85741
Available by appointment ONLY

Quincie Douglas Community Center
1575 E. 36th St. 85713
Available by appointment ONLY

Those seeking quality tax preparation assistance at no cost should visit www.unitedwaytucson.org/vita for complete information about locations, schedules and required documents.

COVID-19 protocols

United Way of Tucson seeks to minimize the risk of transmission, infection and illness from COVID-19 following guidance from the CDC and local health authorities. These efforts include mitigation strategies such as use of masks, hand sanitizing, social distancing, cleaning, and disinfecting practices. All VITA volunteers working at physical locations will be fully vaccinated, including boosters. All taxpayers choosing to visit an in-person VITA site must be vaccinated and show proof of an FDA approved vaccination. Masks will be required while indoors and will be available at all in-person sites. Taxpayers unable to show proof of vaccination are encouraged to use GetYourRefund.org/uwtsa to access our free online tax preparation service.

About United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona is building a thriving community by uniting people, ideas and resources. We transform individual lives and bring long-lasting, systemic change to our community by focusing on the key, underlying issues. We fight for the education, financial stability and health of every person in our community. Our role as community convener enables us to form strategic partnerships, mobilize the best resources and be the conduit for needed change. Learn more at www.unitedwaytucson.org

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