

# SCGOVHEALTH

Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health  
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## **Free tax aid offered to help people file for valuable tax credits**

Free tax aid is available at locations throughout Sarasota County for quick filing of federal individual income tax returns at AARP tax aid sites and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.

Residents who earned \$49,000 or less last year can use the VITA tax aid sites in Sarasota County. There are no income limits or age limits at the AARP sites. This service is not for business returns or complex tax issues.

The United Way of Sarasota County will operate eight VITA sites (six in Sarasota County) as part of a coordinated effort between the United Way's Financial Stability Partnership and the Sarasota County Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Task Force. The goal is to help ensure that residents who are eligible for the various tax credits receive their earned share. The other 10 tax aid sites will be operated by the AARP foundation. There are no appointments at the AARP or VITA sites.

Both the AARP and VITA free tax sites allow residents to electronically file their tax returns so they can receive refunds, if eligible, sooner. Generally, a refund can be posted to a person's bank account within seven to 10 days after the visit to one of the AARP or VITA sites. Trained IRS-certified volunteers will be at each location to provide free personal income tax assistance to EITC-eligible residents and older adults (some guidelines apply). Services include responding to questions; assisting eligible persons, including older adults, in filing their taxes; and support in reporting and receiving the benefit of all available and eligible credits, including the EITC and Child Tax Credit.

Many people will qualify for the EITC for the first time because their income declined, their marital status changed or they added children to their families. Families with three or more children also get an extra boost with a larger EITC this year. The EITC can make life a little easier for workers struggling to make ends meet in today's tight economy—up to \$5,600, or more. Yet, the Internal Revenue Service estimates one in four eligible taxpayers could miss out on this valuable tax credit.

Persons who earned \$49,000 or less from wages or self-employment in 2010 are encouraged to see if they qualify. Eligible taxpayers can get their EITC only if they file federal income tax returns – even if they are not otherwise required to file – and specifically claim the credit.

Taxpayers should bring the following to help determine their EITC eligibility and to help prepare their tax returns:

- photo identification
- valid Social Security cards for the taxpayer, spouse and dependents
- birth dates for primary, secondary and dependents on the tax return
- current year's tax package, if received
- wage and earning statement(s) Forms W-2, W-2G or 1099-R from all employers
- interest and dividend statements from banks (Form 1099)
- Form 1098, mortgage interest/property tax information, if applicable
- a copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit
- other relevant information about income and expenses
- total paid for day care
- day care provider's identifying number.

The Sarasota County Commission issued a proclamation recognizing February as Sarasota County Tax Credit Awareness Month. Since these tax credits also are generally spent locally, this helps to improve the county's economy. In addition, this valuable service helps older residents and middle-income and lower-income residents who either need assistance in filing their taxes or who need to consult on a tax issue.

For more information, including a link to online EITC filing, visit the Sarasota County government website at [www.scgov.net](http://www.scgov.net). If you do not have computer access, call United Way 2-1-1 of Manasota Inc. by dialing 211 for more information. Those with mobile or pay phones should call 941-308-4357.

All VITA tax aid sites are currently open. There are no appointments, but walk-ins are welcome at all locations. Local AARP and VITA tax aid e-file sites and their hours are as follows:

#### **SARASOTA**

Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (starting Feb. 1)  
Fruitville Library  
100 Coburn Road

Mondays starting Jan. 31, 3-7 p.m.; Thursdays, 1- 4 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.\*

\*Last return will be started by 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays.

Gulf Gate Library

7112 Curtiss Ave.

Monday-Thursday, 2-6 p.m. (starting Feb. 1)  
Selby Library  
1331 First St.

Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Senior Friendship Center  
1888 Brother Geenen Way

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 - 8 p.m.  
Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
North Sarasota County United Way Building (VITA site)  
1445 Second St.

Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Janie's Garden (VITA site)  
2350 Central Ave.

### **LAUREL**

Wednesdays, 3-7 p.m.  
Laurel Park Community Center (VITA site)  
509 Collins Road

### **VENICE**

Fridays, 1-4:30 p.m. (opens Feb. 4)  
Bay Indies Park  
950 Ridgewood Ave.

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. (opens Jan. 31)  
Closed Monday, Feb. 21, for Presidents Day  
Jacaranda Library  
4143 Woodmere Blvd.

Wednesdays, 4-8 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (except Feb. 12)  
South County Family YMCA (VITA site), Venice site  
701 Center Road

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.  
(opens Feb. 1)  
Venice Community Center  
326 S. Nokomis Ave.

### **ENGLEWOOD**

Mondays-Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Sun Trust Bank  
333 S. Indiana Ave.

Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (VITA site)  
St. David's Episcopal Church  
401 S. Broadway

**NORTH PORT**

Mondays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (opens Jan. 31)  
Holiday Park Recreation Center (Recreation Hall)  
5401 Holiday Park Blvd.

Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
North Port City Hall  
4970 City Hall Boulevard

Mondays, 5-8:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (VITA site)  
(Available Jan. 29; Feb. 5, 12 and 26; March 5 and 26; and April 2 and 9)  
North Port Social Services  
6919 Outreach Way

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