

Free Help Preparing Taxes

Free E-File income tax preparation help will be available at sites across Kansas starting today, Monday, Jan. 25.

One of the largest sites will be at the Docking State Office Building, 915 SW Harrison St., Room 163. The assistance sites are a partnership between the Kansas Department of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, called VITA.

Community IRS trained and certified volunteers will be on site to help complete electronically filed Federal and State individual income tax returns and limited Kansas Homestead Claims & Property Tax Relief Claims. The program offers tax help to low- and moderate-income people, generally earning \$51,000 or less, who cannot prepare their own tax returns.

The volunteer tax preparers can help with special credits, such as Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled for which some filers may qualify.

The Docking site will be open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday through the April 15 filing deadline.

AARP Kansas also offers Tax-Aide through the IRS-sponsored Tax Counseling for the Elderly program at additional sites throughout Kansas. Those sites provide free tax help to seniors.

Items taxpayers should bring with them to have their tax returns prepared include:

- A copy of last year's federal and state income tax return, if they have one
- Photo identification for the taxpayer and their spouse
- Birth dates and social security cards, or a social security letter with the full number, for the taxpayer, spouse and any children in the household born before Dec. 31, 2013
- Wage and earning statements such as W-2 forms from all employers, W-2G gambling income, and 1099(R) from pension, annuity, retirement or profit-sharing plans, IRAs, and insurance contract distributions, interest and dividend statements from banks (form 1099 INT), unemployment insurance benefit statements received any time in 2012 (1099-G), and all other 1098 and 1099 forms
- Statements received from a mortgage company during 2013
- College expense information for college students
- Other relevant information about income and expenses such as total amount paid for day care and the day care provider's federal identifying number, and any notices sent to the taxpayer by the IRS in 2012
- Workers with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINS) should bring the ITIN card sent to them by the IRS
- Those wanting to use direct deposit for their refund should bring a check from the account where they want the money deposited

Due to changes in the law, renters should be aware that they are no longer eligible for a Homestead Claim. The Food Sales Tax credit is also now non-refundable so it does not generate a refund beyond the amount of taxes owed.

Both spouses must be present to sign the required forms if they are filing jointly and bank routing numbers and account numbers must be provided to have the refund deposited directly into a

checking or savings account.

The department's year-round Taxpayer Assistance Center is located in room 150 of the Docking Building. It also offers Kansas income tax return and homestead claim assistance and is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

No appointment is required at either location, assistance is provided on first come first served basis. For more information, call the Kansas Department of Revenue, 785-368-8222.

To locate the nearest VITA site, call 1-800-906-9887. A list of AARP Kansas Tax-Aide sites is available by calling 1-888-227-7669. A listing of times, locations and services offered for Shawnee County is available at <http://www.shawnee.ksu.edu/>