

# TAX HELP COLORADO



## IMPACT AT A GLANCE



5,274

tax returns prepared



\$14.3 M

in tax refunds returned to clients



251

volunteers helped clients at 36 sites



20

languages supported

**Tax Help Colorado provides free tax preparation services to low- and moderate-income Coloradans.**

The complexities of state and federal tax systems, and the stress of filing annual tax returns, can be challenging for anyone. Tax Help Colorado makes it possible for low- and moderate-income individuals and families to file their taxes for free with ease, giving them access to valuable tax credits and other benefits each year.

Tax Help Colorado started in 2007 as an initiative of Gary Community Ventures and has filed more than 96,000 returns since. Thanks to IRS-certified volunteers, this free, high-quality tax preparation service was available to households with an annual income of \$58,000, or less, in 2021.

**“I am in a really tough situation as a widow. Using this money, I plan to buy furniture for my kids. I was homeless, but now I have a place, and I am needing to buy a bed for my kids. My mom has cancer, so this also helps with her medical bills. This is a blessing.”**

–DIANNE, TAX HELP COLORADO CLIENT\*

## MEETING FAMILIES WHERE THEY ARE

In its first year as a Mile High United Way program, the average household income for clients served by Tax Help Colorado was approximately \$28,000. Tax sites across Colorado are at central, easily accessible locations, such as community colleges, Mile High United Way, and other nonprofits. Residents can be connected to Tax Help Colorado through 211 Help Centers and other referral services. Professional tax preparation costs an average of \$200, and by meeting Coloradans where they are with this free service, Mile High United Way removes multiple barriers preventing families from receiving the full benefit of their tax refunds.

Entering the 2022 tax season, there was no Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) presence in Boulder County. Mile High United Way quickly responded to community needs and set up two sites, serving families and individuals with an average household income of around \$24,000. The Tax Help Colorado site at Boulder Public Library quickly became one of our busiest in the state.

## FINDING CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Tax Help Colorado opened a new site near the Denver-Aurora border that works closely with the community’s Burmese-speaking population. Our first day, four clients came in together. Three of them were native Burmese speakers, and the fourth spoke Rohingya. One of the three Burmese speakers also spoke Rohingya, but did not speak English. To prepare the Rohingya speaker’s return, he spoke in Rohingya to his friend, who interpreted into Burmese for a bilingual Tax Help Colorado volunteer who speaks Burmese and English. This experience truly illustrated how creative engagement with the right community partners can reduce significant barriers for our diverse community.



*Nancy Diaz volunteered more than 225 hours in the 2022 tax season as the site coordinator and only IRS-certified volunteer tax preparer in Lamar and the surrounding area. She tirelessly lent her expertise to ensure site compliance, organize community outreach, and complete intake and tax preparation for each client. Nancy’s service went above and beyond, as she helped some residents obtain their individual taxpayer identification number, which is a complex and often confusing process. Nancy also served as an interpreter for tax preparers in other communities.*

**Thank you to Nancy and all the dedicated volunteers who make Tax Help Colorado a success!**

\*Name changed for privacy purposes