

PRESS RELEASE

50 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909-2459
(401) 444.0600 | fax (401) 444.0635
www.LIVEUNITEDri.org



Contact: *Sandi Connors, Executive Vice President, Director of Strategic Marketing & Communications*
sandi.connors@uwri.org | (401) 444-0652

Through Free Tax Preparation Service, United Way Helps Return More than \$27 Million to the Pockets of Working Rhode Islanders

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program allows eligible taxpayers to have their income tax returns completed and filed for free in order to receive the money they're due in tax refunds and tax credits

Providence, R.I. (December 12, 2019) Thanks to United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI), more than \$27 million was returned to the pockets of working Rhode Islanders this year through its management of the statewide Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) campaign.

It is the initiative's largest single-year financial benefit for local, eligible taxpayers since UWRI's involvement began in 2005, and represents the value of tax refunds and tax credits claimed, and the value of the tax preparation services provided to participating taxpayers.

"The results and reach of VITA, and the direct impact on Rhode Island families and our state's economy, are truly remarkable," said Cortney Nicolato, President and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island. "This is a program that benefits everyone, but more importantly, it helps our neighbors meet immediate needs."

Led by UWRI and in partnership with Citizens Bank, VITA provides free tax preparation services to eligible Rhode Islanders who earn \$55,000 or less annually. The goal of the effort is to ensure working taxpayers receive the money they're due in tax refunds and tax credits, such as the EITC and Child Tax Credit, which reduce tax burden and can lead to a larger refund.

In 2019, UWRI and Citizens made VITA available at 24 program sites statewide, each staffed by IRS-trained and certified volunteers who offered services in multiple languages and filed returns electronically. In total, more than 21,000 individual income tax returns were completed and filed by volunteers in Rhode Island.

Together, United Way and Citizens Bank funded \$221,380 to deliver the VITA initiative in the Ocean State in 2019, leveraging their investment more than one-hundred times over to benefit low- and moderate-income working Rhode Islanders.

###

United Way of Rhode Island is changing lives and strengthening our communities by investing in proven programs that work over the short-term, and are scalable over the long-term. For more information, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.