



## **JOHNSON COUNTY Social Services**

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### **For Immediate Release**

#### **FREE TAX PREPARATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

**Johnson County, Iowa** – Tax time just got a little less stressful. Thanks to the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, qualifying low- to moderate-income workers in Johnson County can receive free tax preparation assistance from trained volunteers. VITA 2017 services begin Wednesday, January 25, with a clinic at the Iowa City Public Library, 123 South Linn Street, from 5:45 pm to 8:45 pm. Clinics will be available at several locations, days and times in Iowa City, Coralville and North Liberty through Wednesday, April 12.

The Internal Revenue Service estimates that 20 percent of American workers do not claim the refundable tax credits for which they are eligible, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC is a special benefit for working people with low to moderate income. Workers who qualify for the EITC and file a federal tax return may be eligible for a portion or all of the federal income tax taken out of their pay during the year. They may also receive additional cash back from the IRS. Even workers whose earnings were too small to owe income tax may be eligible for the EITC.

January 27, 2017, marks the 11th anniversary of EITC Awareness Day, a nationwide effort to increase awareness about EITC and free tax preparation sites. This year, the IRS is promoting EITC and providing information on other refundable tax credits for which workers may be eligible. This includes the American Opportunity Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and the Additional Child Tax Credit.

U.S. Rep. Dave Loebsack, a strong supporter of the Earned Income Tax Credit, said, “As hard-working Iowa families start preparing to file their 2016 income taxes, I urge anyone who is eligible to take advantage of EITC. I was pleased to work to permanently extend this important tax credit, and I’m especially pleased that the University of Iowa’s College of Business students, along with other volunteers, are again helping folks prepare their taxes.”

VITA Tax Clinics provide trained student volunteer tax preparers from the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business to people who, in 2016, earned less than \$55,000. Last year VITA volunteers filed 1,300 tax returns for Johnson County participants, with Federal refunds totaling \$1,724,726.

VITA is a partnership among Johnson County Social Services, the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business, Iowa City Public Library, Iowa City Community School District, and United Way of Johnson County. The program is funded by Johnson County and ISED Ventures, an Iowa asset development organization that creates opportunities for low- and moderate-income Iowans to achieve financial stability. ISED receives funding for this program from the Department of Human Services and the Internal Revenue Service.

VITA Tax Clinics will be offered at the following locations (appointments are not necessary):

- 1) Iowa City Public Library**, 123 South Linn Street; Saturdays (11 am to 5 pm), January 28, February 4, April 1 and 8; Sundays (12:30 pm to 4:30 pm), January 29, February 5, 12, 19 and 26, March 5 and 26, April 2 and 9; Mondays (5:45 pm to 8:45 pm), April 3 and 10; Tuesday (5:45 pm to 8:45 pm) April 11; Wednesdays (5:45 pm to 8:45 pm), January 25, February 1, 8, 15 and 22, March 1, 8, 22 and 29, April 5 and 12. Spanish interpreters are available at the Sunday clinics.
- 2) Southeast Junior High**, 2501 Bradford Drive, Iowa City; Sundays (1 pm to 4 pm), February 12, 19 and 26, March 5. Interpreters available by appointment only
- 3) Northwest Junior High**, 1507 8th Street, Coralville; Mondays (6 pm to 9 pm), January 30, February 6, 13 and 20. Spanish interpreters are available at this site.
- 4) Garner Elementary**, 80 Birch Court, North Liberty; Mondays (6 pm to 9 pm), February 27, March 6, 20 and 27. Interpreters available by appointment only.

To schedule an interpreter or to request an interpreter for a language other than Spanish (including sign language), contact An Leonard at 319-356-6090 at least 4 days in advance.

For more information on these free tax preparation sites, call the United Way toll-free at 2-1-1 (from a landline telephone) or 1-866-469-2211. Or visit the Johnson County website at [www.johnson-county.com](http://www.johnson-county.com).

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