

Volunteer Tax Preparers Needed for Newark Now's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program



What is VITA?

The volunteer tax preparation programs were established in the late sixties under the direction of the IRS. The VITA program provides free tax preparation to low-income families and individuals. The program is overseen and operates under the authority of the IRS. All VITA providers are registered with the IRS and VITA preparers are certified with the IRS.

Newark Now's VITA program

Newark Now has operated the VITA program for eight years. In year 2012, tax filing year 2011, will be its ninth year as a VITA program. In 2011 (tax year 2010) with the support of our volunteers and interns we were able to provide free tax assistance to over 4,000 low-income individuals and families resulting in \$6.9 million Federal and State tax refunds. In addition to the tax refunds, Newark Now's VITA program was able to save taxpayers \$800,000 in filing fees. In addition to preparing current year returns Newark Now also prepared previous year returns (tax years 2004-2009). Last year's season was an amazing success because of the volunteers and interns willingness to help others. The number of tax preparations and the total dollars refunded to taxpayers through Newark Now's VITA program have grown exponentially each year. Your support will have a direct economic impact on the community.

What is needed to become a Volunteer Tax Preparer

No tax preparation experience is necessary. However, volunteers and interns need to be reasonably computer literate to prepare taxes. All volunteers and interns must attend a short orientation course and also some software training. VITA tax preparers become certified with the IRS through the [Link and Learn](#) program. All tax preparers are required to achieve at least the Basic Certification from the IRS Link and Learn program. All materials needed for the certification process are available online. The certification exams are open book and do not have time limits.

What we ask of the Volunteers and Interns

In addition to completing the basic certification we also ask our volunteers to commit to a total of 30 hours of volunteering for tax preparations. Requirements of interns will be coordinated with their respective college/university. Newark Now VITA program will begin preparing taxes returns for 2011 filing year on January 15th 2012. The majority of our VITA sites will close on April 15th. However, the Financial Empowerment Center VITA site is open year round. For volunteers what we are asking for is contribution of

approximately 3 hours a week of your time. We are flexible in regards to volunteers' schedules as we will be open six days a week, Monday through Saturday. In 2010, Newark Now had six fixed tax sites at the following locations:

Newark Now's Financial Empowerment Center
103 Bloomfield Ave, Newark NJ 07104

Newark City Hall
920 Broad St, Room B29, Newark NJ 07102

Essex County College
303 University Avenue, Green/EOF Area, Newark NJ 07102

One Stop Career Center
990 Broad St, Newark NJ 07102

Essex County Department of Citizen Services
50 South Clinton Street, East Newark NJ 07018

Episcopal Community Development Corporation
620 Clinton Avenue, Newark NJ 07108

Hours of operations for sites in 2012 are to be determined, but we will have new sites opening in Montclair, Paterson, and Bergen County.

Additional Information for College/University students

Newark Now has internships for the VITA program with many local colleges. If one is not already established we are more than willing to work with your school to provide an internship with Newark Now's VITA program. Please contact us if you are interested in doing an internship.

Additional Information for Volunteers & Interns

The certification process is conducted online at [IRS' Link and Learn site](#). In addition we also have hard copies of the training publications. We will be offering training on a regular basis for our volunteers. This training will also include software training provided by Newark Now and also through the TaxWise training program. Newark Now will also be hosting training given by the Internal Revenue Service and State of New Jersey's Division of Taxation in the fall of 2011.

For more information or to volunteer/intern with Newark Now VITA please call 973-624-3733 or email Jeremy Guenter jguenter@newarknow.org.