

## The Jackson Sun

# Free tax preparation, filing services for West Tennessee taxpayers

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The Wal-Mart Foundation is working with United Way of America and One Economy to enhance free tax preparation and filing services for taxpayers in West Tennessee, according to a news release from United Way of West Tennessee.

The VITA campaigns are part of a \$3.6 million Wal-Mart Foundation grant to United Way of America and will fund enhanced operations to 90 United Ways in cities nationwide, the release said. United Way of West Tennessee is one of the recipients of the grant award.

The United Way VITA Free Tax Preparation program kicked off on Jan. 31. In the two weeks following, about 310 returns totaling more than \$300,000 in Earned Income Tax Credits and \$600,000 in refunds for residents of the 10 counties served have been filed.

The United Way of West Tennessee has partnered with Bancorp South, First State Bank, Dyersburg State Community College, McNairy Adult [Education](#) Center, UT Extension, Carroll County Library, Bolivar-Hardeman County Library and the Franklin-Wilkinson VFW Post 1294 to bring free tax assistance to West Tennesseans.

For a complete list of eligibility requirements, locations and preparation times, call 211, or visit [www.unitedway.tn.org](http://www.unitedway.tn.org).

“We are looking forward to seeing the positive impact that this grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation will have on families visiting VITA sites in West Tennessee,” said Alan H. Turner II, president and CEO of United Way of West Tennessee. “This year more than ever, families need to take advantage of every dollar made available to them, and thanks to the Wal-Mart Foundation and our local corporate partnerships, we are in a better position to help them do just that.”

“Many West Tennessee residents are unaware of the tax credits they qualify for,” said Margaret McKenna, president of the Wal-Mart Foundation. “Through this Wal-Mart Foundation grant, we are able to help eligible consumers take advantage of tax credits, and provide them with opportunities to save [money](#) on tax preparation fees.”

Nationally, the IRS estimates that about 20 percent of eligible individuals and families are unaware that they qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable federal income tax credit for low- to moderate-income individuals and families. In West

Tennessee, two out of three families qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit, yet only one in three know to file for it, the release said.