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**Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) at Community Teamwork  
Completes breaks all records by completing more than 800 Tax Returns**

**Lowell, MA, April 14, 2023** – Community Teamwork (CTI) announced that its VITA Program has broken all previous records by completing more than 800 Tax Returns this year. In a typical year, the VITA Program completes between 400 – 500 returns. The service is offered free of charge to residents who meet specific income requirements.

The Internal Revenue Service’s Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) and administered by Community Action Agencies (CAA’s), including Community Teamwork, throughout the country, annually helps thousands of wage earners access millions of dollars in tax refunds, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). In Massachusetts, the CAA’s and other community-based organizations serve over 30,000 low-income taxpayers, helping them to access over \$60 million in tax refunds.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the VITA program, with nearly 92,000 volunteers participating in VITA last year, preparing more than 3.3 million returns, according to the IRS. They are trained IRS experts who volunteer their time to help ensure timely accurate returns. They not only provide free tax prep, but also help accessing tax credits and other savings programs,

This year, Community Teamwork partnered with students from the UMASS Lowell Manning School of Business, who volunteered their Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings at Community Teamwork’s downtown office, greeting clients, answering questions and preparing income taxes, and troubleshooting issues for clients, many whom are not native English speakers. The students and other volunteers, including experienced professionals, are required to complete training before they start their work on returns.

“We would not have been able to complete as many returns as we did these past few months, without the help of our volunteers, including our UMASS Lowell students, as well as the tireless dedication of our Financial Education Center staff, including Eric Rosario and Jackyie Gonzalez, Senior Financial Literacy Coordinators, who worked around the clock, to meet the

increased demand this year,” said Connie Martin, Division Director Energy and Community Resources, at Community Teamwork.

To learn more about this program, visit [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) - Community Teamwork \(commteam.org\)](https://www.commteam.org/volunteer-income-tax-assistance-vita)

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### **About Community Teamwork**

Established in 1965, Community Teamwork is a non-profit Community Action Agency (CAA) serving more than 55,000 individuals and families in the City of Lowell and the seven surrounding towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Tewksbury, Tyngsboro, and Westford. Community Teamwork also serves as a Community Development Corporation and as the Regional Housing Agency for the Merrimack Valley and the rest of the Northeastern Massachusetts, including 72 cities and towns inclusive of the North Shore and Cape Ann. Community Teamwork is a catalyst for social change. We strengthen communities and reduce poverty by delivering vital services and collaborating with key stakeholders to create housing, education and economic opportunities. Our vision is a community whose institutions, systems, and people support everyone’s opportunity to thrive. [www.commteam.org](http://www.commteam.org)

### **About the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

The Earned Income Tax Credit has been called one of the most successful antipoverty programs since it bridges the wage gap. Since the late 1970’s, wages have not kept up with productivity and many working people have trouble meeting their basic needs. The EITC, along with other tax credits, has been shown to improve infant health outcomes, employment rates of single mothers, child education achievements and future earnings.