

Volunteers needed to help low-income Jackson residents file taxes

By [Tarryl O. Jackson | Jackson Citizen Patr...](#)

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The Community Action Agency in Jackson is seeking volunteers to help low-income residents file their 2009 income taxes, starting in January.

The agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program provides free tax preparation to families and individuals whose annual household income is a maximum of \$49,000.

How to help

To volunteer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, call the Community Action Agency at 784-4800 or 800-491-0004 or visit www.caajlh.org.

"It's a great way to get involved in the community," said Jessie Murray, CAA spokeswoman. "We see volunteers take a personal stake in bringing as much money back to the community as they can."

This year, about 50 volunteers helped bring in about \$4.9 million to more than 4,200 households in Jackson, Hillsdale and Lenawee counties through their 2008 income tax returns. The year before, the program brought in more than \$3.5 million in returns to about 3,900 households in the tri-county area.

In Jackson County, VITA assisted 2,951 households with their 2008 taxes, resulting in more than \$3.4 million in tax returns. This compares to 2,842 households that received more than \$2.5 million the previous year.

Volunteers are needed to greet and register taxpayers, file tax credits, prepare returns and translate for clients who do not speak English.

"We have volunteers who come year after year," Murray said. "We can use volunteers of any age ... anybody who wants to give back and make an impact in their community."

In January, volunteers will receive free instruction and training materials sanctioned by the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

Volunteers are needed during the day, evenings and weekends, and are encouraged to give between three and six hours a week during peak tax time in February.

Grass Lake resident Larry Socie, 70, has been a volunteer for about five years. He said the best part is getting to know the people he helps.

"I tell them, 'I get to walk in your shoes for a moment,' " he said. "It's all about the people."