

# United Way of Broome County offering free tax assistance programs



By [Kevin Quinn](#)

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VESTAL (WBNG) -- Monday marks the first day of tax season with the IRS now officially accepting returns until April 15.

For more than a decade, the United Way of Broome County has been offering a Volunteer Tax Assistance, or VITA, Program aiming to take the stress away from filing on time.

"We're always talking about financial stability," said United Way of Broome County 211 Coordinator Candace Gregory. "If you've gone out and paid to have your taxes done it can be very pricey. This is free and we save the taxpayers of Broome County thousands and thousands of dollars."

To qualify for the program, there are specific income requirements but the United Way offers a separate program for tax assistance for seniors.

"You have to make less than \$64,000 a year for total household income," said Gregory. "We set up three sites for those VITA sites. We also set up four AARP sites which follow some of the same guidelines without the income requirements."

The program, run entirely by trained community volunteers, is aimed to do more than just help you file on time. The United Way also helps file for tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC.

"If you have children in the household and you fall below a certain pay scale you can get additional tax credits, which brings even more money back into the household," said Gregory.

The program helps around 1,000 residents annually. You can call 211 to set up an appointment. These appointments will take place through April 11.

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