



## About the Free File Alliance

A 2001 Office of Management and Budget initiative instructed the IRS to provide free and secure online tax return preparation and filing services to taxpayers. In accordance with this OMB directive, the IRS began working in partnership with the tax software industry to develop a solution. The result was the formation of the Free File Alliance, LLC, a group of tax software companies who provide free commercial online tax preparation and electronic filing services.

Since Free File made its debut in 2003, more than 30 million Americans have used its products. Twenty software providers offered their services through Free File in 2010. Each sets its own eligibility criteria, which is usually based on age, income or state residency. The only requirement is that 70 percent of the nation's taxpayers must be eligible for at least one software product. An income ceiling is set and adjusted annually.

**freefile**

IT'S FAST. IT'S SAFE. IT'S FREE.

### Learn More

For more information,  
you may email  
[partner@irs.gov](mailto:partner@irs.gov)



## IRS **freefile** Introduces **Free Assisted Self-Service Tax Preparation**

A new concept  
in providing free  
tax preparation  
services for even  
more taxpayers



# the **How to provide free tax assistance to the 16 million taxpayers who need your help.** issue

Free tax help has never been more critical. Yet, limited resources make it difficult to reach all who need assistance. The IRS estimates 16 million more taxpayers would use your free help, if it were available.

**Assist more taxpayers by helping them prepare and file their own returns. Bring IRS Free File self-service into your free tax sites as an additional option for taxpayers.**

Volunteer sites could make computers available for self-service use, direct customers to either self- or full-service and have one volunteer assist several self-service users at once. Members of the Free File Alliance will provide free federal and state return software in participating states. In addition, the IRS and the Alliance have developed procedures which will allow the IRS to provide you with the number of returns filed under this program.

**Give this self-help concept a trial run. Consider a small pilot project this year.**

next step

## Benefits to VITA/TCE Sites

People pump their own gasoline. They use automated tellers. They use airline kiosks to get boarding passes. They scan, pay and bag their own groceries. Self-service is a well-established and accepted way of providing more services with fewer resources. And, people value faster options. With just a little help at the beginning, people learn to do things for themselves.

IRS free tax preparation sites have provided top-notch service to the nation's taxpayers for more than 40 years. Not only do volunteers prepare tax returns through one-on-one personal interviews, but some also offer critical financial services that truly make a difference in peoples' lives. Adding a self-service option expands on the IRS' current tax assistance programs.

This Free File self-service offers significant benefits to VITA/TCE:

- Prepare and e-file more tax returns
- Better target taxpayers who need one-on-one help
- Reduce lines at peak times
- Increase options for taxpayers
- Sites credited with Free File return data

## Benefits to Taxpayers

People who prepare their own tax returns are among the fastest growing segments of taxpayers. Tax software has transformed the preparation industry, as the step-by-step guides make it easier for people to prepare an accurate return and claim the tax credits they are due.

Many taxpayers have simple returns and can prepare their own taxes with a little help. Access to computers and fast Internet connections remains the barrier to discovering Free File software is available and simple to use.

Among the Free File self-service benefits to taxpayers:

- Access to brand-name online tax software
- Assistance from volunteers as needed
- Reduced wait time for tax prep
- Expanded free tax help options
- Builds confidence to file without assistance

