



## 2009 Meeting Minutes Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Issue Committee

- December 16, 2009
- November 10, 2009
- October 13, 2009
- September 8, 2009
- August 11, 2009
- July 14, 2009
- June 9, 2009
- May 8-9, 2009
- April 14, 2009
- March 10, 2009
- February 10, 2009

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**Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP)  
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Project Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 16, 2009**

**Designated Federal Official (DFO)**

Nancy Ferree, DFO

**Members Present**

Justin Axelrod  
Raymond Buschmann  
Richard Coonradt  
Ken Donnelly  
Gary Iskowitz  
John Kim  
Matthew Kosanovich  
Eboni Moss  
Timothy Oetken  
Jeffrey Steinberg  
Swarna Vallurupalli  
Stephen Vanderver  
Marilyn Young

**Members Absent**

Edward Johnson

**Staff Present**

Anita Fields, Secretary  
Sallie Chavez, TAP Program Analyst  
Roger Burton, IRS Program Owner  
Frederick McElligott, IRS Program Owner  
Cathy Fitzgerald, IRS Program Owner

**Guest(s) Present**

None



### **Welcome/Announcements**

Laura Criel opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She asked Anita to take roll. Quorum was met. Everyone introduced themselves to each other.

### **Review of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Nancy Ferree will work with Louis Morizio to approve the meeting minutes from November.

### **Mission of the VITA Issue Committee and Roles, Committee Structure and Expectations**

Criel stated that the mission on the VITA committee comes from the VITA program office. The big role of the VITA committee is to help with the VITA training materials. Criel also stated that this year we will not have a separate training committee.

**---Protocol, Participation and Quorum**—Criel discussed protocol for teleconferences. She also discussed Quorum and quorum is set at 50% plus one.

**---Roles of Staff, Program Owner, Chair and Members**—Steve Vandever asked how many issues the committees work during the year. Criel answered, two, but it may change for this year. Criel gave a brief overview of the roles of the Staff, Program Owners, Chair and the Members. Ferree stated that the committee chair runs the meeting and the staff supports the committee chair. If the chair is not available the vice chair runs the meeting.

**---Flow and Reporting of Issues**—Fred McElligott discussed the structure of the VITA office. McElligott stated that it is very important to participate on the conference calls and the subcommittees. The work is a tough job for one person to handle, therefore we need everyone to participate and do their part.

Julie Garcia is the National Director, McElligott is the Area 1 Director, Cathy Fitzgerald and Roger Burton is both analysts. VITA has 12,000 sites and 80,000 volunteers nationwide.

McElligott stated that if you have a personal agenda, please keep it outside.

### **Roles of the Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Subcommittee Chairs**

Ferree discussed the roles of the Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Subcommittee Chair. The Chair runs the meeting with the assistance of the staff and the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair runs the meeting in the event the Chair is not available. The Subcommittee Chairs are leads of their subcommittees and reports back to the Chair and the rest of the committee.

### **Review of 2009 Recommendations**

Criel stated that TAP members were part of every product used in training for VITA. McElligott made references to the Commissioner stating the IRS to walk in the shoes of the taxpayer. He asks that the panel members walk in the shoes of the IRS as well.

The two issues referred to the VITA office is Measuring Tax Returns Accuracy in the VITA/TCE Programs and Method to Measure and Quantify Coalitions' Efforts. The IRS is going to use some if not all of the information that the VITA Issue Committee sent forward.

### **2008 Issues**

There were eight issues came through, two could not be implemented because of budgetary reasons.

**Volunteer Mileage Reimbursement**—the committee recommended that the IRS could provide this reimbursement directly to VITA volunteers or encourage partners to provide reimbursement using the grant funds. **The SPEC Grant Program Office will continue to encourage partners to provide volunteer travel reimbursement using grant funds.**



**Volunteer recognition**—the committee recommended to have a tax volunteer recognition week. Nominated volunteers could be selected to attend Executive level /ceremonies/celebrations. **These recommendations will be implemented in FY 2010.**

**Increase Advertising and Promotion of VITA Program**— the committee recommended that the IRS expand the services offered by SPEC. This can be through advertising and promotion of VITA through existing channels. **Per Lynn Mayeski, JOC is continuing to look at the possibility of advertising VITA/TCE on the toll free lines. However, it will not be possible for 2010 due to focus on the ARRA provisions.**

**Insert Flyer in Error Mailers Advertising VITA Services**— the committee recommended to include an insert in direct mail campaigns informing taxpayers about free electronic tax preparation services. **In February 2009, SPEC Individual Marketing Services (IMS) mailed 100,000 copies of Publication 4644 Common Errors Made by Taxpayers 65 and Older to a targeted sample of taxpayers. This publication provides information about Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) services. No additional activity expected until September 2009 when Research provides data analysis.**

**Add Select Schedule K-1 to VITA**—the committee suggested to add select Schedule K-1 (e.g. those reflecting income shown on forms and schedules within the VITA scope) issues to the VITA curriculum. **The team concurred with the TAP recommendation to expand scope to a limited type of Schedule K-1s. This topic is included in the training materials for Filing Season FY2010.**

**Add Limited Schedule C to VITA (Part 1)**—The committee suggested to the IRS to do limited Schedule C returns to provide services to taxpayers with expenses greater than \$5K. **The SPEC team met and recommended delaying for 2010 due to quality concerns. They will revisit in 2011.**

**Add Limited Schedule C to VITA (Part 2)**—The committee suggested to the IRS to Add limited Schedule C to provide services to taxpayers with expenses greater than \$5K. **Glenn D. has notified us of his support of the increase. He has sent his recommendation forward to his Director. We are waiting to hear back from the SBSE executives concerning their opinion.**

Criel stated that Fred and his staff are supportive. There is a member of Fred’s staff on every subcommittee call.

#### 2009 Issues

Cathy Fitzgerald reported that the VITA Issue Committee recommended that Quality Improvement of VITA site processing returns. The proposed solutions were:

- SPEC should increase communication to its VITA/TCE partners regarding the IRS program and process for reviewing return accuracy. They will implement this suggestion.
- VITA/SPEC site audits/reviews should be targeted using criteria which identifies those sites that have the greatest need for quality improvement. They will implement this suggestion.
- As a general rule, the sit audits/reviews should be announced (not greater than 10 days) in advance. They will not implement this suggestion, except for limited exceptions.
- Form 6729C “Accuracy Return Review Sheet” (referred to as F6729C) should be revised as follows:
  - The current format and methodology of F6729C is good for statistical analysis and reporting, including the Yes/No question format.
  - Question 13: Add “if No, identify in comments”. On Form 6729C “Accuracy Return Review Job Aid”, after “the error” insert “identify the source documents that were not reported correctly”.

They will implement this suggestion. VITA sites will use this form this filing season.



The second Issue the SPEC Program Office asked the committee to assist in identifying and quantifying types of assistance SPEC provides to its partners. The committee suggested providing a tool to measure the quality at VITA/TCE sites. The subcommittee attached the measure tool to the referral form.

Fitzgerald mentioned that beginning January 16th it is going to be mandatory for every SPEC employee to take Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) training.

#### **Program Owner 2010 Issue Focus and Goal**

Burton told the committee would expand the focus of the Quality Improvement Process. The goal is to develop a quality improvement process of ten mandatory requirements for site compliance.

SPEC wants the panel to:

- Review the process that is currently in place.
- Review the tools provided for ensuring accuracy.

The expectation of the panel is:

- Provide recommendations for changes to improve the overall process and accelerate progress in increasing quality.
- Provide specific recommendations on enhancements to tools.

The other focus for 2010 is Partner-provided Financial Education and Asset Building (FEAB) Services at VITA/TCE.

Not all partners are willing or able to expand the scope of services available at their VITA/TCE sites. How can SPEC most effectively use its resources to expand FEAB services to taxpayers at all VITA/TCE sites?

SPEC wants the panel to:

- Evaluate how SPEC engages partners and resources to effectively link REAB services to VITA/TCE sites.
- Assess goals and objectives (measure outcomes) relative to SPEC's involvement in the FEAB support effort.

The expectation of the panel is:

- Provide suggestions for how to best engage partners in the delivery of FEAB services.
- Provide feedback on existing SPEC goals, objectives and measures relative to the FEAB support efforts.
- Provide suggestions and feedback on communication and training products relative to the FEAB support efforts.
- Assist with developing new FEAB-related communication and training products.

McElligott stated the expectation is not only get low-income people a bank account, but to educate them on the management of that account.

Burton discussed the training piece of VITA/TCE. He explained that the panel assists in re-writing products. This year SPEC wants the panel to look at the entire training programs.

John Kim suggested to start with three subcommittees instead of two, to add the training committee.



McElligott mentioned that there is currently five levels of certification and the goal is to scale it down and still prepare a quality return.

**Election Process**

Justin Axelrod and Steve Vanderver are nominated for Chair of the VITA Issue Committee. Steve Vanderver is the new Chair of the VITA committee. Justin is the new Vice Chair.

McElligott gave a wonderful compliment to Laura Criel and stated she did a wonderful job as Chair. He stated that she is the epitome of leadership. John Kim also gave Kudos to the Program Owners for their support and commitment throughout the year.

**Establishing Structure**

- Teleconference Date—2nd Tuesday every month at 2pm.
- Face-to-Face Meeting Date and Possible Location—Face to Face will be 6-8 May. The committee chose to have their face to face in Atlanta, GA.

**VITA QR Subcommittee Members**

Buschmann, Iskowicz, Johnson, Kim, Steinberg, Vanderver, and Young

**VITA FEAB Subcommittee Members**

Axelrod, Coonradt, Donnelly, Kosanovich, Moss, Oetken, Vallurupalli

**Subcommittees' Report-out**

The Chair of the Quality Review Subcommittee is Buschmann. He reported, to begin their task Burton is going to send the subcommittee the different manuals and tools needed to begin the understanding. Once they get an understanding, they will begin to work on the task. The subcommittee call is scheduled for 1st Tuesday of each month at 2pm EST.

The Chair of FEAB Subcommittee is Swarna Vallurupalli. She reported they are currently waiting on a contact list from the IRS. Once they receive the partner list, they will split up, make contact and determine where they want to go from there. The subcommittee call is scheduled for the 1st Tuesday of each month at 12pm EST beginning February 2, 2010.

Vanderver asked the panel to keep an eye on the process while they are preparing returns.

**Closing Remarks/ Photo**

**Next meeting scheduled is a teleconference January 12, 2010 @ 2:00pm EST.**

**\*Certification: These minutes were approved by the committee by consensus.**



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**November 10, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- Fitzgerald, Cathleen
- McElligott, Fred

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Bryant, Patricia
- Buschmann, Ray
- Criel, Laura
- Florence, Jasponia
- Gambardella, Linda
- Kim, John
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Blanchard, Gregory
- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Johnson, Edward

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa
- Odom, Meredith

**Other Attendees**

- Deller, George

Quorum was met

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the last teleconference call of the year. Also, the minutes from the October meeting were approved.



**Program Owner**

McElligott welcomed Cathleen Fitzgerald as the new Analyst who will be working with the Committee next year.

He indicated that this Committee has achieved in the short year and all members should be proud lot and members should be proud of their accomplishments. The proposals on the issues assigned were submitted before the deadlines given and several recommendations have been implemented by the Program.

Burton noted that since he has been working with this Committee, the relationship among the Program Owners, TAP staff and members has grown. As a result, there has been great success. This year, the assignments were clearly defined, and the subcommittees produced great recommendations.

Criel thanked McElligott, Burton, LaPierre and the Brooklyn staff for their leadership and concurred that this was in fact a good year.

McElligott indicated that because the proposed issues for 2010 have not been officially accepted, he could not at this time share them with the members. He did indicate that they would be addressing education and asset building. Also, next year as always the members will be involved with the teams working on the VITA materials.

Criel mentioned President Obama’s proposal for the IRS to offer tax refunds to taxpayers in the form of savings bonds. She stated that some of the VITA volunteers she works with have expressed concerns about this proposal. She added that if the proposal is accepted, the IRS should clearly define the role of the volunteer; they would not want to become financial advisors.

McElligott took note of the discussed concerns.

**Annual Report**

Criel thanked Blanchard and Axelrod for their notes on their respective subcommittees to be used for the Committee’s Annual Report.

Gambardella and Hutchinson were in Rome, GA in late October to participate in the Beta testing of Tax Wise. Gambardella shared some comments on the tax software.

Criel gave special thanks to our members who end their TAP membership this year: Blanchard, Bryant, Deller, Hutchinson, Verwiel and Wernz.

Morzio too expressed his gratitude for these members’ services and dedication to the TAP.

**Closing Comments:**

Criel asked the members to consider leadership roles next year whether with this Committee or any other.

Next meeting will be October 13th at 2:00pm EST.



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**October 13, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- Fitzgerald, Cathleen
- LaPierre, Deborah

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Blanchard, Gregory
- Buschmann, Raymond
- Criel, Laura
- Florence, Jaspconia
- Kim, John
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Bryant, Patricia
- Deller, George
- Gambardella, Linda
- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Johnson, Edward

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa

**Other Attendees**

- Swartz, Steve - Taxpayer Advocate, New Carrollton, Maryland

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Quorum was met. September minutes were approved for posting.





### **Program Owner's Presentation**

Burton reported the following:

- SPEC is working with Wage and Investment Customer Account Services to add VITA/TCE message to be on the toll-free line. There may be some configuration problems, but hopefully, this can be implemented by fiscal year 2010.
- SPEC will have a national volunteer site to review and make recommendations on the Tax Volunteer Recognition Day This Day would take place after the filing season and the objective is to get national publicity for the work of our volunteers.
- SPEC is slowly moving towards implementing preparation of Schedule C in sites.
- The list of 2009 SPEC Grant recipients will be issued soon. SPEC will encourage granting reimbursement of travel expenses for volunteers.
- SPEC mailed out 100,000 copies of Publication 4644 – *Common Errors Made by Taxpayers ages 65 and Older*. This Publication also lists free sources for the preparation of federal tax returns.
- Members of SPEC are currently brainstorming on potential issues for the TAP Committee to work on next year. No final recommendations were made yet but TAP members can provide feedback and ideas on these suggested issues:
  - Expanding financial education to partnership level and to integrate it into VITA site.
  - Increasing services to the non-English proficient taxpayers as well taxpayers with disabilities. This would be expanded to rural communities.
  - Expanding the VITA Grant programs.
  - Expanding SPEC's partnership with Field Assistance in a pilot program where these IRS employees would work account-related problems at the sites.
  - Increase free-file in VITA sites and list these sites in IRS.gov for public use.
  - Expanding the preparation of State tax returns in the Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TACs).
  - Implementing the preparation of ITIN applications (Form W-7) in VITA sites.

Burton indicated that SPEC will appreciate any suggestions from the members on the issues related to the equipment. He added that SPEC will also consider Deller's suggestion on streamlining the process of the Sec. 501-C application. The objective would be developing an application that would be easier for someone with an average education to complete such an "EZ" application.

### **Future VITA Committee Issues**

Wernz, Verwiel and Buschmann agreed that lack of equipment or outdated equipment in VITA/TCE sites is an issue.

Verwiel suggested that the IRS should advertise the EITC with the military and that the rules to qualify for this Credit should be simplified. Criel noted that these are issues for the TAP's EITC Issue Committee although they are very valid. Burton added that SPEC has a Yellow Ribbon Campaign dedicated just for this as service to military personnel. LaPierre said the Program is working with the Armed Forces on an initiative to counsel people leaving the Service and returning to civilian life. Burton said the idea of expanding VITA assistance for military personnel as they leave the service is a good issue to explore as a possible future assignment to the issue committee.

LaPierre announced that this is her last meeting with VITA. She introduced her replacement, Cathleen Fitzgerald. She also thanked all the members especially Axelrod for his leadership in the subcommittee.

### **Annual Report**

Criel asked panel members to submit a brief narrative of their work in the subcommittees, mainly subcommittee chairs.



Criel would like to have an acknowledgment of who participated in the development of referrals (specify names) to be included in the Annual Report. These members should be recognized for their efforts. We will talk about the VITA portion of the 2009 Annual Report on the November conference call.

**Public Participation**

Swartz confirmed the equipment problems the members had already mentioned.

**Closing**

Morizio thanked everyone for their participation and asked that members who had any suggestions or ideas for this Committee to work on to submit them to Knispel.

Criel thanked everyone for their work.

**Next meeting will be November 10th at 2:00 PM E.T.**



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**September 8, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Deborah

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Bryant, Patricia
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Gambardella, Linda
- Kim, John
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Blanchard, Gregory
- Buschmann, Ray
- Florence, Jasponia
- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Johnson, Edward

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa
- Odom, Meredith

**Other TAP/IRS and Public Attendees**

- Block, Roy - TAP Manager
- Doetman, Maggie - Coordinator, VITA Program, Kansas City
- Rasmussen, Anne - Area 5 Panel Member
- Swartz, Steve - Taxpayer Advocate, New Carrollton, Maryland
- Walker, Tom - Area 5 Panel Member

**Quorum was met.**



## Welcome

Criel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Quorum was met. The minutes of the August meeting were approved pending a small editorial change.

She introduced the subject of two proposals that the Area 5 Committee would like to discuss with us and gain our input. She indicated that the VITA Committee will not take ownership of these proposals; we will only provide input and feedback.

## Area 5 Proposals

TAP Program Manager for the Area 5 Committee Roy Block explained how the issue of the "Security of Taxpayer Information on Form 8879" originated. This Committee would like to propose that IRS allow volunteers to use Form 3210, *Document Transmittal*, to transmit Form 8879 and to confirm receipt. Tom Walker, one of the proposal's authors, explained that the problem lies in the fact that the site coordinators get no confirmation when delivering the Forms to the IRS.

Bryant noted that requesting additional forms to be completed, such as Form 3210, will create extra work for the Site Coordinator. Furthermore, the problem would persist if the IRS neglects to confirm receipt of the Form 3210. She suggested the use of e-mail verification. E-mailing the IRS contact after mailing the Forms 8879 to the IRS and getting a Return Receipt might be the best and less costly option, Bryant said. Overnight mailing can be expensive.

Walker stated that cost is not a concern to the Committee but assurance that the IRS receives the Forms is.

Burton suggested that e-mailing the SPEC Relationship Manager after mailing out the Forms and requesting him/her to acknowledge receipt via e-mail is the best alternative. For example, an acknowledgment of the number of envelopes or boxes received from the site.

The second proposal on Equipment Returned to IRS at End of Filing Season is a moot issue since the VITA Programs receive and return their equipment following the execution of Property Loan Agreements.

## Program Owner Presentation

Burton stated that McElligott is very grateful to this Committee for their hard work. He added that the Measuring Accuracy Subcommittee did an exceptional job in writing their recent proposal to meet the schedule of the SPEC team that will be working on the Form 6729-C. As a result, this team was able to incorporate about 80% of the Subcommittee's recommendations. The team's leader would also like to thank the TAP for the proposal. The new Form 6729-C will now be implemented for FY 2010 instead of FY 2011.

Burton also thanked the Quantitative Measures Subcommittee for their proposal. He indicated that there is a team chaired by an Executive in Area 2 who is working on Financial Education. This Subcommittee's proposal appears to have a lot of information in which the team is seriously interested. They will be including the TAP's recommendations and other input to create ways to 1) measure the IRS' financial education efforts and 2) to be recognized for these efforts.

Lastly, Burton thanked the training VITA Volunteers Subcommittee and all those who worked on the VITA training material for next season. He was told that most of these training publications and documents are ready for printing.

John Kim wanted to thank Deller, Wernz, Bryant and Verwiel for their help in working on the extensive Publication 4555. Criel thanked John for the excellent job he had done in coordinating the reviews of the training material in such a timely manner.



Next, Burton said that McElligott is soliciting topics from SPEC's Area Directors and other employees for next year's TAP's VITA Issue Committee's agenda. He also invited the current Committee members to share their ideas with McElligott so they can be considered as part of this Committee's FY 2010 assignment. Criel asked all present to participate in this and provide any ideas at our next month's meeting. Meantime, Burton will share with us the list of topics SPEC is consolidating for this purpose. He noted that a topic on this list aims to meet the President's interest in financial education.

Deller had two suggestions for topics: 1) organizing volunteers (such as a VITA site) to help small exempt organizations apply for the exemption and also with the preparation of Form 990 and 2) preparing state tax returns at all VITA sites as well as Tax Assistance Centers (TACs) *It is already a practice in most states (not in New York).* On the second topic, Burton responded that this is an issue that SPEC Commissioner Rick Byrd is already considering.

Criel also invited all Committee members to run for a leadership role in TAP for next year. She indicated she has personally tried to contact each member to encourage planning for this opportunity.

### **Public Comments**

Doetman thanked the Committee for allowing her to participate in their meeting and stated that she admires their work. She had three topics that to suggest for their consideration: 1) financial education in VITA sites, 2) expanding Schedule C preparation in all sites, 3) having the ability to access state information as part of IRS transcripts.

Morizio indicated that Issue Committees will be allotted more time at the Annual Meeting this December to work their issues. Probably the same amount of time as Area Committees. He also thanked everyone for the great job they have done this year and for completing their assignments earlier than the originally scheduled deadline. He invited all to brainstorm and work with SPEC in coming up with good issues for next year.

### **Closing**

Criel also thanked everyone in the Committee.

Next meeting will be October 13th at 2:00pm EST.



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**August 11, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Deborah
- McElligott, Fred

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Buschmann, Ray
- Bryant, Patricia
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Florence, Jaspconia
- Gambardella, Linda
- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Kim, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Blanchard, Greg
- Johnson, Edward
- Verwiell, John

**TAP Staff**

- Knispel, Marisa

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the teleconference. Since we had quorum, Criel asked the subcommittee chairs to report-out. Each subcommittee had submitted a proposal for the members' review and now they had to decide whether or not to forward these proposals to our Program Owners.

**Subcommittee Report-Out**

**Measuring Return Accuracy**

Buschmann reported in Blanchard's absence. This Subcommittee wrote a proposal titled "Measuring Tax Return Accuracy in the VITA/TCE Programs" aiming to improve SPEC's current methodology for determining VITA/TCE Return Accuracy. The proposal reviews the current method of using Form 6729-C and suggests some changes to the Job Aid for this Form. It also suggests announcing the site audit



reviews conducted by the IRS before the review is performed at each site and performing such review in sites that need most quality improvement.

Buschmann indicated that the Subcommittee worked for two months on this proposal. They debated using statistical accuracy as their focus vs. quality at the Program's sites. In the end, the latter was chosen as most important. They worked on the Form and the Job Aid, but concluded that it was more important to change the questions on the Job Aid than the Form 6729-C.

Criel indicated that the group needed to decide if the proposal was to be addressed to McElligott as the IRS team assigned to work on it was scheduled to meet next week. Knispel used roll call for the decision. Wernz did not agree; the rest of the members present did agree to forward the proposal to the IRS. Deller mentioned that he had forwarded some questions on the proposal to Blanchard but he never replied. He liked the proposal and indicated that in the essence of time, this proposal should be forwarded to the IRS. Morizio pointed out that consensus was reached so the proposal would be forwarded to the Program Owners. He also reminded the members that consensus is not 100% unanimity on issues.

McElligott suggested that any additional comments or suggestions after the Program Office received the proposal could still be forwarded to him. He would ensure that the team working on this subject receives such comments.

#### **Quantitative Measures Subcommittee**

Axelrod reported that the IRS requested the Committee work on methods that SPEC can use to measure and quantify their efforts. For this purpose, they developed a Reporting Form SPEC can use. The Form could be revised by this organization according to their needs but what they presented can be used as their basis. The Form uses four categories of measurement: 1) Education, 2) Public Benefits and Private Benefits, 3) Financial Management and 4) Credit Management.

McElligott said that "financial" measurement is one of the requisites for SPEC to measure.

Again, Knispel used roll call to take vote on whether or not to address this proposal to the Program Owners. Buschmann said he had some questions on it but he agreed to address it. So again, by consensus, this proposal will be forwarded to the Program Owners.

#### **Training VITA Volunteers**

Criel said that although this Subcommittee has not been meeting on a monthly basis, the members have been working on the VITA/TCE materials. She will be traveling to Atlanta next week to work on another team. Later on this year in October, others will participate in testing Tax Wise.

Hutchinson indicated that the next Subcommittee meeting will be in September.

#### **Program Owner**

McElligott expressed his gratitude for the Committee's work on the proposals and for accomplishing it before the September 30th deadline. He hopes to have some feedback on these proposals prior to the Annual Meeting in December.

Morizio added that this Annual Meeting will look forward to the new year's issues and assignments and not look backwards.

#### **July's Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were approved.

Next meeting will be on September 8th.



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**July 14th, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Deborah
- McElligott, Fred

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Buschmann, Ray
- Bryant, Patricia
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Gambardella, Linda
- Kim, John
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Florence, Jasponia
- Johnson, Edward

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa
- Odom, Meredith

**Other Attendees**

- Jean-Charles, Stephanie
- Truett, Vincent
- Kerscher, Marcia

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the teleconference and asked the members of the public to introduce themselves. The minutes from the June meeting were approved.

**Subcommittee Report-Out**





### **Quantitative Measures Subcommittee**

Axelrod indicated the Subcommittee will have a proposal ready by the next monthly meeting. By the end of this week, he expects each member of the Subcommittee to provide input on an ongoing email discussion. The Subcommittee has decided to develop a Reporting Form based on four different categories. He also requested a copy of the form used by the IRS in the past. LaPierre will send the form to Axelrod.

### **Training VITA Members**

The members participating in VITA projects in Atlanta reported out.

Kim briefed the Committee on the review of the VITA's Instructor's Manual (Publication 4491) and thanked Deller, Verwiel and Wernz for helping him in this review.

Bryant indicated that her team working on the Intake Interview Sheet had had a recent teleconference. Now, the group is waiting for the Sheet's final format. The team that worked on the exercises found in Publication 4491-W needs this Intake Interview Sheet as part of its project.

Criel said that the first turn for testing materials was completed and the Beta testing will begin following the next turn. She added that the advanced portion of the test will require more research since it covers the new law.

### **Measuring Return Accuracy**

Blanchard indicated this Subcommittee has done a tremendous amount of work since the face-to-face meeting. They developed a proposal that provides feedback on the current methodology used to measure VITA/TCE return accuracy. They performed an exhaustive review of a Quality Return Review Check Sheet (Form 6729-C). They reviewed the Sheet thoroughly line by line and developed suggestions to improve it. Some suggestions were on clarifying the wording, renumbering items on the Sheet and deleting others. By implementing these suggestions, the IRS could improve the quality of the review process and enhance the quality of the tax return preparation done by VITA and TCE. The Subcommittee also reviewed the IRS' practice of visiting the sites and made some suggestions. One of them is that the IRS should give a heads up to the site to ameliorate the anxiety that causes the site coordinators.

Knispel had shared the proposal written by this Subcommittee with all members of the full committee prior to the meeting and Blanchard asked that if anyone had comments or questions, to send them to him via email. Knispel suggested the deadline of July 21st for any comments on this proposal so that the Committee can move forward and address it to the Program Owner. Blanchard thanked the group for their work.

### **Program Owner**

McElliggott expressed his gratitude to the Subcommittees for their work as we approached the September 30th deadline and asked they keep up their momentum.

Burton also thanked all Committee members since he has participated in both the Quantitative and Measuring Subcommittees and has seen the great work plans by both of these teams. He stated that Axelrod's subcommittee was energized and the members were focused on their assignment. The Measuring team's proposal is excellent work and it addresses two controversial topics. One of these is the "advanced notice" they suggest giving to the sites prior to the IRS visit. The other is the criteria for selecting which sites to visit,

LaPierre thanked Axelrod and the Quantitative team for their level of participation and excitement in their work.

**ACTION ITEM: Read the Measuring Accuracy Subcommittee proposal and email Blanchard with any suggestions/comments by July 21st.**



Morizio said he is very pleased with the progress of both subcommittees. It is good to have all the work done by the deadlines given since it will give SPEC the opportunity to comment on the recommendations made prior to some members' departure from the TAP.

**Public Participation**

The guests thanked the members for allowing their participation in the meeting.

**Closing**

Criel thanked the members for their good work.

Next meeting will be August 11, 2009.



## **VITA Meeting Minutes**

**2:00 pm ET**

**June 9, 2009**

**Teleconference**

### **Program Owner**

- McElligott, Fred

### **Designated Federal Official**

- Knispel, Marisa

### **Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Bryant, Patricia
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Florence, Jaszi
- Kim, John
- Wernz, Stanley

### **Committee Members Absent**

- Buschmann, Ray
- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Gambardella, Linda
- Johnson, Edward
- Verwiell, John

### **TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Odom, Meredith

### **Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Subcommittee Report-Out**

#### **Quantitative Measures Subcommittee**

Axelrod reported that the members agreed on four broad categories to measure: **(1)** Education **(2)** Public/Private benefits **(3)** Financial Management and **(4)** Credit Management. They have agreed on using a Reporting Requirements Form that would allow them to measure the coalitions. The Form would be similar to that used by the Low Income Tax Clinics. Axelrod will send the members the link to LITC's Grant Application where this Program's Requirement Form can be found.

#### **Measuring Return Accuracy Subcommittee**

Kim indicated that at the face-to-face meeting, this Subcommittee discussed several good ideas on how to evaluate the accuracy of VITA tax returns. They were ready to start writing these suggestions but Criel had just informed them that the IRS has already formulated changes to the intake form



(Form 6729-C). Since the draft changes are imminent, Kim suggested they wait to see the changes the IRS will make and then compare them to their suggestions.

McElligott suggested the Subcommittee submit their suggestions since the IRS' recommendations are only in draft form. This way, he added, the IRS will be able to incorporate the TAP's recommendations before the final draft is done by the end of July or early August.

### **Training VITA Volunteers**

Bryant and Axelrod spent a week in Atlanta working on the revision of Form 4491-W. They worked on the practice exercises and comprehensive problems. They incorporated the recent laws into the training as well as Social Security which is a popular topic. Other issues were the sales tax on automobiles, real estate, etc.

Criel who was in Atlanta at the time of this teleconference spoke about her assignment. Her team is working hard on the VITA certification test.

Deller and Hutchinson worked on Publication 3189 and Publication 4012, respectively. Deller explained that each person in the team was responsible for a part of the Handbook and that they have consolidated some material to avoid duplication. He added that the team suggested renaming the Handbook to the E-File Administration Handbook. He asked that anyone in the Committee who had suggestions on this book should refer them to him.

### **Public Participation**

None.

### **Closing**

McElligott suggested for the VITA Issue Committee to spend time discussing the approach the subcommittees will take prior to identifying the issues that will be assigned for the following year. This might facilitate the resolution of the issues presented to the next VITA Issue Committee.

Criel thanked members for their work.

Next meeting will be July 14th at 2:00 PM ET.



**VITA Issue Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
May 8th and 9th, 2009  
Atlanta, GA**

- Friday, May 8, 2009
- Saturday, May 9, 2009

**Friday, May 8, 2009**

**Attendees:**

Axelrod, Justin  
Blanchard, Gregory  
Bryant, Patricia  
Buschmann, Raymond  
Criel, Laura - Chair  
Deller, George  
Gambardella, Linda  
Hutchinson, Carol  
Johnson, Edward  
Kim, John - Vice Chair  
Verwiel, John  
Wernz, Stanley

**Staff**

Knispel, Marisa  
Morizio, Louis  
Odom, Meredith

**Program Owners**

Burton, Roger  
LaPierre, Deborah  
McElligott, Fred

**Guests**

Coston, Bernie  
Barnhart, Maria  
Fuller, Nan Ellen  
Hollingsworth, Elizabeth  
Jones, Cindy  
Lloyd, Darrell  
Mosler, Hank  
Rousseau, Rick  
Smith, Ron

Criel welcomed everyone to the meeting, reviewed the agenda and informed everyone that Axelrod is the newly appointed Chair the Quantitative Measures Subcommittee.

**Welcome from the EDCA**

Coston thanked the VITA Program Owners for their help with the TAP and delivered greetings from NTA Nina Olson and her gratitude for their hard work. Coston will remain the Acting Executive Director of Case Advocacy (EDCA) until the end of the fiscal year and may then return to TAP. He announced TAP's success through increased recruitment statistics. Recruitment ended on April 30th. He indicated that we received a total of 901 final applications and 1,106 draft applications with fewer than thirty



openings for membership available. He reminded the committee that the staff will need their assistance from Panel members when conducting interviews.

Coston also thanked the members for their continued dedication and their outreach to the public.

### **Program Owner Overview**

McElligott reminded the members that their goal for submitting their recommendations is the end of September and the Program aims to respond to these recommendations by the TAP's Annual Meeting in December.

McElligott provided statistics on the tax returns processed by VITA sites this year. He said that 2.8 million tax returns were prepared with a 95% E-file rate. Many of these returns included the Earned Income Tax Credit which meant millions of dollars were sent to eligible taxpayers. Thousands of returns were prepared for disabled people and thousands for non-English speaking taxpayers.

The three most frequently made tax law errors found in the tax returns prepared by these sites were:

- Income not being reported correctly
- Real estate tax not included in the standard deduction
- Recovery Rebate Credit

Burton reminded members that the Measuring VITA Return Accuracy Subcommittee works on providing feedback to the Program on the current methodology used when computing accuracy by the volunteers at the sites. He urged them to suggest other criteria to use for this purpose and to develop a new review process.

LaPierre thanked Deller and Moses Shillow (who recently left the TAP) for their work in the Quantitative Measures Subcommittee. These members visited VITA sites to gain knowledge of the work done at these sites. The expectation of this subcommittee is to provide suggestions to measure ways by which SPEC helps its partners to succeed.

### **Link & Learn**

Fuller provided the members with an overview of SPEC's 2009 volunteer training products and of the Link & Learn Practice Lab. She spoke about the different teams dedicated to the development of these training products and TAP's participation in the teams. She offered a Power Point presentation and a presentation of how Link& Learn works. The latter can be accessed via <http://www.irs.gov/app/vita/index.jsp>. SPEC plans new and improved navigation features for this website and hopes to encourage the volunteers to use it as a tool to practice tax return preparation. The website is also available in Spanish and Chinese.

### **Program Owner Presentation**

McElligott reviewed the responses SPEC provided to the Committee's 2008 recommendations:

- Mileage Reimbursement for VITA Volunteers – SPEC will provide information to partners on how volunteers can claim these expenses on their federal tax return
- Recognition of VITA Volunteers – SPEC will identify a week in May to formally recognize volunteers and will work with local partners to schedule recognition events within this time frame where possible.
- Provide Year Round Service to VITA Eligible Taxpayers – This issue will not be pursued.
- Increase Advertising and Promotion of the VITA Program – SPEC recommends that we allow the primary growth of VITA to be driven by local marketing campaigns rather than national campaigns so there can be a balance between local supply and demand.



- Insert Flyer in Error Mailers to Certain Taxpayers informing them of VITA/TCE services – The Committee will be provided with the results of two direct mail initiatives currently in progress.
- Add select Schedule K-1 items to the Scope of VITA-prepared returns – This year SPEC is expanding VITA scope to include limited cancellation of debt resulting from the Mortgage Debt Forgiveness Act of 2007.
- Add Limited Schedule C to the Scope of VITA Services – This is on the radar for next year.
- Exit Check List for VITA Volunteers- This issue was not pursued

McElligott also informed the members that the VITA/TCE Program will be advertised in all IRS publications.

Criel raised the issue of the VITA/TCE Program not preparing state tax returns and the burden placed on the volunteers. McElligott indicated that W&I Commissioner Rick Byrd became aware of this problem from a recent visit to a site in Rochester, NY. He was then informed that twenty-one states do prepare state tax returns at their sites but others, like New York, do not. He finds this is a problem and has assigned staff to resolve it so that there is consistency across the nation. McElligott promised to inform the Committee in September or October on the status of this issue.

### **Tax Wise**

Cindy Jones made a presentation on the TaxWise Software for 2009 and provided the following statistics:

- 9,644 TaxWise packages were ordered for VITA/TCE
- 7.6% increase over FY2008
- 98.2% of VITA/TCE e-file sites use TaxWise.
- 2,071 sites used TaxWise Online compared to 525 sites in FY2008
- More than 2.7 million federal returns prepared
- Nearly 2.1 million state returns prepared
- More than \$3 billion in refunds

\$793 million EITC

\$478 million CTC

\$65 million Education Credits

- More than 1.2 million requested direct deposit
- Nearly 1.2 million returns for persons age 60+
- More than 23K returns using an ITIN
- Nearly 181K returns for persons with a disability
- More than 377K returns for taxpayers speaking a language other than English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese

### **FY 2010 TaxWise Software Plans**

- No longer required to support Windows 2000
- Desktop passwords
- New web-based reports
- First desktop shipments – November 2009
- TWO available first week in December
- Training – Web-based
- Refresher/New Tax Law
- Administrators (includes trouble-shooting)
- TWD Preparers



- TWO Preparers
- Reports

Jones indicated that vendors are currently competing to be awarded the new software contract. The award is planned for November, 2009 for to be used in tax year 2010 (FY2011)

CCH (Commercial Clearing House) Representatives- which is responsible for the current software- were at the meeting and demonstrated TaxWise Online. They also encouraged members to participate in webinars they offer to have hands-on help in learning the Program and its features. These are offered before the tax season and are free to participants.

### **May 9, 2009**

#### **Attendees:**

Axelrod, Justin  
Blanchard, Gregory  
Bryant, Patricia  
Buschmann, Raymond  
Criel, Laura  
Deller, George  
Gambardella, Linda  
Hutchinson, Carol  
Johnson, Edward  
Kim, John  
Verwiel, John  
Wernz, Stanley

#### **Staff**

Knispel, Marisa  
Morizio, Louis  
Odom, Meredith

#### **Program Owners**

Burton, Roger  
LaPierre, Deborah  
McElligott, Fred

#### **Sub-Committee Report-Out**

Training VITA Volunteers – Carolyn Hutchinson (chair) -This Subcommittee will not meet until they participate in the test teams in the month July. In the meantime, the members have joined either the Measuring VITA Accuracy or the Quantitative Measures subcommittees.

Measuring VITA Accuracy – Greg Blanchard (chair) - The Subcommittee has agreed that Form 6729C is appropriate to use. They are reviewing and revising some of the Form's verbiage.

Quantitative Measures – Justin Axelrod (chair) – This Subcommittee discussed the different SPEC coalitions' efforts to educate and offer services to their communities. Their assignment is to measure these services and develop an incentive for all coalitions to increase their outreach to the community. They have decided to first measure financial services offered and the opportunities that arise to the community from such services. They will define the mission of the assignment and the scope of this mission. They will prepare a survey that will be used as a tool to measure the coalitions' services.

#### **Closing**

Criel thanked the members, TAP staff and Program Owners for the success of this Issue Committee.





A round robin of comments took place.

Morizio also thanked the members.

**Next teleconference will be on June 9, 2009.**



**VITA Issue Committee Meeting  
April 14, 2009  
Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Deborah
- McElligot, Fred

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Buschmann, Ray
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Florence, Jaspconia
- Gambardella, Linda
- Kim, John
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Blanchard, Gregory
- Bryant, Patricia
- Hutchinson, Carol
- Johnson, Edward

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa
- Odom, Meredith

**Other Attendees**

- Swartz, Steve- Taxpayer Advocate, New Carrollton, Maryland
- Engell, Katrina - CCH

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the call and thanked the members of the public for attending. Quorum was met and the March minutes were approved for posting on the TAP website.



### **Subcommittee Report-Out**

Criel said that the members of the Training VITA Volunteers Subcommittee have been assigned temporarily to work with the other two subcommittees. There will not be a report out from this Subcommittee at this time. These members will have a brief meeting at the face-to-face but will participate with the Quantitative Measures or Measuring Return Accuracy Subcommittees, also.

### **Quantitative Measures**

Deller said that Shillow resigned from the TAP and in the absence of a chair, he led their last meeting on March 10th. They have received a draft paper written by Shillow that was reviewed at their meeting.

### **Measuring Return Accuracy**

Buschmann discussed their meeting which took place earlier this day and that he led in Blanchard's absence. One of their focuses is Form 6729C that is used as a measurement tool for accuracy in the preparation of tax returns at the various VITA/TCE sites. Their other focus – which was initiated today – was on whether the IRS should announce their review visits prior to the visit itself. Some members were for and some were opposed to this. Burton clarified that SPEC's goal is to visit about five percent of sites annually in order to test how well they are performing with compliance procedures and at the same time review the accuracy of their returns being prepared at that site. Criel shared the experience when three IRS employees showed up at one of her sites for the review process. Their visit takes time away from the volunteers to do their work as they are focusing on their review. Criel added that they received an A+ from their review.

Verwiel's site was reviewed by their State. Wernz said that they had a review at three sites in South Western Ohio and that the process went well. They were also reviewed by TIGTA.

Burton said that TIGTA will not share with the IRS their schedule of reviews until the week of the review. They contact the SPEC's Territory Manager where the site is located in the week of the review. The Manager will then alert the site coordinator of the impending visit.

### **Face to Face meeting:**

Criel asked that if anyone cannot attend this meeting to please inform her and the staff. We expect to have an exciting meeting and we are hoping for some presentations on products like Link-n-Learn.

Morizio added that at this meeting we will review the Program Owner's responses on the VITA Committee's 2008 recommendations.

Babb indicated that travel arrangements for all will be mailed out at the end of this week.

### **Public Participation**

Swartz indicated that his VITA site was reviewed and the reviewer's concern was the fact that one of their volunteers had not taken the required test for certification. He explained that this particular volunteer is a 20-year IRS Revenue Agent and he is very knowledgeable on taxation since he does this for a living.

Burton indicated that SPEC is very strict on the certification requirement being met by each volunteer. This includes volunteers who might be CPAs, tax attorneys or other tax professionals. There are no exceptions to the certification requirements for anyone.

Engell thanked the Committee for allowing her to participate.

### **Closing**



Criel thanked members for their good work. Next meeting- Face to Face meeting in Atlanta, GA on May 8th and May 9th .



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**March 10, 2009**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Deborah

**Designated Federal Official**

- Jenkins, Audrey

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Blandchard, Gregory
- Bryant, Patricia
- Buschmann, Ray
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Florence, Jaspconia
- Gambardella, Linda
- Johnson, Edward
- Kim, John
- Shillow, Moses
- Verwiel, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Hutchinson, Carolyn

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Knispel, Marisa (Absent)
- Odom, Meredith
- Morizio, Louis-TAP Manager (Absent)

**Other Attendees**

- Swartz, Steve- Taxpayer Advocate, New Carrollton, Maryland

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the issue committee call.



### **Subcommittee Report-Out:**

#### **Quantitative Measures Subcommittee**

Shillow stated that the members met on March 4th They discussed some documents on performance measures. Their objective was to refine and clarify their scope as they had some confusion on their assignment. They determined that their responsibility is to review the work that SPEC is doing and to identify ways to measure how well the result meets the taxpayers' expectations as well as the overall efficiency of the process. The Subcommittee hopes to have part of this task completed by the face-to-face meeting.

#### **Measuring Return Accuracy**

Blanchard indicated there was also some confusion on their scope. He wants to focus on what the Program Owners expect them to accomplish. In the coming weeks, Blanchard said, he will make a special effort to communicate with all members of the subcommittee and ensure they know their boundaries and scope to achieve their mission. He also indicated that everyone in the Subcommittee is very involved.

#### **Training VITA Volunteers**

Johnson discussed Form 2210. The issue is whether the form is out of scope for the VITA Program. If it is part of the software used in VITA, then training should be provided. He said that he agrees with others in the Subcommittee that at least one person in each VITA site should know how to prepare this Form.

#### **Comments and Observations**

Burton indicated that the first two Subcommittees seem to be losing their focus. He reiterated to panel members to review the documents detailing the expectations of each Subcommittee that were given to them last December. He also suggested that they read the respective document prior to the each Subcommittee meeting to help them stay focused

#### **Face to Face Meeting**

Jenkins said that as of now, there is no final approval of the face to face meeting scheduled for May 7th through May 9th. Atlanta has been recommended by Morizio as the location but there is no final word from the Director yet. On final approval, Babb will be sending travel information to each member

#### **Minutes to be approved**

Odom said that Knispel posted the February minutes on TAPSpace and sent out notifications to review and respond to her by COB March 9th. Odom will send minutes again to members and asked members if they have any changes to inform her or Knispel who is periodically checking her emails.

Burton said that VITA training materials are now complete. There will be training on issues such as: cancellation of debt, mortgage forgiveness, etc. SPEC has requested that one person in every territory will be trained and serve as a territory resource for employees, and VITA volunteers and partners who are preparing tax returns.

TAP Director Shawn Collins joined the call towards the end and expressed her gratitude for the work of TAP members on their Issue Committees. She stated that members should feel free to call her directly or use her email address if they wish to communicate with her on issues. Collins also said that she will do her best to work and resolve any concerns.

Burton mentioned to Collins that she has a staff of dedicated, loyal employees.

#### **Closing**

Criel thanked members for their good work. Next meeting will be April 14th at 2:00pm, EST.



**VITA Meeting Minutes**  
**2:00 pm ET**  
**February 10, 2009**  
**Teleconference**

**Program Owner**

- Burton, Roger
- LaPierre, Debbie
- Fred McElliggott

**Designated Federal Official**

- Morizio, Louis

**Committee Members Present**

- Axelrod, Justin
- Blandchard, Greg
- Bryant, Patricia
- Buschmann, Ray
- Criel, Laura
- Deller, George
- Gambardella, Linda
- Johnson, Edward
- Kim, John
- Wernz, Stanley

**Committee Members Absent**

- Hutchinson, Carolyn
- Florence, Jasponia
- Verwiell, John

**TAP Staff**

- Babb, Rose
- Odom, Meredith

**Welcome**

Criel welcomed everyone to the call.

**Reviewed Agenda:**

Criel indicated the Committee should consider any suggestion and comments received from anyone and ensure it fits within the TAP's mission. If need be, we will refer a comments or suggestion to the appropriate Area Committee.



## **Subcommittee Report-Out: Quantitative Measures Subcommittee**

Shillow indicated that their teleconference was rescheduled to the first Wednesday of every month beginning March 4th at 2PM EST. Their plan was to begin brainstorming to develop a list of attributes for measuring the success in the VITA sites. LaPierre agreed to provide the members with information on the sites in their areas. There are 5 categories of service performed in the sites that will be of primary focus for this Subcommittee: disabled taxpayers, senior citizens, rural and low income population, youth sites, and bilingual sites. Paramilitary groups are excluded. LaPierre suggested it would be a good idea to review the position description to get an idea of her position in SPEC.

### **Measuring Return Accuracy**

Blanchard informed all members that Return Accuracy Subcommittee had their conference call prior to this meeting. They discussed some of the attachments that Burton forwarded to them. One was the Accuracy Return Review sheet or Form 6729C. This is used to review and measure the quality of the returns prepared within the site. Burton also distributed a Job Aide to subcommittee members as an aid to the questions on this Form.

Blanchard also said that as a group, they will review live information from the Subcommittee members who are tax preparers by using their data. Blanchard, for instance, will sanitize some of his clients' tax information and share it with the group to review it. Doing this exercise will help the Subcommittee develop a standard to measure accuracy.

Burton discussed the intake and interview sheet completed by visitors to VITA sites and which the preparers use to do the tax return. He added that it is important for the members to focus on their assignment and not get sidetracked.

### **Training VITA Volunteers**

Bryant indicated they have not done much work in reviewing training information yet. They will eventually proceed with their review of materials as they get more information from this year's volunteers.

Kim informed members that he is going through the VITA training and would give feed back if he finds something in the training manual via email.

### **Face-to-Face Meeting:**

Morizio said that after doing a cost analysis for the face to face, Atlanta is the cheapest city and the fact that McElligott and LaPierre are stationed in Atlanta makes the decision easier. A two-full day meeting (May 7th and 8th) would be expensive but it depends on budget and the amount of work we need to do. Otherwise, it will be a day and-a-half meeting (all day on the 7th and half-day on the 8th). Travel is the days before and after. We may return to the same hotel used last year where we were given a free meeting space for the Saturday portion of the meeting.

Morizio also reminded all members that any issue that may or may not be related to VITA must be elevated via the Area Committees. Only issues that are assigned by our Program Owner will be worked in this Committee.

### **Closing**

**Next meeting March 10th at 2pm ET**