



UNITED WAY BAY AREA

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Taxes Are Hard, Volunteers Needed to Help Make It Easy

SAN FRANCISCO (October 15, 2019)—United Way Bay Area’s Earn It! Keep It! Save It! program is seeking volunteer tax preparers, interpreters and greeters to help staff Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites throughout the Bay Area during the 2020 tax season. No prior experience with tax preparation is required—training is provided. With the support of trained, IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers, VITA sites provide free tax preparation to low to moderate income individuals and families at more than 200 locations across eight Bay Area counties. To volunteer, visit **earnitkeepitsaveit.org/volunteer**.

VITA volunteers help Bay Area households receive the best possible refunds by ensuring they claim all deductions and tax credits available. For example, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit—one of the most powerful poverty-fighting safety net programs in the country—can provide eligible families with three or more qualifying children a \$6,557 credit. Sites also help families access the California Earned Income Tax Credit (Cal EITC). Families with multiple children can claim the maximum credit of almost \$3,000, plus a new \$1,000 credit for families with children 5 and under.

“When I saw the sense of relief and the smile that my first taxpayer had once I had prepared her return and she had fulfilled her obligation to file taxes, I was hooked,” said VITA volunteer Pete Shyvers. “United Way Bay Area sets the stage for a great experience.”

Free volunteer training provided by community partners and the IRS begins in December and January. Volunteer tax preparers are invited to attend three days of classroom instruction. There is also a need for outreach volunteers. These roles require less training. For tax professionals or experienced volunteers, an online training and accelerated certification tool is available.

Site operation hours vary, but most volunteers are asked to volunteer regularly for at least one four-hour shift each week from late January until April 15, 2020. Volunteers of all ages and backgrounds are welcome. There is a special need for bilingual Spanish speakers.

Last year, almost 2,800 Earn It! Keep It! Save It! volunteers across the Bay Area helped file more than 78,000 federal and state tax returns, bringing more than \$80 million in federal tax refunds back to the local Bay Area community. Since 2003, volunteers have facilitated more than half a billion dollars in refunds to Bay Area households—an estimated 80 percent of which is spent locally.

Learn more: earnitkeepitsaveit.org/volunteer

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About United Way Bay Area

United Way Bay Area (UWBA) fights for financial stability and equal opportunity for residents in eight Bay Area counties. UWBA takes an innovative, holistic approach to ending the cycle of poverty through advocacy and programs that support all ages—providing free access to family support, financial and career coaching, job opportunities and basic needs. www.uwba.org

Learn more about United Way Bay Area: uwba.org