



DSC students, credit union offering free tax help

Submitted by Dalton State College

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— Dalton State College accounting students and representatives from the School of Business are partnering with the Georgia Federal Credit Union (GFCU) to help run a branch volunteer site at GFCU for much of this year's tax season to offer free tax help, school officials say.

Instructor of accounting Jamie Connors said many accounting students and some community volunteers will be preparing basic tax returns on Friday nights and Saturdays until March 13 at the GFCU's Dalton branch at 605 Calhoun St. in downtown Dalton.

"The average cost of preparing a tax return ranges from \$115-\$205 depending on the type of return required and where it is prepared," Connors said, noting that the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) provides "free tax preparation to people with low-to-moderate income, typically under \$49,000 a year."

The Dalton site is a branch location of GFCU's partnership with the University of Georgia in Athens.

"The program has been offered for several years through UGA and GFCU's Athens' locations, but this is the first year this program will be offered in Dalton in partnership with Dalton State," Connors said.

The credit union volunteer site allows preparers to file federal and state returns electronically or on paper. According to the IRS Web site on VITA, this lets participants get refunds in half the time of paper returns. This time can be cut further if participants choose direct deposit. If necessary, there are payment options available when using the IRS e-file.

Georgia Federal Credit Union is scheduling appointments for 5 to 8 Friday nights and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays. Participants should come prepared with the following items:

- Proof of identity (driver's license, state issued id)
- Social security cards for you, your spouse and dependents
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on your return
- Current year's tax package if you received one
- Wage and earning statements from all employers (Forms W-2, W-2G, 1099-R)
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns if available
- Bank routing numbers and account numbers for direct deposit (typically a voided check)
- Total paid for any day care providers and the day care provider's tax identifying number (the provider's Social Security number or the provider's business Employer Identification Number)

To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

To make an appointment, contact John Bailey at Georgia Federal Credit Union at (706) 226-1199, extension 3901, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information about the VITA program, please contact Jamie Connors at (706) 272-2455.

More information about the VITA program can be found in the IRS article "Free Tax Return Preparation For You by Volunteers" on the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov/individuals.