

Press Release

For immediate release

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FREE Tax Assistance Suspended – But you WILL have time to utilize this service

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Barry County's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program suspended their tax preparation services effective March 13, 2020. This includes tax appointments scheduled at the Hastings Public Library, Delton District Library, Putnam District Library and Thornapple Credit Union.

The Treasury Department announced Friday, March 20, 2020 that it has moved Tax Day to July 15, 2020. This means that once things settle down, we WILL be opening up our VITA sites and contacting all of those individuals whose appointments were cancelled. There WILL be opportunities to take advantage of this program prior to the new tax filing deadline of July 15th.

Those households who have the capability of emailing their tax documents to the United Way offices, should contact Courtney to see if their return can be completed virtually. This would consist of a phone interview and documentation would be sent electronically between the client and preparer. This service could be provided now while social distancing is in effect.

Please keep in mind, the office of **the Barry County United Way, as well as other partner organizations in the BCEC will be closed to the public through at least March 31**. We seek to limit exposure to our clients and staff as many other organizations are also doing. Courtney Ziny can be contacted by e-mail at courtney@bcunitedway.org or 269-945-4010.

Since the end of January, Barry County's VITA program has assisted 473 households in collecting over \$740,000 in tax refunds and credits! This program, supported by the IRS, offers FREE tax assistance to households with an income less than \$60,000. IRS-certified volunteers provide FREE income tax return preparation to eligible individuals and families. Preparers help inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Homestead Property Tax Credit and Home Heating Credit.

A partnership between Davenport University, Barry Community Foundation and Barry County United Way, the local VITA program has been offering FREE tax assistance to residents for over 10 years!