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**Free Tax Filing Assistance for Eligible Long Islanders**

**Long Island's Largest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program  
Available at Bethpage Federal Credit Union**

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***Taxpayers to also Receive Important Details on  
How to Claim up to \$8,125 Earned Income Tax Credit***

**Bethpage, NY – February 5, 2014** – For the eleventh year, [Bethpage Federal Credit Union](#), New York State's largest credit union, will help low- to moderate-income households on Long Island prepare their tax returns for free, by offering Long Island's largest Volunteer [Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) program at 12 of its Long Island branch locations.

Beginning February 5, 2014 through April 12, 2014, over 100 IRS certified volunteers, including bilingual tax assistors, will be available to meet with eligible taxpayers with 2013 incomes of \$52,000 and below to file tax returns. Bethpage's VITA Program is open to all eligible Long Islanders, including non-Bethpage members. VITA services will be available on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons in 12 Bethpage branches including: Elmont, Freeport, Hempstead, Massapequa, Roosevelt, Westbury, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Farmingdale, Patchogue, West Babylon and Riverhead. No appointments needed. Bethpage will also provide mobile VITA assistance available at various public locations throughout Long Island. For a complete listing of locations, addresses, contact numbers and times, go to [www.bethpagefcu.com/community/events/vita](http://www.bethpagefcu.com/community/events/vita) or call 1-800-628-7070.

As part of its VITA program, Bethpage also partners with the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island to educate eligible taxpayers about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), an anti-poverty program available to one in five eligible Long Island households. VITA volunteers will work with taxpayers to ensure that eligible families know how to claim their Earned Income Tax Credit, which could bring an additional \$8,125 into the hands of deserving Long Island families and be claimed up to three years back.

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“Bethpage’s VITA program has grown substantially since it was first implemented in 2004, and continues to grow significantly each year. To date, over 7,500 individuals have filed their tax returns through Bethpage, bringing over \$9.2 million in tax refunds back to the Long Island economy and \$2.3 million in EITC money,” said Linda Armyn, Senior Vice President, Bethpage Federal Credit Union. “Essential to its success each year is the number of certified, trained volunteers who join us, 75% of whom are accounting, finance and business students from partnering colleges and universities including NYIT, SUNY Old Westbury, Farmingdale State College, Touro Law School, LIU Post, Briarcliffe, and Stony Brook University, just to name a few. Without these student volunteers, the program would not be where it is today.”

“At a time when the national dialogue is moving toward building economic equity and opportunity for all, the EITC is a national program that helps to make that a reality for working families,” said Gwen O’Shea, President and CEO, Health & Welfare Council of Long Island. “Bethpage Federal Credit Union’s VITA program brings this national program to struggling Long Island households through free tax preparation services that are professional, confidential and reliable. HWCLI is proud to partner with Bethpage to educate and inform Long Island families about EITC and VITA sites.”

Bethpage coordinates the largest VITA program on Long Island. In 2013, Bethpage completed 2,028 VITA tax returns and helped secure IRS total refunds of over \$2.5 million, a 34% increase from 2012. Rob Suarez, Bethpage’s AVP of Community Development, who coordinates Long Island’s largest VITA program added, “Bethpage’s VITA program has steadily grown each year, to help more and more low- to moderate-income Long Island households not only file their returns for free but receive thousands of dollars yearly from the EITC. Last year alone, over \$685K was secured for Long Island families from the EITC, money that would have otherwise gone unclaimed.”

Under the guidelines of the VITA program, Bethpage coordinates the services of its volunteers, who are trained by the Internet Revenue Service (IRS), to electronically prepare all specific forms including, among others, 1040EZ, 1040A, and 1040. Bethpage is also an e-file site where taxpayers can file their income tax returns electronically. E-filers will receive refunds twice as quickly as those using paper returns in as little as 10 business days when they choose Direct Deposit. Taxpayers who do not have a direct deposit account and wish to receive payment in this format can open a Bethpage account when filing their tax returns.

Enacted by Congress in 1975, the EITC is a Federal income tax credit for workers who don’t earn a high income and meet certain eligibility requirements. Taxpayers who qualify and claim the credit could pay less Federal tax, pay no tax or possibly get a tax refund. Long Island’s Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition, which was developed by the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island, was initiated to create awareness for VITA and EITC.

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Qualifying taxpayers planning to take advantage of Bethpage's VITA program need to bring the following materials with them for review: 2012 tax package of wage and earnings statements (Form W-2), all interest and dividend statements (Form 1099-INT), all other income and expense information, a copy of last year's Federal and State returns if available, bank routing and account numbers for Direct Deposit, total paid for day care and provider's tax ID, social security cards for you, your spouse and dependents and as well as photo identification. To file taxes electronically on a married filing joint tax return, both spouses must be present. For more information on VITA and paperwork needed, please visit Bethpage's "Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program" page located under the community section at [www.bethpagefcu.com](http://www.bethpagefcu.com) or call 1-800-628-7070.

[Bethpage Federal Credit Union](http://www.bethpagefcu.com) is a not-for-profit financial cooperative, existing solely to serve its members and has experienced rapid growth in recent years to become a strong alternative to banks. Bethpage was approved for the largest federal community charter in the U.S. in 2003 and now is Long Island's largest credit union and leading community financial institution with over 232,000 members, 27 branches and 60 shared service center locations throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties. As a financial cooperative, Bethpage offers better rates, lower fees and a full menu of personal and commercial financial services.

Bethpage maintains branch locations in Bay Shore, Bay Shore King Kullen, Bethpage, Central Islip, Commack King Kullen, East Meadow NuHealth, Elmont, Farmingdale, Freeport, Glen Cove, Hempstead, Huntington, Levittown King Kullen, Lynbrook, Massapequa, Melville, Mineola, North Babylon, Patchogue, Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Seaford, Smithtown, Roosevelt, Valley Stream King Kullen, West Babylon and Westbury with over 425 surcharge-free ATMs in King Kullen, 7-Eleven, CVS Pharmacy and Costco locations throughout Long Island. For more information, call 1-800-628-7070 or visit [www.bethpagefcu.com](http://www.bethpagefcu.com).

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