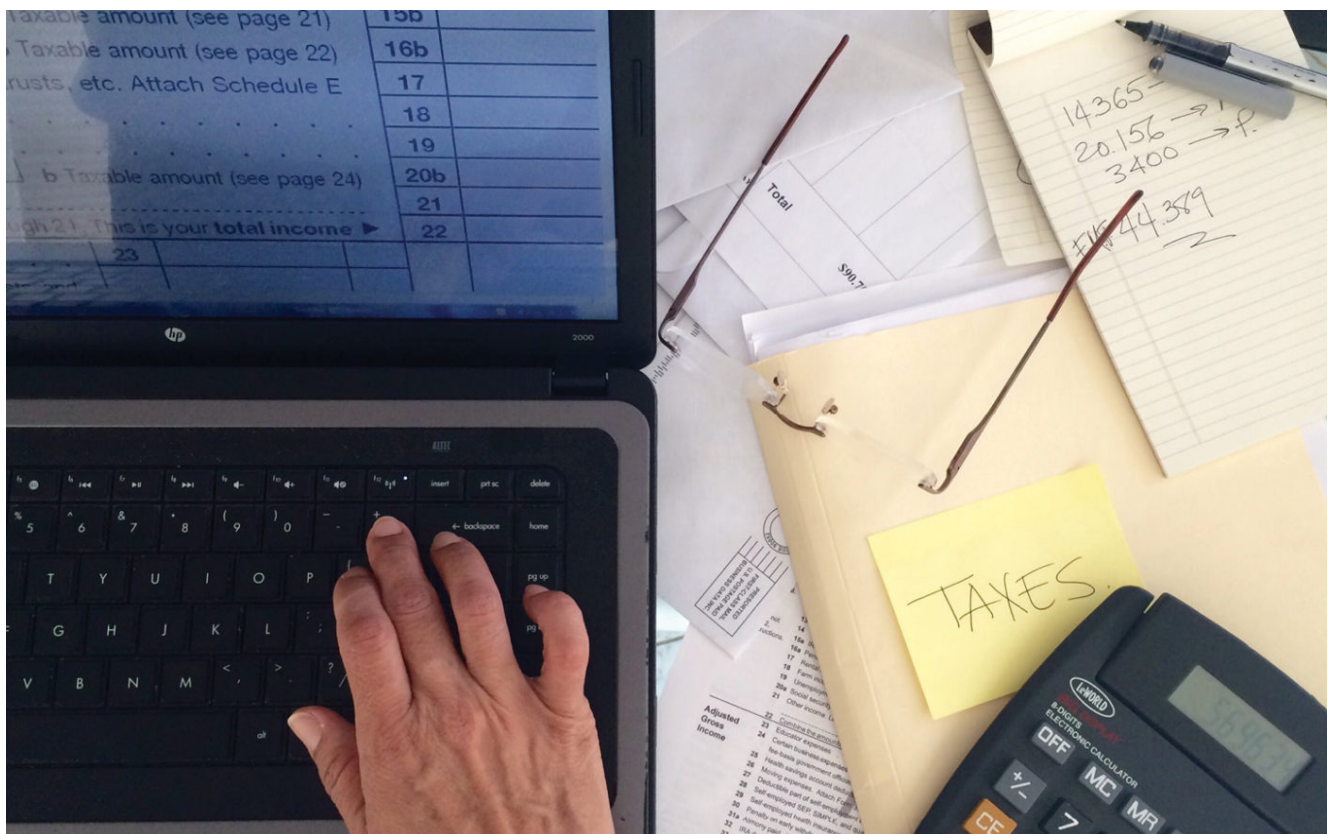


# DROP-AND-GO TAX SITES OFFER FAST, FREE TAX PREP HELP

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## VIRTUAL TAX PREP IS OPEN FOR 2021!

Though in-person volunteer tax assistance is suspended for 2021, our partners Accounting Aid Society and Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency will offer free virtual tax preparation appointments.

**LEARN MORE**

**Note:** This post describes pre-COVID services. For current information on virtual tax preparation services, [visit our Tax Assistance webpage](#).

Detroit families now have another way to get free tax preparation help through the “drop-and-go taxes” program. Individuals who qualify can get their taxes done for free with help from an IRS-certified volunteer tax preparer.



The Greater Detroit Center for Working Families Financial Coach Jesica Rubio at SER Metro helps take in tax return information. SER Metro serves as a “drop and go” tax site in Detroit.

## QUICK AND EASY

One option for free tax preparation is for families to visit a drop and go community partner agency such as Matrix Human Services or SER Metro.

The community partner agencies scan tax documents for drop-and-go participants and send them to Accounting Aid Society where they’re processed by certified tax preparers. Then, Accounting Aid sends the completed return back to the drop-and-go site about a week later for the individual to sign.

## INCREASING ACCESS

The model is based on a similar program run by the Food Bank For New York City.



"Our goal was to build something in Detroit that was similar to the success that New York City had, but was built around how Detroit works," Gabrielle explains, noting that transportation barriers are a huge issue for Detroiters trying to access services.

The drop-and-go service was added to offer more options in areas of Detroit where access to a traditional Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site is limited.

"The idea is to increase access to free tax preparation," says Gabrielle Thomas, chief operating officer of Accounting Aid Society. "These virtual sites are neighborhood based, and the intake partners are places where people already go for other services."



Jesica Rubio of SER Metro scans tax documents using technology purchased with a grant from United Way.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

This also means that clients can learn about other financial services. For example, they can decide how to invest their tax refund, or access financial coaching. Staff at United Way partner SER Metro also help people receiving drop-and-go tax preparation access other services, like job and education assistance.

"A tax refund offers many families an infusion of cash that can make a huge difference long term," said Gregory McPherson, [Matrix Human Services](#) director of adult and senior programs. "We can help create a plan to catch up on bills, pay down debt and improve credit scores. This can dramatically improve things like interest rates on major purchases."

# IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY

For more than a decade, we've invested in tax preparation services to help people keep more of what they earn. It's a major part of our work to help families become stable.

We have partnered with Accounting Aid Society and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan since 2016 to educate Detroiters about the EITC.

Over the last three years, an average of 85,000 Detroiters collectively claimed nearly \$300 million each year in EITC refunds. Additional tax credits such as the child tax credit can boost a family's refund even more.

With financial support from United Way, Accounting Aid Society invested in technology and training to set up several sites. These sites process hundreds of tax returns each year and are available through the first week in April.

[Call United Way's 2-1-1 helpline](#) for information on this and other tax services.

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