





[News](#)

- Type Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)
-  [Print](#)
-  [Email](#)
-  [Most Popular](#)
-  **SHARE** 
- [0](#)

More West Valley sites will provide free tax help

Number of locations has doubled from 2011

by **David Madrid** - Mar. 6, 2012 11:22 AM
The Republic | [azcentral.com](#)

[Recommend](#) 2 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

[Tweet](#) 4

Low- to moderate-income families in the West Valley are eligible for free income-tax assistance.

The Valley of the Sun United Way is offering its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program at eight sites in the West Valley this year.

The program is available only during tax season. Volunteers trained to IRS standards help individuals and families with low or limited income, those with disabilities, senior citizens and military personnel and their families.

Charlie Boyce, Valley of the Sun United Way vice president of community impact, said there are more than 60 tax assistance sites in the state. Last year there were only four sites in the West Valley.

Because of the need for more tax assistance in the region, Valley of the Sun United Way worked with the IRS, area businesses, education providers and non-profit organizations to fill the West Valley gap in services by doubling the number of sites.

Boyce believes that more sites will be added to the Northwest Valley for next year's tax season.

Boyce said this year there is a focus on making sure taxpayers apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is available to workers who earned \$49,078 or less in 2011.

"That tax credit is the largest tax credit that the federal government has, and it is for working families who earn a certain level of income," Boyce said. "They are eligible to apply for that credit and get that money back into their households."

Families may receive a maximum \$5,751 through the tax credit, but they must apply for the tax credit or they won't get it. Only four out of five people eligible for the tax credit apply for it, he said.

Last year, more than half a million Arizonans received \$1.2 billion in Earned Income Tax Credits, and nationwide, \$59.5 billion in credits were claimed, making the tax credits one of the nation's largest anti-poverty programs, Boyce said.

This year, he said, even more Arizonans could qualify for the credit.

"There is still money on the table, and that's part of the work we are doing, to ensure that every single family that comes into one of the VITA sites is really screened thoroughly to see what they are eligible to receive," Boyce said.

Beatriz Beltran, 46, of Avondale, learned about the tax assistance program last year. She said she had been paying about \$300 to have her taxes professionally done, and now she completes her tax returns for free.

"With the VITA program I saved a ton of money, including the \$300, and the volunteer was so helpful. He got me my tax credits that I didn't know I was eligible for," Beltran said.

She learned of the program at her work at Adelante Health Care. She said this year, her employer will host a VITA site, and next year, she hopes Adelante will host sites at each of its seven health centers.

The volunteer who helped Beltran do her taxes last year made her feel comfortable, she said.

"It was like hanging out with a friend," Beltran said. "He told me 'Alright, this is what you need to do to prepare for next year. Collect this information.' He was like my tax adviser. And all for free. I have all the information. I have my checklist, and I'm ready to go."

"Normally I would wait until the last minute to do my taxes, like the day before they are due."

The deadline to file tax returns is April 17.

Beltran, who completed her tax returns Saturday, recommends VITA to those with low to medium incomes.

"I know that everybody needs a little help, and this is a great service to help us get closer to becoming financially healthy," Beltran said.

Those who seek tax assistance should bring these documents to accurately determine Earned Income Tax Credit eligibility and to prepare tax returns:

Social Security cards or an IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number card or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number letter for all household members.

- Picture identification for taxpayer and spouse.
- Birth dates for all persons listed on the tax return.
- Proof of all income, including W-2 and 1099 forms.
- Amount of money paid to child-care provider last year.
- Name, address and tax identification number of child-care provider.
- Bank account and routing numbers for direct deposit.
- Copy of last year's tax return, if available.





- Type Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

-  [Print](#)

-  [Email](#)

-  [Most Popular](#)

-

-  [SHARE](#)    

-

0

MORE FROM AZCENTRAL

- [Woman finds Prince Albert in a wall](#) (azcentral.com | thebuzz)
- [Adopted boy shook when asked about sex, police say](#) (azcentral.com | news)
- [Police: Brother of mutilated boy targets homeless](#) (azcentral.com | news)
- [Buckeye police cars crash into each other en route to call](#) (azcentral.com)
- [Peyton Manning expands search with Dolphins, Titans meetings](#) (azcentral.com | cardinals)



MORE FROM THE WEB

- [Prophet Economist Issues Eerie Warning. Disturbing Charts Expose The Unthinkable.](#) (Newsmax.com)
- [The Pizza Box Recycling Mystery](#) (Recyclebank)
- [4 risky places to swipe your debit card](#) (Bankrate.com)
- [8 Examples of "Black Privilege"](#) (MadameNoire)
- [12 Companies that Could Go Bankrupt Very Soon](#) (StreetAuthority)

[2]