



1118 S. Washington Ave
Lansing, MI 48910

MEIC by the Numbers

Free Tax Preparation in Michigan for the 2017 filing season

Michigan had more than 334 free tax sites during the 2017 filing season¹

Volunteer tax preparers completed more than 101,484 federal tax returns in 2017²

Michigan taxpayers saved more than \$15.4 million in tax preparation fees³

This year, more than 45,525 households, 58,325 people and 9,000 children were served by MEIC members resulting in more than \$50.8 million in federal tax refunds.⁴

MEIC members helped more than 14,250 Michigan households claim more than \$1,964,975 in heating assistance and more than 8,175 taxpayers file their city taxes.⁵

On average, 23.9% of MEIC member clients receive the EITC, 5.1% receive the Child Tax Credit, 33.4% receive the Home Heating Credit and 49.3% receive the Homestead Property Tax Credit.⁶ (Estimate based from 5-year average of MEIC data collection)

The MEIC has 42 active practitioner members and partners, including 24 that provide free tax preparation assistance to Michigan taxpayers.

More than 40% of income tax returns prepared and filed by a volunteer in Michigan in 2017 were completed by a MEIC member.⁷

Between January 1st and May 1st of 2017, there were 15,529 users and 27,288 page views of the MEIC taxpayer site, MichiganFreeTaxHelp.org. This is up from 9,156 and 15,890 during the same period in 2016.⁸

¹ There were 334 IRS VITA or TCE sites in addition to non-IRS program sites offering free tax preparation in Michigan.

² IRS numbers were provided to the MEIC in an email and are current through on September 22, 2017.

³ This figure comes from calculations based off of an article on the National Society of Accountants annual survey of tax preparation fees. The average cost for a state and federal return with standard deduction is \$176, adjusted to \$152 to reflect Michigan's regional difference in cost which is multiplied by 101,484. This estimate is extremely conservative. Client interviews indicate that some spent more than \$400 in previous years. The article can be found at: <http://connect.nsaacct.org/blogs/nsa-blogger/2017/01/27/nsa-survey-reveals-fee-and-expense-data-for-tax-accounting-firms-in-2016-and-2017-projections>

⁴ The MEIC began collecting uniform data from its practitioner partners during the 2013 tax filing season. Of the 25 "active" practitioner members or partners, 17 provided data from the 2017 filing season as of September 29, 2017.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ These percentages are based on the MEIC Data Collection Initiative which provides a representative sample on data for MEIC member sites. Since 2013, between 6 and 15 members of the MEIC have provided data to CEDAM and these averages are the 4-year average.

⁷ This figure is based on federal filings, only. Actual percentage may be higher due the high number of credit only filings by MEIC members.

⁸ Figures are from Google Analytics for the MichiganFreeTaxHelp.org site beginning on January 1, 2016 and ending on April 30, 2017.

2017 MEIC Uniform Data Collection Results

The MEIC collected uniform data from practitioner partners for the 2016 tax filing season. As of October 1, 2017, 17 of the 25 “active” practitioner members or partner provided the MEIC data.

The 17 MEIC partners that provided data include the Accounting Aid Society (*providing services in Oakland, Macomb, Wayne, Livingston and Washtenaw counties*), Allegan County United Way, Asset Independence Coalition (*services in Ingham, Clinton and Eaton Counties*), Barry Community Founday, Blue Water Community Action Agency (St. Clair & Sanilac counties), Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Cheboygan VITA (*services in Cheboygan County and surrounding communities*), Community Action Agency (*serving Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale Counties*), Genesee County Tax Credit Coalition, Goodwill Industries of West Michigan (*serving, Lake, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties*), Hope Center (Macomb County), Kent County Tax Credit Coalition, Montcalm-Ionia Financial Action Alliance (*Montcalm and Ionia counties*), Northwest Michigan Community Action (*serving Antrim, Benzie Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee counties*), United Way of Saginaw County, United Way of Washtenaw County and Wayne Metro Community Action Agency (*serving Wayne County*).

Data Element		Outcome	
Total number of households		45,528	
Total number of individuals in households		58,330	
Number of dependents <18 years old*		9,082	
Number of Direct Deposits (those not receiving refund unable to direct deposit)		19,414	
How did the client file last year?		Client is planning to save some of their refund?	
Paid Preparer	3,357	Yes	3,833
Self-Prepared	1,040	No	7,649
Free tax site	27,209	Not receiving refund	2,439
Friend	831	Unsure	3,098
Did not file	3,778	Refused to answer	2,289
# Federal returns		40,998	
\$ Federal refunds		\$34,025,439	
# Federal EITC		10,495	
\$ Federal EITC		\$ 14,004,261	
# Child Tax Credits		2,749	
\$ Child Tax Credits		\$ 2,817,400	
# State returns		42,931	
\$ State refunds		\$12,621,303	
\$ State taxes due (amount of taxes owed)		N/A	
# State EITC		10,372	
\$ State EITC		\$881,154	
# Home Heating Credit		14,265	
\$ Home Heating Credit*		\$1,964,989	
# Homestead Property Tax Credit		22,646	
\$ Homestead Property Tax Credit*		\$11,751,524	
# City returns*		8,188	
\$ City refunds (tax refunds only)*		\$188,262	
\$ City taxes due (amount of taxes owed)*		(\$484,510)	
# Credit only returns*		6,110	

* Not all data points were collected by all 17 participating members. Adjustments were made to reflect these omissions when calculating the percentages on page one of this document. Credit only data

Last Updated, November 1 2017