**Virginia CASH Campaign**

**EITC Initiative**

**2023-2024 Earned Income Tax Credit**

**Grant Application**

***Name of Grant Program:*** Virginia CASH Campaign EITC Initiative

***Source of Funds:*** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant

***Language:*** Virginia General Assembly appropriated $185,725 in FY 2023 to Virginia Community Action Partnership (VACAP). [Item 347 A.2](https://budget.lis.virginia.gov/item/2022/2/HB30/Reenrolled/1/347/) states: “Out of this appropriation, $185,725 the first year and $185,725 the second year from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant shall be provided to contract with the Virginia Community Action Partnership to provide outreach, education and tax preparation services via the Virginia Earned Income Tax Coalition and other community non-profit organizations to citizens who may be eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The contract shall require the Virginia Community Action Partnership to report on its efforts to expand the number of Virginians who are able to claim the federal EITC including the number of individuals identified who could benefit from the credit, the number of individuals counseled on the availability of federal EITC, and the number of individuals assisted with tax preparation to claim the federal EITC. The annual report from the Virginia Community Action Partnership shall also detail actual expenditures for the program including the sub-contractors that were utilized. This report shall be provided to the Governor and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1st each year.”

***Eligible Grant Recipients:*** Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) partners in Virginia providing traditional VITA, Virtual VITA or Facilitated Self-Assistance delivery models. Organizations that qualify as a nonprofit (501c), state or local government, or regional or local coalitions that provide outreach, education and free income tax preparation services to clients who may be eligible for TANF, federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) or the Virginia EITC, which is refundable. A current W-9 must be submitted with the application.

***Requirements and Objectives:*** Grant spending should focus on serving TANF, EITC and CTC recipients, expanding services, increasing capacity and quality control, improving accuracy of returns and volunteer training. Grant recipients are expected to show incremental increases in return preparation each year. Please be brief, clear and concise and comment on all items with detail and specificity in the application.

**Completed applications for funding must reflect compliance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations for VITA sites providing free tax preparation services (refer to IRS Publications 1084 for site guidelines and 4012 for Volunteer Code of Conduct). If you receive a federal IRS VITA grant, you should already be complying with regulations provided in Publication 4671.**

Models of tax preparation have changed and continue to change as a result of the 2020 COVID pandemic. As we move into the fifth tax filing season since the pandemic, your delivery methods, clients, volunteers, and expectations have all changed. The alternate delivery methods you’ve perfected may not continue to suit the community. Consider who will you reach with each method and how you will support different delivery methods. If your planned tax season activities or your method of operation changes prior to or during the tax season, you may amend your application. It is strongly recommended that someone from the coalition participate in the Virginia CASH Campaign VITA chats, SPEC Watercooler chats and IRS SPEC webcasts.

All coalitions are asked to use the Virginia CASH Campaign logo in conjunction with their free tax preparation programs. Coalitions are encouraged to engage other community partners in providing financial empowerment and other asset-building initiatives. Data capture is essential for reporting all VITA activities and reports should be submitted in a timely manner. VACAP encourages coalitions to invite local elected officials and community funders to their VITA site so they can see first-hand how the free tax program positively impacts the community.

***EITC/CTC/TANF:* Funding for VACAP’s EITC grant comes from the General Assembly Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. The focus of your outreach campaign should be on assisting clients who may be eligible for EITC, CTC and TANF. While the income limits and the number of children in the home vary for every client, the impact and importance of filing for these credits for your VITA clients ensures that your VITA service is serving the low-moderate income people in your communities who are eligible for these credits. Outreach should also highlight the Virginia Earned Income Tax Credit as an income tax credit that is equal to 15% of the federal EITC and is refundable.**

**To continue receiving TANF funding for the grant you should ensure that you are serving TANF eligible clients with the VACAP grant. Ask/answer/track these two questions and answers on your data sheet. *Does the taxpayer have a child or children under 18 in the home? Does their income fall below 200% of poverty? Poverty guidelines for 2023*** [***here***](https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines)***.***

***Grant Awards:*** Coalitions will be awarded a base amount grant in recognition of the fact that all sites have basic expenses to cover. Remaining funds will be divided among coalitions based on timely report submission, successful program results and final grant reports. New coalitions will be awarded funds based on grant proposals, geographic area and services provided. Please keep in mind that poorly prepared, incomplete or late reports will have a negative impact on future funding. Decision by grant reviewers is final and there is no appeal process.

***Application Deadline:*** VACAP will post the application to the [website](https://www.vacap.org/grants/) on **September 25, 2023**. VACAP will host a grant application conference Zoom call on **October 4, 2023, at 10:00 AM** to review the application process and answer questions. Applications must be received on or before **November 1, 2023.** Carefully proofread your application before submitting it. Please submit completed application in PDF format to Carolyn Spohrer via email at cspohrer@vacap.org.

***Decisions made by:*** Grant recipients will be notified by **December 6, 2023**. Funds will be disbursed via ACH beginning **December 8, 2023. Decisions are final and there is no appeal process.**

***VACAP contact:*** For assistance or questions please contact Carolyn Spohrer: 804-644-0417 or cspohrer@vacap.org.

**Project Summary**

**Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Coalition Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Primary Contact Person/Project Director: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Telephone: office: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_cell:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Your email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Who else should receive emails regarding the EITC grant and deadlines and general information during tax season (list name and email address):**

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**Grant deadline emails:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**General VITA information:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**You are strongly encouraged to participate in the bi-weekly/monthly VITA Chats. Who should be participating and what is their email address? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Agency federal Tax ID#: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Grant Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Virginia General Assembly Senator(s) and Delegate(s) in area to be served by grant:**

**Summary of your VITA Program:**

**Project Description**

1. Is the VITA program part of your agency strategic plan? Is it one of your core programs? Briefly explain how and why or why not.
2. Given the nature of recent filing seasons, what is your plan to use alternative tax preparation models, such as Free File, Facilitated Self-Assistance, MyFreeTaxes, Drop off or Virtual VITA? Please define what Virtual filing means to your coalition.
3. Describe your agency VITA staffing both during tax filing season (Jan-April) and during the off-season. (paid full time/part time, volunteer, etc.)
4. Did you meet your volunteer needs last tax season? If not, how will you adjust your volunteer recruitment strategy? Describe your volunteer training plan.
5. Describe contingency plans in place to change your VITA processes if circumstances change, i.e., restrictions by agency or government to include surprise staffing changes.
6. How and when are VITA program outcomes shared with agency President/CEO and/or board?
7. Document the need for free tax preparation services in your area including population and localities to be served.
8. What is your process for referring clients to other potential benefit programs i.e., fuel assistance, housing, Medicaid, SNAP or similar programs.
9. Given that VACAP EITC funding comes from a TANF Block Grant, please describe how your outreach will focus on clients who may be eligible to receive:
	1. TANF
	2. EITC and/or CTC
	3. Virginia refundable EITC
10. Describe your marketing/publicity plan. Ensure that your VITA program is listed is the [211 Virginia](https://www.211virginia.org/consite/index.php) search database.
11. If you are planning to participate with any financial empowerment initiatives, tell us who and what, why and how. What is your plan to include financial empowerment or financial coaching?
12. If applicable, list other community organizations that will collaborate with you. Include a brief description and what activities/programs they will provide. (Include one sample copy of Memoranda of Understanding as attachment.)
13. Did your coalition apply for a federal VITA grant this year? How much will you receive?
14. If you’ve chosen to not apply for a federal VITA grant, please explain your reasoning.
15. What are your other VITA program funding sources?
16. Are your objectives for this year clearly stated and based on measurable outcomes or overcoming challenges you voiced in the final report last year? How and why?
17. How will you overcome challenges to meet your new measurable outcomes?
18. What else do you want the grant reviewers to know about your VITA program?

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Project Budget**

Funding for the VACAP EITC grant covers the state fiscal year, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The VACAP grant may make up a small part of your overall VITA program budget and you can use the VACAP funding as a match for additional funding from other sources. **\* VACAP grant budget is submitted after you know the amount of your grant from VACAP. Your overall budget for VITA should be submitted with your grant application.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget Category** | **\*VACAP Grant** | **Overall Budget for VITA** |
| Rent/office space |  |  |
| Personnel (salary) |  |  |
| Fringe benefits |  |  |
| Travel |  |  |
| Technology (computers/printing) |  |  |
| Publicity |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Web Design/Maintenance |  |  |
| Telephone/Internet |  |  |
| General office supplies |  |  |
| PPE |  |  |
| Mailing costs |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Training |  |  |
| Volunteer Recruitment |  |  |
| Volunteer food |  |  |
| Volunteer recognition |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Conferences |  |  |
| Financial Empowerment |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Indirect Costs (10% or less) |  |  |
| Other (define) |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |

In addition to attending the VITA chats, IRS SPEC Watercooler chat and IRPS SPEC webcasts, Taxpayer Opportunity Network and Prosperity Now webinars and other training opportunities, VACAP recommends that your budget include amounts that will allow coalition representatives to attend state, regional and national conferences relating to free tax preparation programs, VITA, FSA and financial empowerment and financial coaching.

**Activities/Outcomes Plan**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Goal** | **Measurable Outcome** | **Evaluation** |
|  | **Must include:****Number of federal tax returns you will process****May include goals like:** **Increase the number of volunteers by x people.****Reduce our error rate from x% to x%.** |  |  |

**Important Dates**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Event** | **Outcome** |
| **September 25, 2023** | Application posted vacap.org | Grant announcement |
| **October 4, 2023** | Grant application Zoom call at 10:00 AM |  |
| **November 1, 2023** | Grant application deadline | Email PDF to Carolyn -cspohrer@vacap.org  |
| **December 1, 2023** | Report to Governor, General Assembly and JLARC | Submitted by VACAP and posted to GA and VACAP sites  |
| **December 6, 2023** | Grant recipients notified | Via email |
| **December 8, 2023** | Grant funds disbursed | Paid via ACH after budget is submitted and accepted |
| **January 31, 2024** | Report #1 | Submit online  |
| **February 29, 2024** | Report #2 (cumulative) | Submit online |
| **March 31, 2024** | Report #3 (cumulative) | Submit online |
| **April 30, 2024** | Report #4 (cumulative) | Submit online |
| **May 20, 2024** | Final coalition report – data page that includes % comparison and narrative | Submit online, PDF with data and narrative emailed to Carolyn at cspohrer@vacap.org |

**Grant Application Checklist**

**\_\_\_\_ Has the Grant application been completed?**

 **\_\_\_\_ all information in Project Summary (p. 4)**

 **\_\_\_\_ other email recipients (p. 4)**

 **\_\_\_\_ all questions of Project Description (p. 5)**

 **\_\_\_\_ all sections of Activities/Outcomes Plan (p. 8)**

**\_\_\_\_ Have the Important Dates been reviewed? (p. 9)**

**\_\_\_\_ Has the Program Director/Executive Director signed the grant application? (p. 6)**

**\_\_\_\_ Has the PDF application been emailed to** **cspohrer@vacap.org** **by the deadline?**

**\_\_\_\_ Have you included a copy of your W-9? (Download** [**here**](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf) **or submit your own)**