

Discuss each step in detail, using the Student Guide. Pay special attention to deductions and credits and go through the information in the Student Guide on claiming deductions and credits (when to take the standard deduction and when to itemize, common credits one can claim etc.). Pass out the “Credits and Deductions” and “Common Tax Write-Offs You Can Claim” handouts as additional resources. Pass out the “6 Steps for First-Time Tax Filers” handout and read through it together. Ask participants if they have any questions on what has been covered thus far.

An essential part of this workshop is the section on resources. Emphasize that there are a number of free resources for filing taxes available to lower-income individuals and households. These include:

- Guided tax preparation websites, which partner with the IRS to provide tax assistance for free. These can be found on the IRS Free File website;
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), which is a form of free tax assistance by trained volunteers for lower-income people, people with disabilities, or people who have limited English proficiency;
- Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), similar to VITA, this is free tax assistance by volunteers specifically for senior citizens.

Pass out the “IRS Free File” handout. Emphasize that if participants have access to a computer and secure internet access, filing online using the free tax assistance websites recommended by the IRS is most likely the easiest, cheapest, and most efficient way to file federal and state income tax returns. These websites do the math for you and fill out Form 1040 by asking you questions. However, note that these websites can sometimes be difficult to navigate and contacting a VITA volunteer may be helpful.

Owing and Paying Taxes

Facilitator:

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Materials: PowerPoint slides; Student Guide p. 167; whiteboard