



**2011 Meeting Minutes
Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee**

- November 8, 2011
 - October 11, 2011
 - September 13, 2011
 - August 9, 2011
 - July 12, 2011
 - June 14, 2011
 - May 18 – 20, 2011
 - April 12, 2011
 - March 8, 2011
 - February 8, 2011
 - January 11, 2011
-

**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Donna Powers, TAP Program Analyst

Members Present

- None

Members Absent

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Annette Fitzgerald
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Joyce Rhyan
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster
- Brian Roy

Staff Present

- None



Welcome/Announcements

The call was opened by Donna Powers. There were no members of the TAP, program owners or IRS staff on the call. Quorum was not met.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The September and October meeting minutes were approved via e-mail by consensus.

Meeting Close

Powers closed the meeting.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Eboni Moss
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Ken Donnelly
- Annette Fitzgerald

Members Absent

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Edith Kendall
- Walter Webster
- Brian Roy
- Joyce Rhyan
- Jeffrey Steinberg

Staff Present

- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Kate Lett-Deathe, Program Owner
- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst

Welcome/Announcements

Steve Vanderver, Chair and Nancy Ferree, DFO opened the meeting. Nancy spoke on behalf of the committee, expressing appreciation to Steve for his chairmanship the past two years.

Roll Call

Donna Powers took the roll. There were not enough members for quorum.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The September meeting minutes were not approved because of the lack of a quorum. The September and October minutes will be sent to the committee members via e-mail by Powers for a consensus vote.

Program Owner Comments

Roger spoke on behalf of Fred McElligott, who was unable to be on the call. He said the VITA/TAP program is a simple, efficient, and direct program whose members help to increase Wage and Investment (W & I) Stakeholders, Partners, Education and Communication (SPEC's) productivity and quality. We have had issues with participation on calls, but he felt the face to face meeting helped to really work on the issues. We had three recommendations. IRS/SPEC has already implemented some, or in the process of implementing some. He indicated he has never seen any recommendations that were accepted so readily as the ones that were submitted. From the program owners' perspective, he feels we are light years ahead of where we were last year. The committee had a job to do, got together and finished it on time. Great job everybody!

Steve added the fact that the SPEC employees were at the face to face meeting, and able to provide expectations to the committee, was invaluable.

Roger said the process of receiving the recommendations by SPEC seemed to go seamlessly this year, as opposed to previous years.

Kate commented that she agreed with Roger as to the process this year. It was a pleasure to work with each of the members and all the hard work that went into each of these recommendations.

Subcommittee Report Out

Issue 19403—Product Development Team

Powers reported all of the projects have been finished. IRS asked for volunteers for the Beta Testing project, and Jeffrey Steinberg is working on this team. Darryl Lloyd and Maria Barnhart sent their thanks for the outstanding work that has been done this past year by the VITA TAP members. IRS certainly appreciates all of the work performed this year.

Round Table Discussion

This is the VITA committee's final call and our goodbye to Steve Vanderver.

Each of the committee members on the call thanked Steve for his hard work. The IRS employees added their appreciation to Steve for the outstanding job he has done for the past two years as VITA chair.

From the program owner's perspective, they felt he had put in many man hours on this committee, and the documents submitted. From the 300 -400 volunteer hours TAP usually recommends for yearly volunteering, they recognized the Chair put in probably double or triple that amount. The great team and the finished products are a direct result of his work and leadership. It has been a pleasure working with you – your participation on calls and your leadership style has been an example of how we should all be working.



PK told Steve he had been his mentor and welcomed him to the group, and many times answered his calls for help. What impressed him the most was the amount of dedication he put into this job. Even though he is soft spoken, he delivers his message well. You are appreciated!

Annette thanked Steve for his work and his encouragement. This helped toward the success of this year's committee.

Eboni said this has been a good thing to be on the VITA committee – after working as a volunteer for years to see it from the other side. She added her appreciation for Steve's hard work.

Meeting Close

Steve and Nancy closed the meeting.

This is the final meeting.

Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on October 14, 2011.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Donna Powers, Acting TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Joyce Rhyan
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster
- Brian Roy

Members Absent

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Annette Fitzgerald
- Robert (Bob) Rible

Staff Present

- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner
- Gary Lindsey, Program Analyst

Welcome/Announcements

- Donna Powers, Acting DFO, opened the meeting.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The August meeting minutes were approved.

Program Owner Comments

Fred thanked the panel for the outstanding work done on the VITA recommendations. He stated the packages were received on August 26 and well put together. The recommendations are being looked at. Gary Lindsey agreed with Fred that they were well thought out and well written and in the process of being assigned out to the various owners/managers who can develop the IRS' response. Fred indicated last year there were a lot of recommendations, and this year they were very concise. They will be a part of the National Committee Meeting in December.

Subcommittee Report Out

Steve indicated all of the issues had passed through the Joint Committee and forwarded to the IRS program owners.

Issue 19041 – Improving Internal and External Awareness of FEAB – Brian Roy

Brian told the panel all three issues were on TapSpace and if they had not already read them, they should avail themselves of the opportunity to do so.

Roger commented on the issue by saying there is an additional amount of time needed to implement changes, but the panel did a good job developing the recommendations and identifying the barriers.

Issue 19402 – Explore Options Relative to Expansion and Integration into Traditional VITA/TCE Sites Alternative Methods of Filing Returns – Steve Vanderver

Steve indicated there were a couple of questions from the Joint committee, but they seemed to accept it and voted to forward it to the IRS. Roger commented there were changes on the team, but all in all, the recommendations that came from this team were some of the best he has ever seen from the TAP program. He indicated Gary Lindsey agreed with his view. The teams have worked hard and completed good research to come up with these recommendations.

Issue 21939 – FEAB VITA Grant Application – Eboni Moss

Eboni commented they are interested in the feedback from IRS. Roger told the panel that Robin Taylor, who is over the VITA grant office is right now in the middle of the grant ranking process and the decisions for grants should be completed by the end of October. This will not affect this year – but will probably be in the calendar year 2012. The panel won't be seeing anything on the grants that are being worked today.

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team- Steve Vanderver

Steve spoke on behalf of the team. He worked on the beta test, Bob handled the coordination of 4491 training manual, and Steve worked on 4401-W, which included two trips to Atlanta. The teams completed all of their work this past week and hopefully they will have some good products coming out of the teams. Jeffrey worked on the testing of 6744 and Pub. 4189.

Donna discussed an issue that Area 7 has put before the Joint committee. Issue 20080 is to take the current five levels (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, Military and International) and shrink them into two: Basic and Advanced. This issue is similar to 16829, which was the recommendation from the 2010 VITA project committee, which was to combine the basic and intermediate levels, which is going to be implemented in 2013. After discussion, it was decided to discuss the issue with the analyst from Area 7, Janice Spinks, and perhaps the IRS can get involved with the discussion.



Donna told the group they will have a final meeting in October, and no meeting in November. There will also be no subcommittee meetings.

Meeting Close

Donna closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on October 11, 2011.

Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on October 14, 2011.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Ken Donnelly (in-part)
- Annette Fitzgerald
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Ken Donnelly
- Joyce Rhyan
- Bob Rible
- Eboni Moss

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Program Analyst
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker
- Kathryn (Kate) Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst (in-part)

Guest(s) Present

- Karen Truss, W&I Research
- Dr. David Cico, W & I Research
- Saima Mehmood, W & I Research
- Nan Ellen Fuller, SPEC

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was met.



Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The July meeting minutes were approved.

Program Owner Comments: Subcommittee Report Out

All three issues from the subcommittees were reviewed and voted by consensus to forward to the Joint Committee Quality Review.

The three issues were discussed by the leads. They were presented as follows:

Issue 1904 – Increase Internal and External Awareness of FEAB – Edith Kendall

Issue 19402 – Alternative Methods of Filing Returns – Steve Vanderver

Issue 21939 – VITA Grant Application – Edith Kendall

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team – Nan Ellen Fuller

Nan Ellen gave a recap of all the team's accomplishments so far. A conference call was held on July 19 to discuss the suggested updates and changes to the Pubs 4491 and 4012.

There will be one more opportunity for the team to provide feedback. The Education & Product Development (E&PD) Staff will be conducting the Final Quality Review of the training materials the week of August 22, 2011. Nan Ellen will email the latest DRAFT of the publications prior to our Quality Review to Bob. The primary focus this time will be on the **technical accuracy** of the material and to make sure we have included all of the **tax law changes** for Tax Year 2011.

The following is the schedule:

- **Pub 4012 (white tabs-tax law)** – The proof is due to us from the vendor on August 10. I will forward it you on August 11. All comments should be forwarded as soon as possible but **no later than August 19**.
- **Pub 4491** – The proof is due to us from the vendor on August 15. This will be forwarded on August 16th. All comments should be forwarded as soon as possible but **no later than August 22**.

Steve Vanderver and Jeffrey Steinberg will meet one last time in Atlanta to finish their projects.

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on September 13, 2011.



Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on September 13, 2011.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Ken Donnelly (in-part)
- Annette Fitzgerald
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Brian Roy

Staff Present

- Marianne Ayala, TAP Program Analyst
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker
- Kathryn (Kate) Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst (in-part)

Guest(s) Present

- Karen Trust, W&I Research

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was met.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The May and June meeting minutes were approved with corrections on the June minutes.

Program Owner Comments

Roger Burton spoke about how pleased he was at the progress of the teams thus far and thinks the project will be completed by the August 15 date.

Kate shared her praise for the committee's hard work that has been done thus far in the project, especially since the Face to Face meeting.

Roger and Kate both stated they hope that TAP continues holding the Face to Face meeting in the middle of the year, because that's when a lot of the work is done to finalize the project.

Subcommittee Report Out

Issue 19041 – Partner – Provide Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) Services at VITA/TCE Sites – Edith Kendall

Edith provided a brief report on the project's progress thus far, stating that Eboni had completed the rough draft. Edith stated she is doing some more background research and talking with the Economic Influx and Development Office for the state of Iowa. She is talking with the office to gather some more background research and feels the rough draft would be done soon.

Issue 19402 – Explore Options Relative to Expansion and Integration into Traditional VITA/TCE Sites Alternative Methods of Filing Returns – Steve Vanderver

Steve provided a brief report on the projects progress thus far; stating he had written the rough draft and the group discussed it on their last conference call. He stated the draft included several proposals to expand the VITA sites to include many more services. He requested if anyone had any suggestions or comments to email him so he could include into the referral.

PK provided some information about the American Bar and how they require attorneys to perform additional pro bono work. His proposal is to ask tax attorneys if they would consider doing pro bono work for different VITA programs in order to buy CPE credit or some other way to entice the preparers to volunteer for VITA.

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team – Bob Rible

Bob provided a brief report on the projects progress thus far, stating he had collected input from all the team members and returned it to Nan Ellen by the deadline. He also stated the group would be receiving some rough drafts in August for review. Bob stated the group has a conference call with Nan Ellen to discuss the next steps on the project.

Jeffrey stated he had worked in Atlanta with the text team and they were making progress.

PK suggests Bob to use different people on the second review so they can see it with fresh eyes to make fresh suggestions on the material.

Refocus of TAP Survey – Steve Vanderver

Steve reminded everyone to respond to the Refocus of TAP Survey by the July 15 deadline so he could consolidate the responses and have them ready for the Joint Committee Face to Face.



Rodger suggested sharing the rough draft with Dr. Cisco and his staff.

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on August 9, 2011.

Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on August 9, 2011.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 14, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Annette Fitzgerald
- Eboni Moss
- Robert Rible
- Brian Roy
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Stephen Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Winifred Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Edith Kendall
- Prabal Purkayastha (PK)
- Joyce Rhyan

Staff Present

- Marianne Ayala, TAP Program Analyst
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker
- Kathryn (Kate) Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst

Guest(s) Present

- Nan Ellen Fuller, IRS Specs
- David Scisco, W&I Research
- Imam Mesmuth, W&I Research

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was not met.

Introduction of Guests

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The May meeting minutes were not approved and pushed to next month due to lack of quorum.

Program Owner Comments

Kate Lett-Deathe provided a brief report on the status of the VEAB project. She stated the group had a good meeting at the face to face and while there they reviewed their rough draft for their proposals to the IRS. The group is hoping to have their second rough draft completed by June 28 and at that time she would provide a copy to the headquarters program analyst for feedback. On the groups' next meeting on July 14, the group would review the feedback and finalize the project before their Aug 4 deadline. She commended the groups' enthusiasm and participation for completing the project.

She commented on the branding project stating that they were creating an action plan that would carry the rebranding issue into the next few years, because the information is still being collected and would not be complete for a while.

Fred McElligott complimented everyone on the face to face meeting and their hard work and dedication to meet the Aug 15 deadline for the projects.

Subcommittee Report Out

Issue 19041

No report out

Issue 19402

No report out

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team – Nan Ellen Fuller

Nan Ellen provided a brief report on the progress on the four different teams that different committee members are serving on. She stated that the first team, the 4012 team, met and worked on the 4012's. The second team was currently meeting and working to finish their part since the completed product has to be turned into the vendor by the following week. She stated that Bob Rible is coordinating the feedback on the 4491 and on the 4012. She has already received the feedback on the 4012, which she has provided with the content owners for their review and the feedback for the 4491 is due by the end of the month. She stated there was a conference call tentatively set up for mid-July to discuss the recommendations and decide which ones the IRS would be adopting and to answer any questions the team might have.

Annette provided feedback she had regarding some of the suggestions that the group has been developing. Her concern was with so many different forms how would they be able to get them to the right place and her other concern was with the Kiosk method. She stated at one of her sites they piloted the idea and it was not successful because the taxpayer ended up having to pay for filing their return.

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on July 12, 2011.



***Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on July 12, 2011.**



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Face-to-Face Meeting Minutes
May 18 – 20, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, DFO

Members Present

- Winifred Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- PK Purkayastha
- Brian Roy
- Stephen Vanderver

Members Absent

- Annette FitzGerald
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert Rible
- Walter Webster

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner/Area 1 SPEC Director
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Kathryn Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst/Note Taker
- Michael Beebe, Acting SPEC Director
- Shawn Collins, TAP Director

Guest(s) Present

None

Welcome/Announcements

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Vanderver gave his thanks to all the third year members. Everyone introduced themselves.

Shawn Collins thanked everyone for coming out and shared that she and the staff appreciate all the work that the volunteers contribute. She discussed the restructuring of TAP and how it is going to look. There is a draft that will be shared shortly. She shared that the communications committee is taking a look at the TAP Member handbook to ensure that it is updated and TAP is also working on TAP strategic plan. She also thanked the program owners for all they do to support the TAP program.

IRS Overview

Mike Beebe thanked everyone for the recommendations that the TAP sent through. He also thanked and congratulated Roger Burton, 2010 Program Owner of the Year. Beebe shared that late legislation impacted about 150,000 taxpayers this year.

- SPEC experienced some vendor issues, communication issues, and customer service issues as well.
- Last year SPEC had an 85% quality rate and this year it is slightly higher.
- VITA volunteers increased this year by 4%, this shows how the VITA program is increasing

Beebe also talked about FEAB and how they are working with the partners, he shared how they are piloting a new program for free file that includes the filing of state taxes as well. They are just piloting this in 28 states right now and hoping to expand it over the next couple of years.

Program Owner Overview - SPEC

Fred McElligott thanked the members for their volunteerism and the outstanding work they do for SPEC. He told them a couple of stories about his visits at different VITA sites and seeing the other volunteers helping taxpayers. McElligott shared what an amazing feeling it is to volunteer your time to help others and the gratitude shown is well worth your time given.

Burton stated that the feeling that McElligott described is real. He experiences the same feelings and he is thankful for the assistance and time the TAP volunteers give to the IRS and SPEC.

Lett reiterated the statements by McElligott and Burton stating she is glad to meet with all of the new committee members face-to-face since she missed the December meeting. She stated she looked forward to a very productive meeting and thanked all for their participation.

Product Development Team

Darrell Lloyd gave an overview of what the product development team is all about. Last year TAP members helped on test teams, Janice Socha is the newest member on the test team. Publication 3189 is another project that the TAP members help with. This year the product development team is trying to make the online version more effective.

Tax Year 2011 Product Development Teams

Testing Materials – Publication 4189 & Form 6744 – Vanderver completed this May 2-5.
Student Workbook – Comprehensive Problems & Exercises – Publication 4491-W

E-file Administrator & the Volunteer Resource Guides – Publications 3189 and 4012 (Tax Wise yellow & Blue Tabs) – do not have a volunteer for this team as of yet.

Training Product Quality Review – Publications 3189 and 4012 (Tax Law White Tabs) – this one is done remotely and Bob Rible is the lead.



“Optional” Specialty Online Modules – Cancellation of Debt (COD) AND Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) – Jeffrey Steinberg has volunteered for this team.

Janie Neal explained each team and product in detail. She also gave the dates of the review.

Training and Product Enhancements – Maria Barnhart explained the screenshot of the tax law portion of Link & Learn.

Practice Lab Usage

Lloyd stated that the more feedback the better the products

IRS’ Response to 2010 Proposal

Ron Smith is the Chief of Strategic Planning and Development in SPEC. Currently SPEC is looking at ways to change VITA/TCE. VITA is 40 years old and needs to have changes. Smith gave an overview on how the responses come back to the committee. He stated that all recommendations are taken seriously, and they are forwarded to the experts in the organization.

Seven issues came in with 29 sub-recommendations.
13 fully accepted, 10 partially accepted, 5 under consideration and 1 rejected.

On the Form 14099, *SPEC Partner / Site Financial Education & Asset Building Assessment Tool (Internal Use Only)* is a form that the partners fill-out, and it is strictly internal. One partner can indicate they are performing in all levels of engagement as can one site. If you weigh the activities on the front of the form, then you will be able to tell what level of engagement the site and ultimately the partner is exhibiting.

Smith stated that what SPEC wants to do is get a portfolio of services offered at the VITA sites. The form gives us a basis for this.

Public Input Closing/Wrap-Up

Vanderver thanked Ron and stated that he originally understood the response incorrectly. Vanderver stated that Smith’s explanation of the process will help the committee make better recommendations in the future. He closed the meeting for the day.

Welcome

Vanderver opened the meeting and welcomed everyone back.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved with 2 minor corrections, by consensus.

Administrative

Anita completed the travel voucher process. All members complied.

Overview on Free Assisted Self-Service Tax-Preparation (FAST)

Dan Maier, SPEC Program Analyst, gave a brief overview on FAST pilot program. In his presentation he stated volunteer tax return preparation is SPEC's primary External Measure, and the only Critical Measure, initially following stand-up, SPEC's return prep totals experienced significant year-to-year gains, and IRS studies (2009 Benchmark Survey) have indicated that the actual market segment for these services is much broader.

- ✓ 16 million additional taxpayers are aware of these return prep services and would use them if they were readily available (the "assistance gap")
- ✓ In addition, a large percentage of individuals who visit a volunteer site are single taxpayers; according to 2010 Tax Wise data, 59% of all taxpayers had a filing status of single

He also talked about the assistance gap, the assisted self-help kiosk model, and partnership with free-file alliance, lessons learned from 2010 filing season, and SPEC's growth plan for 2011.

Dr. David Cico, W & I Social Scientist gave a presentation and brief overview of the people that qualify for VITA services and do not use the services. This is a sample of 9930 people.

There are about 75% people that still use traditional paper returns and the other 25% complete their returns electronically.

The Phase 2 report was to take a better look at the people that do not use VITA, that are aware and qualified, and those that don't use VITA, and unaware of VITA.

Cost is what drove most people to the VITA sites. The way they found out about VITA, was word of mouth, friends, and social services, among others.

Birmingham, Wilmington, DE, Milwaukee and Denver, are the cities where the survey office held focus groups and they will get a draft report out soon.

Friday 5/20/2011

Vanderver opened the meeting and welcomed everyone back once more. He stated that this has been an exceptional meeting.

Subcommittee Report-Out

Alternative Methods of Filing Returns – Vanderver shared a few ideas the subcommittee had pertaining to some alternative methods to assist taxpayers in filing their taxes. These ideas are:

1. Having an interview sheet, so that the computer can suggest tax software for taxpayer, instead of taxpayer having to make the choice
2. Scan documents to a VITA preparer—complete return and send back to taxpayer for signature

3. Encourage corporate America to allow volunteers to come into their establishment to prepare free tax returns for their employees as an employee benefit; then eventually training them to do it themselves

Some barriers to these alternatives are privacy and disclosure issues and systems needing to be fixed before VITA can expand.

Financial Education Asset Building (FEAB) – Brian Roy reported that the FEAB subcommittee discussed six objectives to consider when deciding what projects to propose. Those six objectives are:

Objective # 1: Utilize a wide variety of partner channels to deliver financial education and asset building to assist low- to moderate-income W&I taxpayers.

Objective # 2: Fully engage the SPEC workforce in the delivery of financial education and asset building.

Objective # 3: Maximize financial education and asset building resources by facilitating cooperation and alliances among partners.

1. VITA grants funds to include FEAB activities.

- Cap % to use for FEAB
- Does it require Legislative Change?

6. Incentives

- What is in it for the partners, Volunteers and taxpayers?
- Other Services (i.e. Wills, credit reports, long term care)

Objective # 4: Improve internal and external awareness of financial education and asset building

- 2 Name Change (Possibility of re-branding FEAB)

Ask Partners, site coordinators and SPEC employees (email & surveys)

Identify questions...

What does it mean to you?

Success Stories

How has FEAB improved your life?

Discovery of Documents (i.e. check lists, job aids, training materials, etc.)

- 4 Infomercial

Where done – how to replicate?

- 3 TAPSpace FEAB conversation – Ken

Tap-Dance Update

TAP Facebook page

Should SPEC just use Financial Education vs. FEAB

Objective # 5: Improve student knowledge and skills around financial education and asset building through a public education campaign

- 5 Link & learn
 Include real life examples/success stories/best practices
 Topics on FEAB

7. Job Aid/Checklist/Form 14099 Revisions

Objective # 6: Coordinate IRS cross-functional efforts to provide financial education and asset building.

Miscellaneous

Burton stated that he appreciates all the work the VITA committee has done. Although, 1/3 of the members were absent the committee did tremendous work. He also stated that with the restructuring of TAP, the interest of current and future members might be lost.

Lett stated that she was excited about the accomplishments made during the meeting and that even though the FEAB subcommittee had set an aggressive time-line to deliver the project referrals prior to the August 15 date, she was confident in the committee and their dedication to the hard work it would take.

Fred McElligott stated that he was impressed with the results that came from the meeting.

Vanderver put a plug in for the VITA Project Committee. He thanked everyone for attending and participating in the F2F meeting.

Meeting Close

Vanderver closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

The next meeting scheduled is on June 14, 2011 @ 2 p.m. EST.

Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on July 12, 2011.



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal (PK) Purkayastha
- Brian Roy
- Stephen (Steve) Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Annette FitzGerald
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert (Bob) Rible

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker

Guest(s) Present

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was met.

Introduction of Guests

Gerald Reaser with the National Older Worker Career Center joined the call to learn about the types of issues VITA was working on.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The March meeting minutes were approved, by consensus, as written.

Face to Face Information – Donna Powers

Donna reminded everyone the face to face would begin on Wednesday, May 18 at 1:00 p.m., all day Thursday, May 19 and half day Friday, May 20. The hotel would be the Residence Inn in downtown Atlanta. The meeting would be at the Harris Towers. She would be emailing everyone more information.

Program Owner Comments – Fred McElligott/Roger Burton

Fred stressed the importance of being in a refinement point in the project so the referrals can be written up and submitted to the IRS. He stated that if any subcommittee needed assistance to contact Roger, Kate or himself to resolve any issues prior to the meeting that might be holding up the subcommittee. He also reported that the Mike Beebe, National Acting Director was going to try and attend the meeting.

Roger reported Dr. Cico and his staff have committed to attending the breakout sessions for the subcommittee to provide the numbers from when they did the survey. He reported the results from the survey would be able to break down even further and analysis provided.

Donna provided a brief report for Kate Lett-Deathe on the Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) group has broken into two subcommittees. One group is focusing on research and the other is focusing on marketing. She said panel members have performed tests at the sites and are discussing the analysis.

Subcommittee Report Out

Issue 19041 – Edith Kendall – Edith provided a brief report on the subcommittee stating the subcommittee received a more accurate report and are reviewing the information.

Donna stated she sent out a briefing paper to bring together the groups so both sides of the FEAB groups could see what the other was doing.

Issue 19402 – Joyce Rhyan/Annette Fitzgerald – Annette stated she had reviewed the report that Donna had sent out and it provided her with a lot of good information.

Fred reported taxpayers had the option to go to a VITA site and fill out their own taxes if the Kiosk is available rather than see an actual Tax Preparer at a VITA site. The software was provided by the Free-File Alliance and to date about 3,000 returns done this way, with 2,000 returns filed via the Kiosk on the west coast and 1,000 for the rest of the country.

Roger stated the results from the survey that 9 percent of taxpayers did their returns via paper, 18 percent by themselves using version of software, 2% that uses IRS free-file and 3 percent that participate in the VITA program. The goal is to get the numbers up in certain areas to make it better for the taxpayers by either going to the VITA site or using either the VITA volunteer or the Kiosk.



Edith provided information on a project she participated in at the Oscar Meyer Union Hall to assist taxpayers with their taxes. She mentioned an information pack was provided with all kinds of outreach material, which was a better approach rather than trying to get them to listen to a speech.

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team – Donna Powers – Donna provided a brief report on the team stating for team one Jeffrey, Steve and Winnie, only one person will attend the June 13 meeting and team two, Steve Vandever will be attending for week May 2 for Pub 44991, week May 23 for Pub 2389 and week for Jun 13 for the Pub 4012 Tax Laws. She is looking for a volunteer to go to the Jun 13 for the optional team. She is still waiting for the final dates on these and will finalize with attendees once she has the final dates.

Citizen Input

Gerald Reazer thanked the committee for allowing him to attend and listen in on the call. He said he would contact Donna to get some further background on the project.

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on May 18 – 20, 2011 Face to Face in Atlanta, GA.

Certification

These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on May 18, 2011



**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, TAP Program Manager

Members Present

- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Eboni Moss
- Prabal (PK) Purkayastha
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Brian Roy
- Stephen (Steve) Vanderver, Chair
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Winifred (Winnie) Browne
- Annette FitzGerald
- Ken Donnelly
- Joyce Rhyan

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker
- Dr. David Cico, Ph.D.
- Social Scientist – Research Group 4
- IRS – Wage & Investment – Atlanta

Guest(s) Present

- Justin Axelrod

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was met.

Steve announced the stepping down of Jeffrey Steinberg from Vice-Chair of VITA and the lead of his subcommittee.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The February meeting minutes were approved, by consensus, as written.

Information—Donna Powers

Donna stated with Jeffrey Steinberg stepping down, there had been two self nominations on the panel for the Vice-Chair position. Walter Webster and Winnie Browne self nominated themselves. Walter took a moment to say a few words regarding his nomination. Donna will call Winnie to suggest her sending out a few words regarding her nomination. Steve suggested performing an email vote versus voting on the teleconference.

Action Item: Donna to email committee asking which candidate they would vote for as the new Vice-Chair.

Action Item: Donna to email Annette Fitzgerald and Joyce Rhyan of the subcommittee to see who would want to become the lead.

Donna reminded the committee members of the importance of attending the subcommittee calls because that is where most of the work is done and where project referrals are written.

Donna stated she would be updating the TAPSpace calendar with all the full committee and sub-committee calls. She apologized for not being able to update the calendar sooner.

Donna requested anyone who did not receive an email from her about the agenda to please email her so she can update her email distribution list.

Program Owner Comments—Roger Burton

Roger echoed Donnas' comment about participating in the subcommittee calls, stating emails back and forth are great, but that one hour call is important to get a lot of clarity with the research and feedback.

Roger stated if any member needed anything from either Fred or Kate to email Roger and he would forward it up to them since they were not on the call.

Roger mentioned that IRS program owners are very busy trying to get caught up from bad weather and issues with the software that they were using with return filing, but now they are back on track and moving forward with the tax year.

Subcommittee Report Out

Issue 19041—Edith Kendall

Edith reported the subcommittee will have two subcommittee calls, one for marketing and one for research. The marketing call will look into some of the different marketing issues and the research call will be looking at the research that Edith is compiling and will be sending out to the team.

Issue 19402— Prabal (PK) Purkayastha

PK reported the subcommittee had received a report that Roger had provided and now was in the process of going through and creating more questions for Dr. Cico who wrote the report and has all the data.

Donna stated that once the subcommittee has finalized the questions, she would forward them to Dr. Cico.

Issue 19403—Product Development Team—Donna Powers

Donna asked Roger if he had received dates from the Nan Ellen Fuller. Roger has not received the firm dates, but it should be close to the same dates as last year.

Donna reported she has a name for every location for the development team and stated for right now she hopes that when travel comes up, the budget would be available for travel. As more information becomes available, she would update the committee as needed.

Member Comments

Members discussed finding different ways to make it easier for the elderly to file their taxes. Suggestions of having someone bring in their paperwork and doing a paper tax return taking it back having the elderly and letting them sign and mail off and developing a “Meals on Wheels” type service for the elderly, but for taxes.

Edith mentioned her office goes into Goodwill and other frequented places by the elderly to get them to feel comfortable about receiving tax assistance.

Citizen Input

None

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on April 12, 2011 @ 2pm EST.

***Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on**

April 12, 2011.

**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, DFO

Members Present

- Ken Donnelly
- Eboni Moss
- PK Purkayastha
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert (Bob) Rible
- Brian Roy
- Stephen Vanderver
- Walter Webster

Members Absent

- Winifred Browne
- Annette FitzGerald
- Edith Kendall
- Jeffrey Steinberg

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Kathryn Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst
- Kymberly Hand, TAP Secretary/Note Taker

Guest(s) Present

- Lina Bettle—Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA)
- Brian White
- Melonie Barowussa
- David Cico, W&I Researcher
- Gary Lindsey

Welcome/Announcements

Nancy Ferree opened the meeting. Steve Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kymberly Hand took roll and quorum was met.



Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

December and January meeting minutes both approved by consensus.

Program Owner Comments

Fred McElligott said thanks to the committee and with the committee's initiative and being engaged in the VITA project, they will be ready for the May face-to-face meeting.

Roger Burton reported on several issues that the 2010 VITA committee had submitted to the IRS for recommendation. He stated several issues had come back as under consideration, however, after going back to the IRS with questions, there seemed to be some miscommunication between the IRS and VITA committee. He stated once he received more information from the IRS regarding the responses from the IRS some of the issuecodes could be changed to reflect a different code for the database.

Discussion among the committee regarding the rejections on the issues, reflect that the issue referral form needed to be revised to include a new code to better reflect the actual meaning of rejected when the recommendation is actually in the process of being fixed.

Subcommittee Report-Out

Issue 19041

Partner-provided Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) Services at VITA/TCE Sites—

Kate Lett-Deathe reported Donna had provided two reports prepared this past year for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. One describes the data received from campaigns participating in the National Tax Assistance for Working Families Campaign, and the other consists of tables looking at data from both tax returns and site surveys. The subcommittee is in the process of analyzing the data, looking at possible trends .

Kate also discussed the questions the volunteers at the various VITA sites might ask taxpayers – to get a feel for why they are at the VITA site and if they have any interest in speaking to a partner about FEAB services.

Issue 19402

Explore Options Relative to Expansion and Integration into Traditional VITA/TCE Sites
Alternative Methods of Filing Returns—PK Purkayastha stated the subcommittee is still in the data gathering phase and different members are using some of the different methods to gather feedback from other taxpayers and tax preparers. The subcommittee is only working with about 3 million of the 19 million of the possible taxpayers who could use VITA/TCE sites or alternative methods. They are researching what the demographics for the taxpayers are to better find the best alternative methods for certain areas.

Roger informed the group they are also looking at a possible question to ask at the VITA sites – and the subcommittee is tweaking that at this point. He stated there is a gap between the number of VITA sites and the number of taxpayers who are not being reached. One of the main focuses of this subcommittee will be trying to find out if the



taxpayer would do their own taxes if there was someone who could assist them and a computer to use at a VITA site.

Issue 19403 – Product Development Team

Donna asked each of the panel members to think about the upcoming development teams beginning in May. Some travel will be involved. She will be sending out a guide on the teams, dates, and competencies needed.

Miscellaneous

None

Meeting Close

Nancy closed the meeting.

The next meeting scheduled is on March 8, 2011 @ 2pm EST.

***Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on**

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**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)
VITA Project Committee(Administrative)
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2011**

Designated Federal Official (DFO)

- Nancy Ferree, DFO

Members Present

- Winifred Browne
- Ken Donnelly
- Edith Kendall
- Eboni Moss
- PK Purkayastha
- Joyce Rhyan
- Robert Rible
- Brian Roy
- Stephen Vanderver

Members Absent

- Annette FitzGerald
- Jeffrey Steinberg
- Walter Webster

Staff Present

- Donna Powers, TAP Analyst
- Fred McElligott, Program Owner
- Roger Burton, Program Analyst
- Kathryn Lett-Deathe, Program Analyst
- Anita Fields, TAP Analyst/Note Taker

Guest(s) Present

- None

Welcome/Announcements

Stephen Vanderver welcomed everyone to the meeting. He also discussed the proposals the committee forwarded to the IRS. He mentioned the responses that were received and asked about getting an explanation of some responses received.

Roger Burton said that he is aware that there needs to be a clearer explanation, he and Fred McElligott and all others involved will ensure that it occurs.

Nancy Ferree reminded everyone to make sure everyone announces their names before speaking, because there are several people on the line that may not recognize voices.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

The committee did not review and approve the meeting minutes for December, because this meeting is administrative.

Program Owner Comments

McElligott apologized for having to leave the annual conference. He thanked all returning members for coming back and joining VITA. What you did in the prior year and the recommendations that came forward is truly an indication of the success that you had. For the new members he said welcome, he thanked them for joining the group and he thinks you will find it a truly great experience. McElligott thanked Vanderver and others who nominated and gave Burton the National TAP Award for IRS Program owner. He stated that he could not think of a more deserving person. He also stated you would NOT find a more dedicated person about TAP.

McElligott says that he is very happy to have Kate Lett-Deathe back with us this year to work with the FEAB subcommittee.

McElligott informed that Burton is staying on for another year to support the efforts of TAP. Steve Owens will not be joining.

Lett-Deathe also apologized for not making the annual conference. She stated that she is extremely excited, there was so much energy and enthusiasm on our first subcommittee call last week. She feels that it is going to be a great year and everyone is ready to hit the ground running. There are many things that the FEAB subcommittee can accomplish this year, because of the energy and commitment the sub-team is showing.

Subcommittee Report-Out

Issue 19041

Partner-provided Financial Education and asset Building (FEAB) Services at VITA/TCE Sites—Edith Kendall reported the subcommittee received a good explanation of FEAB. The committee discussed putting together a rough draft of some questions to informally ask regarding financial literacy i.e. (do you have a checking account, if not, why not, are you a homeowner, etc?) These questions will be used at VITA/TCE sites. Kendall will get the questions completed and send out to the rest of the committee by Friday for their input.

Issue 19402

Explore Options Relative to Expansion and Integration into Traditional VITA/TCE Sites Alternative Methods of Filing Returns—Vanderver reported the subcommittee discussed that in some areas it may be feasible to integrate alternative methods of filing returns; and in some areas it may not, that is what they are going to look at. They are also going to look at setting up Kiosks and self-help or something where the taxpayer can do their taxes with guidance. This may free up the volunteers to maybe one volunteer to help three taxpayers.

Issue 19403

Review and Testing of the VITA/TCE training Program and Publications—Vanderver explained this issue is similar to what the VITA committee did last year. Every year the VITA project committee helps the education and product development people prepare, revise, examine, review, and test training material for VITA volunteers. We will find out more about this project during our face-to-face meeting. There will be opportunities to travel to Atlanta to work on the training materials. Burton is going to get some dates for this project, to prepare for people to volunteer and make plans to attend.

Burton stated that he is going to coordinate with McElligott and his staff to get some tentative dates.

Vanderver also stated that one of the focuses is determining the feasibility of consolidating or restructuring the five current levels of training certifications, which is, in fact, one of the recommendations the committee made last year. This is a direct development from last year's recommendations.

Powers asked, "Are we looking at tentatively 3 weeks for product development travel?" McElligott stated that is a training issue, and he does not know if it is consistent year by year. They will run it by the person in charge of the program and get the committee some quick feedback.

Miscellaneous

Powers said that the dates of the subcommittee calls were changed. Both subcommittees will meet on the first Thursday, the Alternative subcommittee will meet at 1pm EST and FEAB at 3pm EST. The full committee call will be the 2nd Tuesday at 2pm EST.

Burton wants to revisit the dates of the face-to-face meeting so that he can ensure we have training space. Currently the dates are May 18-20 in Atlanta, GA.

Meeting Close

Vanderver closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He also stated that if anyone has any concerns about the face-to-face meeting dates to let Powers know.

The next meeting scheduled is on February 08, 2011 @ 2pm EST.

***Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus on February 8, 2011.**