PNC Bank and IRS Offer Free Tax Prep Help

- Help available at 200 sites in 16 states and Washington, D.C.
- IRS assists with filing; PNC offers faster access to refunds, free check cashing
- Lower-income taxpayers can learn if they qualify for tax credit of up to $6,242

PITTSBURGH, Jan. 27, 2016 – PNC Bank will once again collaborate with the Internal Revenue Service's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to bring free tax assistance to low- and moderate-income taxpayers, along with an expanded effort to help them receive faster refunds.

PNC will work in partnership with local community organizations at more than 200 VITA sites in 16 states and Washington, D.C. IRS-certified volunteers working with the VITA program will be available to provide tax filing assistance for people who generally earn less than $54,000 a year.

Since 2011, VITA participants have had the option to receive faster refunds on PNC Visa® refund cards usable at 30 million locations. Last year, approximately 955 PNC cards were distributed to VITA clients. Other PNC services offered at VITA locations include financial education programs and no-cost refund check cashing at participating sites and designated PNC branches.

"We are very appreciative of the important role financial institutions play in supporting the VITA program," said Debra Holland, IRS commissioner, Wage and Investment Division. "They continue to provide a valuable service to low-income taxpayers and communities across the country through their free tax preparation and financial education programs."

Many tax filers miss out on a beneficial tax credit – the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), either because they don't claim it when filing, or don't file a tax return. VITA volunteers will determine if taxpayers qualify for the EITC and other refundable credits. Last year, the credit returned over $65 billion to almost 27 million workers. The tax credit can mean up to $496 in EITC for people without children, and up to $6,242 for those with three or more qualifying children. The credit varies by income, family size and filing status. The average EITC amount last year was $2,400.

"Free check-cashing services and affordable prepaid refund cards are some of the many resources PNC offers as part of our effort to help taxpayers in low-income communities establish mainstream banking relationships," said Cathy Niederberger, managing director of PNC's Community Development Banking Group. "We provide an alternative to high-fee check cashing services for the nearly 30 percent of unbanked and under-banked households that may lack access to affordable financial services."

In addition to providing a low-fee alternative for those VITA clients without bank accounts, the Visa® card offers taxpayers quick and easy access to their refunds.

Card benefits include:

- Speedy refund: Receive refunds typically in less than 21 days once the request is filed by the VITA site.
- Ease of use: Buy items in stores, online, by mail or phone.
- Pay everyday expenses: Pay bills and make purchases such as groceries, gas, and clothing.
- Access to ATMs: Use cards fee-free at 40,000 PNC and Allpoint® network ATM locations.

What to Bring to a VITA Site
Taxpayers who visit a VITA site should bring picture identification, Social Security cards, wages and earnings statements (Form W-2) from all employers, interest statements from banks (Form 1099), a copy of their previous year's tax return if available, and other relevant information about income and expenses.

This year, PNC teams support VITA sites in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. Dates may vary by site. For a list of sites and available dates, please visit http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep.

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