

UNITED WAY – BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

In the United States, we are a network of 1,150 member organizations – each led by a local volunteer board that sets local priorities for their community. Our vision is a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability and healthy lives.

We mobilize resources, forge unlikely partnerships, and bring together communities to fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community.

\$3.7 Billion

Revenue



52 Million

Served

10.3 Million

Donors & Supporters



37,000

Local Partners

PRIORITIES FOR THE 115th U.S. CONGRESS



EDUCATION

School Readiness, Middle and High School Success, Post-Secondary Completion

KEY POLICIES

Childcare Funding • Pre K Access • Every Student Succeeds Act Implementation • Wrap-Around Programs • College Access & Affordability



FINANCIAL STABILITY

Tax Credits for Workers, Job Training, Housing, Nutrition Income Supports

KEY POLICIES

Earned Income Tax Credit • Child Tax Credit • Volunteer Income Tax Assistance • Workforce Development Funding • Housing Funding • SNAP • EFSP • Child Nutrition Programs



HEALTH

Expand Access to Health Care

KEY POLICIES

Healthcare Laws • Medicaid • CHIP • Maternal Infant Home Care • Behavioral Health Services

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

Charitable Giving, 2-1-1, Anti-Trafficking, Nonprofit Sector Support

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

UnitedWay.org/publicpolicy



THE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA) PROGRAM – A PROVEN PATHWAY TO FINANCIAL STABILITY

The whole community benefits when working people can turn their financial tightrope into a stable pathway to success. That's why United Way focuses on lasting solutions that go beyond charity, because financially stable people are more likely to have access to quality healthcare, provide a good education for their children, and contribute to their local economies.

A key component of success in building financial stability is ensuring hardworking families secure and keep the tax credits they are eligible for through free, high-quality tax preparation and filing services.

COMMUNITY HELPING COMMUNITY THROUGH VITA

Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), volunteers become IRS-certified tax preparers and provide qualifying individuals and families with free, reliable assistance in filing federal tax returns. Most taxpayers utilizing VITA earn an annual household income of less than \$40,000 and come from traditionally hard-to-reach and underserved communities, including people with disabilities, the elderly, and Native Americans. VITA helps hardworking Americans meet their tax obligations while claiming the full amount of any refunds for which they are eligible.

VITA leverages volunteer power to ensure millions of low- and moderate-income, working families have access to:

- Quality Tax Preparation
- Asset-Building Resources
- Financial Education Services

During the 2016 filing season, thousands of VITA volunteers prepared more than 2.1 million tax returns nationwide. Free tax assistance resulted in more than \$2.2 billion returning to local communities in 2016 – dollars spent to cover child expenses, pay bills, purchase groceries and household necessities, as well as to save for the future. The local dollars are made possible largely thanks to tax credits that successfully incentivize and reward work.

SUSTAINING AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Limited federal funding for Community VITA began with a demonstration VITA Grant in 2008. The Fiscal Year 2016 appropriation of \$15 million represents only a fraction of the cost of operating Community VITA tax sites nationwide. While the tax returns are prepared by volunteers, sponsoring community organizations contribute significant resources to recruit and train the volunteers to IRS standards, supervise the volunteers to ensure accuracy, provide office space and computers for electronic filing, and conduct outreach to community members.



Demand for VITA services continues to grow. Given the significant return on investment in this successful partnership, a relatively small boost in funding from Congress can go a long way in enabling more constituents to access this proven resource.

United Way urges Congress to continue to support this successful public-private partnership by:

- **Shoring up investments in the Community VITA Grant Program to \$30 million**
- **Formally authorizing the Community VITA Grant Program**

For additional information, please contact:
Caitlin Carey, United Way Worldwide
703.836.7112 / Caitlin.Carey@unitedway.org

