

FINDLAY, OH (Jan. 4, 2021) In the interest of COVID-19 safety for both clients and volunteers, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA) has been canceled for this year.

“While we know our clients, who are our friends and neighbors will be disappointed, as are the volunteers; it is with an abundance of caution that we make our decision,” said Larry McDaniel, who heads up the tax volunteers, in an email statement. “The health and safety of our volunteers and clients is paramount in our decision.”

VITA is an IRS-sponsored community service designed to help low- to moderate-income households prepare and file their taxes free of charge. It is made possible by a partnership between the Findlay Area Tax Volunteers, United Way of Hancock County, VITA and the Findlay-Hancock County Public Library.

Last year, more than 1,700 tax returns were slated for completion through VITA. The volunteers were able to complete about 1,000 before the operation was halted March 16 because of the pandemic.

Depending on contact information provided, those who signed up for the program last year will receive a phone call from a UWHC volunteer, an email, or a text alert to notify them of the cancellation.

Legally, United Way of Hancock County is not able to refer clients to other tax **services. However, an online search of “Tax Return Services, Findlay, Ohio” or key words “Tax Return Preparation, “Tax Consultants” in the yellow pages of the** phone book will lead to tax service providers.

McDaniel said the VITA volunteers hope to revisit the program in the future. Deadline to file for 2020 taxes is currently April 15.

Those who are trying to find last year's tax returns for their 2020-2021 taxes, were sent a copy of their return via email or were provided a paper copy after their taxes were completed by the VITA volunteers. Since VITA has not applied to be a tax preparer in 2021, they do not have access to last year's files and returns.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where can I get my taxes done?

We are not allowed to refer you other services because of legal liability. You can **do a search on the internet for “Tax Services Findlay, Ohio,” or search the local phone book in the Yellow Pages for “Tax Return Preparation, “Tax Consultants,” or “Tax Representatives.”**

Q: Is there some other way I can get my taxes done for free?

Unfortunately, we are not aware of any other free tax preparation services.

Q: When is the tax deadline?

A: Currently April 15

Q: Will the VITA program be offered next year?

A: VITA leadership would like to continue the program in 2022. Keep an eye on the news for announcements closer to next year's tax season.