

Proclamation

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF ALAMEDA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

* * * * *

PROCLAIM JANUARY 20, 2016 THROUGH APRIL 18, 2016 VOLUNTEER TAX ASSISTANCE SEASON

WHEREAS, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-to-moderate income working individuals and families. Census data shows that the EITC lifts more children out of poverty than any other single program or category of programs. However, studies have shown that taxpayers who cannot afford expensive tax preparation services may not claim the EITC and other credits they have earned, at a loss to the individual, family, community, and state; and

WHEREAS, since 2002, the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA) - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program has helped taxpayers to receive larger tax refunds by claiming the credits they have earned. Households whose 2015 income was \$54,000 or less qualify for no-cost tax preparation that SSA provides with the help of a grant from the United Way of the Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, during the 2014-2015 Tax Season, SSA's approximately 104 VITA volunteers prepared over 2,682 returns and put more than \$4.4 million in total refunds back in the pockets of families and individuals in our community. That is a 26% increase in returns and 40% increase in refunds from the prior season; and

WHEREAS, SSA-VITA is growing beyond tax filing season into a year-round program to help low-to-moderate income households build their financial assets. The program now offers: preparation for Married-Filing Separately returns; Certified Acceptance Agents (CAAs) to assist clients with Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs); on-site health care and CalFresh enrollment; direct deposit, banking and credit union services; financial education and asset building resources; Virtual VITA Tax Preparation (drop-off and pick-up service); and voter registration; and

WHEREAS, making all this possible are approximately 150 volunteers annually who complete 30 hours of training to achieve IRS Certification and dedicate 30 hours or more of their own time to provide evening and weekend tax preparation and financial asset-building services. From January 20, 2016 through April 18, 2016, they will offer services Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at SSA's Thomas L. Berkley, Enterprise and Eden sites as well as the San Lorenzo office of Supervisor Wilma Chan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, this Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, State of California, does hereby proclaim **January 20, 2016 through April 18, 2016** as **VOLUNTEER TAX ASSISTANCE SEASON** in Alameda County; and

FURTHERMORE, this Board of Supervisors recognizes and commends the people who make the program possible: **Lori A. Cox, Director of the Social Services Agency; VITA Program Coordinator Lorena Briseño, who is a Program Specialist with the SSA's Office of Public Affairs and Community Relations;** and the volunteers who are preparing for another successful year of helping County residents build more secure financial futures; and

FUTHERMORE, the Board especially thanks the following volunteers for their decade or more of service: **Shabnam Dean, Jacqueline Jacobs, Dana Jenkins, Jia Jia Lee, Ada Lillie, Julia H. Martinez, Mercedes Melano, Doris Morrison, Denise Robinson, Teresa Salcido, Lorelei Self, Linda Slater, Thelma Starr, Abeba Tadesse, and Patricia Watson.**

SCOTT HAGGERTY, President
Supervisor, First District

WILMA CHAN, Vice President
Supervisor, Third District

RICHARD VALLE
Supervisor, Second District

NATE MILEY
Supervisor, Fourth District

KEITH CARSON
Supervisor, Fifth District