

LADDER UP

For Immediate Release

*Ladder Up Encourages Taxpayers to Use IRS-Sponsored Free Tax Prep Services like Free File, VITA, and TCE: Easy, Safe, No-Cost Ways to File Taxes Online or In Person
Local Community Group Recommends Families Save Their Refunds*

CHICAGO - January 8, 2019 — Ladder Up is proud to participate in Intuit's Tax Time Allies program, through which it promotes IRS-sponsored free tax preparation services to help ensure lower- and moderate-income taxpayers receive their full refund at no cost. These services include Free File, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE).

Through its Financial Freedom Foundation, Intuit made a \$15,000 grant to Ladder Up to support the organization's free file service.

IRS Free File (www.irs.gov/freefile) offers brand-name tax preparation software free of charge to eligible taxpayers who earned \$66,000 or less last year to help them prepare and securely file their federal tax return online for free. Free File helps taxpayers save hundreds of dollars on tax preparation fees, which can be used to help jumpstart savings and empower those seeking financial independence. Since the program started in 2003, over 53 million Americans have used Free File to save nearly \$1.46 billion in tax preparation fees. Twenty-three states have formed similar partnerships with the Free File Alliance, enabling eligible taxpayers to file both their federal and state returns for free.

Ladder Up makes Intuit TurboTax software available to eligible taxpayers earning up to \$34,000 annually who wish to file their returns on their own - more information is available at www.goladderup.org/freefile.

Ladder Up is also one of over 12,000 VITA programs across the country on which the IRS relies to help people file their taxes every year. In 2019 alone, Ladder Up's staff and over 1,000 IRS-certified volunteers helped more than 23,800 families and individuals in Illinois file their returns free of charge and keep 100% of their refunds—totaling over \$39 million—without worrying about hidden fees or unexpected charges. The IRS also sponsors TCE programs nationally that serve taxpayers over the age of 60.

“Tax time is one of the most important financial moments of the year for low- and moderate-income families,” said Christine Cheng, Ladder Up's Executive Director. “At Ladder Up, we want to do all that we can to help people maximize their refunds and save for the future. Taking advantage of free IRS-sponsored tax preparation services is the perfect first step for taxpayers looking to improve their financial health,” Ms. Cheng continued.

For more information about Free File, please visit www.irs.gov/freefile. For more information about free tax preparation services available through Ladder Up, please visit www.goladderup.org/tap.

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About Ladder Up:

At Ladder Up, we believe hard work and hardship shouldn't go together. We are a nonprofit organization committed to providing hardworking people with the financial resources and tools they need to move up the economic ladder. That's why we provide free tax preparation, legal counsel, college financial aid assistance, and financial education.

Through the combined strength of volunteers, communities, and partners, we offer real help and hope to more than 30,000 Illinois families each year. We cultivate trust, build relationships, and offer peace of mind by giving hardworking families and individuals around Chicago the tools to build a better future. For more information, visit www.goladderup.org.

About Tax Time Allies:

The Tax Time Allies program is designed to bring together community leaders, community groups, private companies, and local VITA programs to help inform their communities about the free IRS-sponsored tax preparation resources available to qualifying taxpayers, and to show them how these resources can help them save more and improve their overall financial health and well-being. To learn more, visit www.TaxTimeAllies.org.

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