

CITY OF BURLINGTON
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT - 2024 APPLICATION

Application must be no more than 12 total pages (*including cover page*) with 12-point font.
Refer to NOFA for required information for each question.

Project Name: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Project Location / Address: 255 South Champlain Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Applicant Organization / Agency: Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1603, Burlington, VT 05401

Physical Address: 255 South Champlain Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Contact: Travis Poulin **Title:** Community Action Network Director **Phone #:** [REDACTED]

Web Address: www.cvoeo.org **E-mail:** [REDACTED]

EIN #: [REDACTED] **DUNS #:** [REDACTED]

<p>CDBG Funding Request: \$15,000</p> <p>Total Estimated Program/Project Cost: \$166,527</p> <p><i>Choose one category from Development <u>OR</u> one category from Public Service:</i></p> <p>Development: (choose one) ___ Economic Development ___ Affordable Housing ___ Public Facilities/Improvements</p> <p align="center"><u>OR</u></p> <p>Public Service: (choose one) ___ Early Childhood Ed/Childcare ___ Youth Services ___ Health ___ <u>X</u> Economic Opportunity ___ Housing and Homelessness</p>

1. Type of Organization

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization (<u>please provide copy of your</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For-Profit Organization | <u>IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter</u>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-Based Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution of Higher Education |

Certification
To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this proposal are true and correct.
I have been duly authorized to apply for this funding on behalf of this agency.
I understand that this grant funding is conditioned upon compliance with federal CDBG regulations.

I further certify that no contracts have been awarded, funds committed or construction begun on the proposed program, and that none will be prior to issuance of a Release of Funds by the Program Administrator.



Signature of Authorized Official

Paul Dragon
Name of Authorized Official

CVOEO Executive Director
Title

January 9, 2024
Date

I. Demonstrated Need

1. What is the need/opportunity being addressed by this program/project and how does that contribute to CDBG's national objectives?

CVOEO's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program helps households file their federal and state income taxes, claim Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), apply for renter's credits, file Homestead Declaration forms and apply for Property Tax credits. These credits and rebates can help households stabilize their housing, catch up on past due bills, or invest in education or other training to increase future income. The VITA program contributes to CDBG's national objective 3.2.2 (Low Mod Limited Clientele) by reducing barriers, creating economic opportunities, and providing public services for the benefit of low and moderate income (LMI) persons or households. According to the American Community Survey 2010-2015, overall about 25% of Burlington residents live in poverty. VITA provides free, professional tax preparation and helps people access credits, refunds and rebates. The Internal Revenue Service says that "the EITC is the largest anti-poverty program for working families..."¹ In 2023, CVOEO's VITA program served 422 Burlington households, representing 677 residents. We expect to serve 500 Burlington households during the 2024 filing season.

II. Program/Project Design

1. Give us a short summary (2 sentences) that describe the program/project.

The VITA program serves households that earn \$64,000 or less and that need help navigating the U.S. tax system. In partnership with community organizations and academic institutions, IRS-certified volunteers provide free tax preparation and electronic filing services for low-to-moderate income (LMI) Vermonters, elderly taxpayers, military personnel, and their families.

2. Explain why the program activities are the right strategies to use to achieve the intended outcomes. Why is the program designed the way it is? (cite evidence, best practices, or community input)

The VITA program uses IRS-certified tax preparers who are equipped to navigate a complicated and constantly changing U.S. tax system. The program helps LMI households prepare and file their tax returns so they can save money in tax preparation fees and receive their tax refunds, credits, and/or rebates quickly. Tax preparers meet with consumers to help them complete their tax forms, ensuring that they receive maximum refunds, credits, and rebates. Filing the returns electronically is the quickest way for the IRS to process them² and for taxpayers to avoid paying fees associated with refund loans³. Profit-seeking preparers and lenders use Refund Anticipation Checks (RAC) and Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) with high interest rates or fees to entice taxpayers who need their refunds right away⁴. By offering free tax

¹ <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/taxes/rpt-tax-time-jan2020.pdf>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-to-tax-refund-soon-quickly-possible/>

³ <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/taxes/rpt-tax-time-jan2020.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

preparation and filing to these households, the VITA program ensures that taxpayers receive their full refunds as soon as possible. The IRS has consistently praised the VITA service for the efficiency, quality control process, and accuracy of returns completed.

3. How will this program/project contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy? If this activity is to respond to COVID-19, please also describe how this activity prepares or responds to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A key component of the City’s anti-poverty strategy is increasing and protecting asset accumulation and resident net worth. The VITA program contributes to the City’s anti-poverty strategy by reducing barriers to economic resources and opportunities and helping to increase household net worth by protecting asset accumulation through EITC, renter’s rebates, and tax refunds. In addition, CVOEO and the VITA program are part of the nonprofit infrastructure the City has built to meet the needs of Burlington residents.

4. How do you use community and/or participant input in planning the program design and activities?

Community and participant input are vital to the success of VITA and other CVOEO programs. The hours and structure of the CVOEO VITA service was developed over time with feedback from the people who utilized the service, including New Americans, working families, homeowners, renters, and those on fixed, limited income. CVOEO received participant feedback about program design during planning sessions with the IRS Stakeholder, Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) staff, CEDO, VT 211, local financial institutions, and the United Way of Northwest VT. Representatives of Burlington’s low-income population sit on CVOEO’s Board and help us to determine the best way to structure our programs to meet the most needs.

III. Proposed Outcomes

1. What are the intended outcomes for this project/program? How are people meant to be better off as a result of participating?

By participating in this program people will be better off because:

- a) They will not have to pay tax preparation fees which average \$220 for a non-itemized federal and state tax return,⁵ money that can help pay for things like gas, groceries, and other bills;
- b) Most of the people who participate in the VITA program qualify for tax credits and/or refunds. By filing electronically, the VITA program can help them get their refunds faster;
- c) By meeting with a VITA tax preparer who knows the tax laws and rules they will get the maximum refund available to them and will avoid the possibility of late filing fees;
- d) They will have access to other supportive services such as 3SquaresVT.

2. List your goals/objectives, activities to implement and expected outcomes (# of units, # of individuals, etc.)

Goal/Objective	Activity Funded	Expected Outcome
Reduce barriers, create economic	VITA Site Coordinator who will	500 Burlington households

⁵ National Society of Accountants

opportunities, and provide public services for the benefit of low and moderate income (LMI) persons or households.	<i>supervise</i> trained volunteers as they prepare taxes for Burlington residents.	will be served
Same as above	Same as above	100% of participants will save money by not paying tax preparation fees
Same as above	Same as above	90% of participants will receive a tax refund
Same as above	VITA Site Coordinator will <i>screen</i> clients for eligibility for referral to other supportive services.	10% of participants who are deemed eligible will apply for supportive services.

IV. Impact / Evaluation

1. How do you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you assess project/program outcomes; your description should include: what type of data, the method/tool for collecting the data, from whom you collect data, and when it is collected.

People will be better off if we can help them: a) save money on tax preparation fees; b) complete accurate and timely tax returns; c) increase household income through tax credits, rebates, and refunds; d) connect to additional, supportive services as necessary.				
Outcome	Type of Data	Method	Data Collected From	When
100% of participants will save money by not paying tax preparation fees	Quantitative	Extrapolation	National Society of Tax Accountants report on the average cost of basic tax preparation	End of program
500 Burlington households will be served and will complete accurate and timely tax returns	Quantitative: a) # of households served b) Accuracy rate for VITA tax preparers	a) CVOEO Intake form b) IRS screening tool (form 13164-c) c) IRS reports on VITA accuracy rate	a) Participants b) IRS and CVOEO Outcome Tracker database (for renter credit and homestead households who do not file income taxes)	a) Time of service b) End of program

90% of participants will increase household income through a tax credit, rebate, and/or refund	Quantitative: a) # households that receive a credit b) type of credit received c) Amount received per household d) # refunds received	a-d) IRS Screening tool (form 13164-c)	a-d) IRS	a-d) End of program
10% of eligible participants will be connected to additional, supportive services.	Income eligibility forms and interviews	CCA intake forms	VITA participants	Time of service and post-program

2. How successful has the project/program been during the most recent reporting year for your CDBG project? Report the number of beneficiaries you intended to serve with which activities (as noted in your last Attachment A) and your final outcomes (as noted on your Attachment C) from June 2023 (or June 2022). For non-CDBG participants – report on your achievements from the previous year.

	Expected Outcomes	ACTUAL OUTCOMES
1	Community Action will serve 600 Burlington households	Community Action served 422 Burlington households, representing 677 individuals.
2	100% of participants will save money by not paying tax preparation fees	100% of participants saved money by not paying tax preparation fees, an estimated savings of \$92,840 (based on an average tax preparation fee of \$220 per household last year)
3	90% of participants will receive a tax refund	87% of participants received a refund, 10% owed money to the IRS
4	10% of eligible participants will apply for supportive services	5% of participants who were not receiving but appeared eligible applied for 3SquaresVT

V. Experience / Organizational Capacity

1. What is your agency’s mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?

CVOEO’s mission is to address fundamental issues of economic, social, racial, and environmental justice and work with people to achieve economic independence. The VITA program and its activities fit into CVOEO’s mission because it contributes to economic independence by lowering the burden associated with

preparing and filing taxes and because the program aligns with the concept of economic justice⁶ which is part of our mission statement. As an anti-poverty organization, CVOEO helps individuals and families increase their household income with programs like VITA where they can apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC is considered by the National Consumer Law Center to be “the largest anti-poverty program for working families.”⁷ In addition, assistance provided by the VITA program helps to alleviate the stressors associated with preparing and filing tax returns especially for low-income groups.

2. Explain how your agency has the capacity to carry out the proposed activity (i.e. staff qualifications, years of experience related to this type of activity, etc.)

Travis Poulin, the Community Action Network Director for CVOEO has worked with the VITA program since 1992, first as a tax preparer, then as a site coordinator, and now as the program supervisor. Michael McClintock, the Chittenden VITA Site Coordinator, has worked with the CVOEO VITA program since 2015. CVOEO has been the lead agency for the statewide IRS VITA Matching Grant since 2012. Mr. McClintock oversees the training of approximately 30 volunteer tax preparers who are certified to provide Vermont and Burlington community members with tax help. CVOEO has over 55 years of experience working with LMI community members, helping people acquire essential services and creating opportunities for economic independence. CVOEO has also received funding from the State, as part of an investment in expanding the VITA services, for the hire of a full-time, year-round position; with more than two decades of Marketing and Accounting experience, Matt Harris has joined CVOEO as the VITA Program Manager. This position will allow CVOEO to provide year-round continuity of services, continue to work with VITA participants on accessing basic supports and economic stability year-round, and help recruit and train more volunteers to expand the capacity of the VITA program.

3. What steps has your organization/board taken in the past year to address racial equity, inclusion, and belonging internally? What new commitments have been made to address racial equity, inclusion, and belonging internally in the year ahead?

CVOEO is committed to addressing racial equity, inclusion, and belonging through training and organizational development. Our director of racial equity has increased organizational knowledge by developing monthly large-group trainings and small-group discussions for staff on topics ranging from cultural competence and humility to unconscious bias to understanding white supremacy culture. These trainings help staff acquire general knowledge about specific DEI issues as well as provide practical ways to work with clients and each other. CVOEO’s 3-year strategic plan includes DEI as a stand-alone goal and also is woven into the larger plan that guides CVOEO’s program development.

4. Have you received Federal or State grant funds in the past three years? Yes No

5. Were the activities funded by these sources successfully completed? Yes No
 N/A

If No, please explain:

VI. Proposed Low & Moderate Income Beneficiaries

⁶ Hayes, A. (2020). What is Economic Justice? Investopedia Economics Blog (December 9, 2020) <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economic-justice.asp>

⁷ <https://www.nclc.org/images/pdf/taxes/rpt-tax-time-jan2020.pdf>

1. Will the program solely serve a specific group of people? If so, check ONE below:

- Abused Children Elderly (62 years +) People with AIDS
 Battered Spouses Homeless Persons Illiterate Adults
 People with Severe Disabilities

If this activity/project is designed to serve the population experiencing homelessness through housing or supportive services, is your organization or entity partnered with the Chittenden County Continuum of Care and participating in the Coordinated Entry system for the project:

- Yes No Not applicable to activity/project

2. a. For your proposed project, please estimate how the Burlington residents will break out into the following income categories during the total grant period. Use the Income Table at <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/2023-HUD-Income-Limits>

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low-Income (30% median)	# Very Low-Income (50% median)	# Low-Income (80% median)	# Above Income Limits (above 80% median)
VITA tax preparation	500 households	268	145	80	7

b. All CDBG grantees serving limited clientele will be required to use CEDO's CDBG Beneficiary Self-Certification form to collect beneficiary data including race, ethnicity, annual income, and family size. Is your organization willing and prepared to add this documentation to the intake process for your CDBG funded program by July 1, 2024?
 Yes NO Not Serving Limited Clientele

VII. Commitment to Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

1. Who is the project/program designed to benefit? Describe the project/program's target population, citing (if relevant) specific age, gender, income, community/location, race or ethnicity, or other characteristic of the people this program is intended to serve. How do you select and reach your target population?

The VITA program benefits LMI residents of Chittenden County with CDBG funds used specifically to assist Burlington residents. The primary focus is on serving Vermont and Burlington households with earned incomes, ranging from those whose income is up to 80% of the area median to a small number whose income is 81% or greater than the area median. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the largest (by dollar) federal anti-poverty program⁸ so targeting households that earn income is our primary goal.

Comparison between VITA program and City of Burlington		
Ethnicity and Race	VITA Program Number, Percent	City of Burlington ⁹
White	396 - 58%	38,371 - 86%

⁸ www.nclc.org

⁹ <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/16000US5010675-burlington-vt/>

Black/African American	162 - 24%	1,653 - 4%
Asian	68 - 10%	1,385 - 3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	9 - 1%	45 - 0.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3 - >1%	12 - 0%
Multi-racial	22 - 3%	2,368 - 5%
Hispanic	11 - 2%	1,474 - 3%

Through CVOEO’s Financial Empowerment for New Americans community ambassadors and other community partners we reach out to the New American community. We advertise our services through the Vermont Center for Independent Living to reach people who are disabled, and through Age Well, SASH Coordinators, and senior housing sites to reach the elderly population to ensure that eligible households receive assistance applying for Renter Credit and Homestead Declarations. We reach people by advertising VITA services on our social media platforms, our CVOEO website, Front Porch Forum, the Fletcher Free Library, VT 211, and through community partners and other CVOEO programs.

2. Describe the steps you take to ensure the project/program is accessible, inclusive, addressing racially equity, and culturally appropriate for the target population.

The CCA office is fully handicapped accessible and we offer weekend and evening hours to assist working families. The majority of VITA services for the past two years have been in space provided at no rental cost by the University Mall in South Burlington, allowing VITA to practice social distancing (and it on a bus line and has excellent parking). We work closely with the Association of Africans Living in VT, the VT Refugee Resettlement Program, and the Somali-Bantu Community Association for scheduling, interpretation and translation. VITA training includes information on how to work with a culturally diverse population and interpreters. CVOEO’s cultural competence webinars are designed to inform staff as they connect with people from different backgrounds; these webinars are available “live” (currently via zoom) to all CVOEO employees including VITA staff; they are also recorded for future use.

VIII. Budget / Financial Feasibility

1. Budget Narrative: Provide a clear description of what you will do with CDBG’s investment in the project/program. How will you spend the money? Give specific details.

CDBG funds will be used to provide salary, fringe benefits, and administrative costs to support a VITA Site Coordinator. The Site Coordinator oversees the entire program by training and monitoring tax preparers, developing and maintaining a scheduling database, complying with IRS regulations and data collection for CSBG and CDBG funds, electronically filing tax returns, community outreach, coordinating with VT 211, and liaising with the IRS SPEC office. From late December through mid-May the work is full time. Training occurs in January and the bulk of tax returns are prepared from February 1 through April 15, though CVOEO will now be providing year-round tax assistance.

2. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) in your Project/Program Design.

a.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG
Plans, organizes, and develops the VITA program; trains and supervises tax preparers who assist Burlington residents	VITA Site Coordinator	The site coordinator recruits, trains, and supervises volunteer tax preparers, ensures that data-quality best practices are followed, submits completed tax returns, and coordinates with community organizations for recruiting and scheduling.	13 weeks at 20 hours per week, and 17 weeks at 40 hours per week, est. total of 940 hours	41%

b. All CDBG grantees that use CDBG funds for salaries must submit timesheets that capture total time and effort of staff members funded with CDBG. These timesheets must record hours worked on CDBG-funded programs, hours worked on non-CDBG funded programs and the corresponding program name/funding source(s). Timecards must include a narrative for all CDBG and non-CDBG funded activities, and must be signed by the employee and supervisor. Does your organization have the ability to implement a timekeeping system for CDBG funded staff that meets these requirements by July 1, 2024? Yes No Not funding salaries

3. Program/Project Budget

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
Salary	\$10,888	\$82,467	\$93,355
Fringe	\$1,437	\$23,256	\$24,693
Workers Compensation	\$116	\$587	\$703
Indirect	\$2,559	\$19,821	\$22,380
Program Materials and Office Supplies		\$3,981	\$3,981
Liability Insurance		\$500	\$500
Service Contracts		\$4,000	\$4,000
Rent, Utilities, Telephone, Maintenance		\$11,165	\$11,165
Interpretation		\$1,750	\$1,750
Travel		\$1,000	\$1,000
Other: Background checks, postage, staff training, computer equipment, etc.		\$3,000	\$3,000
TOTAL	\$15,000	\$151,527	\$166,527

4. Funding Sources

	Program/Project		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 12,500	\$ 15,000	\$ 73,850	\$ 85,000
State (specify)				
Employment and Training			\$269,882	\$269,882
Housing and Homeless Programs	\$96,000	\$96,000	\$7,324,927	\$7,324,927
Nutrition Programs			0	0
Utility and Energy Assistance Programs			\$2,153,925	\$2,153,925
Victim Services and Prevention			\$493,044	\$493,044
Head Start and Education			\$275,976	\$275,976
Racial Equity and Community Inclusion			\$270,119	\$270,119
Federal (specify)				
Health and Human Services			\$8,398,085	\$8,398,085
USDA			\$177,547	\$177,547
Energy			\$2,153,433	\$2,153,433
HUD			\$810,022	\$810,022
Justice			\$554,794	\$554,794
Treasury	\$55,527	\$55,527	\$3,921,991	\$3,921,991
United Way			\$125,000	\$125,000
Private (specify)				
Donations			\$1,586,564	\$1,586,564
Private Organizations			\$316,703	\$316,703
Foundations			\$873,500	\$873,500
Fundraising			\$545,000	\$545,000
Program Income				
Fee for Service			\$570,877	\$570,877
Other (specify)				
City and Town Grants			\$125,333	\$125,333
Interest			\$110,000	\$110,000
In-Kind Food			\$800,000	\$800,000
In-Kind Volunteer			\$200,000	\$200,000
Total	\$ 164,027	\$ 166,527	\$32,130,572	\$32,141,722

5. Of the total program/project cost, what percentage will be financed with CDBG?

$$\begin{array}{rclcl}
 \$15,000 & \div & \$166,302 & = & 9\% \\
 \text{CDBG Funding} & & \text{Total Program/Project Costs} & & \text{Percentage}
 \end{array}$$

6. Of the total program/project cost, what would be the total cost per person?

$$\begin{array}{rclcl}
 \$166,302 & \div & 1,800 & = & \$92 \\
 \text{Total Program/Project Cost} & & \text{\# Total Proposed Beneficiaries} & & \text{Cost Per HH}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{rclcl}
 \$15,000 & \div & 500 & = & \$30 \\
 \text{Total Amount of CDBG Funding} & & \text{\# Total Proposed CDBG Beneficiaries} & & \text{Cost Per HH CDBG Investment}
 \end{array}$$

7. Why should CDBG resources, as opposed to other sources of funding, be used for this project?

The anti-poverty goals of the VITA program fit perfectly with the City of Burlington’s anti-poverty strategies and with the spirit of the Community Development Block Grant, especially as a public service that provides economic opportunity for LMI households. VITA helps LMI households save money, secure EITCs and other tax refunds, and encourages them to use those funds in a manner that emphasizes sound money management. This program relies on a mix of funding sources, most of which are raised by writing annual grants. Having CDBG as a part of the funding mix helps to sustain and grow the program.

8. Describe your use of community resources, including volunteers. Include any resources not listed in your budget. Will CDBG be used to leverage other resources?

The VITA program relies on community input and support including: 1) in-kind donations of workspace and staff time by VT 211 operators who manage calls and help with scheduling; 2) access to computer labs and training space prior to the tax season donated by Champlain College; 3) volunteers from the local community, Champlain College, the University of Vermont, and St. Michaels college 3) CVOEO volunteer greeters that help participants complete IRS screening forms; 4) in-kind donated workspace to see VITA clients at the University Mall. In 2023, 30 VITA tax preparation volunteers donated 1,563 hours of their time, an in-kind value of \$44,827 (\$28.68/hour).¹⁰

IX. Collaboration/Efficiency

1. Give 1 or 2 examples of key successful collaboration(s) between your program/project and another agency/program/group to address the needs of the people you serve.

We collaborate with community social service agencies and businesses. For example, VT 211 helps schedule tax appointments, follows up with clients to remind them of their appointments, and provides basic eligibility screening. Champlain College provides training space, computers, and student volunteers. The University Mall donates space to provide VITA services. To provide opportunities for people to work toward financial independence, we partner with and refer VITA clients to other programs within CVOEO, such as Growing Money and Financial Empowerment for New Americans. In addition, we screen for participation in and offer to assist families in applying for the 3SquaresVT program.

2. Do identical or similar community programs exist? How does this program complement or collaborate rather than duplicate services? What makes this program unique?

CVOEO operates the only VITA site in Chittenden County. Our in-person VITA site is the largest in Vermont, and CVOEO is the lead agency for the statewide VITA grant application, which supports free tax preparation services at Community Action Agencies across Vermont. The AARP delivers a Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program at a number of sites throughout VT. VITA and TCE provide complimentary services; while TCE

¹⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics

services are completely focused on seniors, VITA serves any households that falls within the VITA guidelines.

3. Provide 1 example of how your agency has become more efficient in achieving your outcomes or managing your project/program.

CVOEO restructured administration of the three Community Action Offices, creating a Community Action Network Director position which will provide oversight, continuity and support for services provided by all three offices, including VITA services. The VT Community Action Agencies have also received funding from the State to hire full time, year round VITA staff, with the intent to support and grow free tax preparation services statewide.

X. Sustainability

1. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington? If this program/project ends, how will that benefit continue?

According to the American Community Survey 2010-2014, overall about 25% of Burlington residents live in poverty, while for families with a female head of household, that figure is more than double at 52.4%. The EITC is particularly effective at increasing the work and earnings of unmarried households with children¹¹. In 2023, the VITA program helped Chittenden residents receive \$414,047 in Child Tax and Additional Child Tax Credits; \$563,408 in EITC; \$43,915 in Education Tax Credits, and \$2,206,196 in federal and state refunds. Without the VITA program these savings, credits, refunds and economic inputs would not be realized and many families would continue to struggle financially which can lead to secondary effects of poverty such as inadequate nutrition and/or food insecurity, poor academic achievement, and other negative psychosocial outcomes¹². The VITA program helps families earn more which means they have more money to spend in the community. CVOEO is committed to providing the VITA service and will continue to implement the program even if funding from any of our supporters is reduced; reduced funding would mean serving fewer people, but we would continue to offer the program.

2. CDBG funding is intended for new or expanded services. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be able to continue?

Yes, CVOEO would continue to provide VITA services, even if CDBG funding were not available. CDBG is an important funding source for the level of services we currently provide; if CDBG funds were no longer available to support the VITA program, we would have to restrict staff time and serve fewer people. This would be particularly unfortunate as we are actively working to expand this program and develop methods of serving more people.

3. How will you prioritize the proposed project activities if you do not receive the full amount requested?

If CDBG funds are reduced, and alternate funding is not found to support the service, the VITA program would need to be scaled back; we would have to consider eliminating the evening and weekend hours.

¹¹Yarmuth, J., (2018). "The Earned Income Tax Credit Boosts Work, Reduces Poverty, and Provides Other Benefits for Working Americans." *U.S. House of Representatives Committee On The Budget*. November 30, 2018.

¹² American Psychological Association. "Effects of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness on Children and Youth." <https://www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty>.