

## Virtual VITA Volunteer Appreciation Held on Dec. 4th

The Westchester-Putnam Career Center Network held its annual VITA Volunteer Recognition virtually on December 4, 2020. Fifty-four volunteers were honored with certificates from Westchester County and the IRS. “The VITA program would not be possible without the dedicated support of our volunteers,” stated *DSS Commissioner Kevin McGuire*. “People work hard and we want families to get back every dollar they are entitled to by law.”

The VITA program, which typically runs February 1 to April 15 at nine locations, helps low- and moderate-income individuals and families eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) file their taxes for free, including people with disabilities, senior citizens, and those for whom English is a second language. To make sure the program delivers maximum benefits, VITA relies on dedicated volunteers to act as greeters, assist with translation and call-center operations. Tax preparation is done by IRS-certified volunteers with all locations offering FREE electronic filing.

Due to COVID-19, only the Mt. Vernon Career Center reopened to serve the public. Despite that, the program met 75% of its goal with 2298 returns completed. Special thanks are due to all volunteers, who adapted to all the date and protocol changes, as well as the *VITA Site Coordinator Rudy Aikens* of WestCOP, Inc. and *Victor Avendano*, *VITA Program Director, WPWDB*, for ensuring all health and safety protocols were followed so that tax filers could drop off their paperwork and get their taxes completed given difficult extenuating circumstances.

### Many of the volunteers have served multiple years, including:

George Curtis **16 years** / Antonio Stamos **14 years** / Rudy Aikens **13 years** / Tom Regina **8 years** / Tamicka Hall **6 years** / Ruth Cedeno **5 years** / Audelle Bodie **5 years** / Hugo Granda **5 years** / Luz Camargo **5 years** / Nkong Tankeng **5 years**

**Additional recognition was awarded to:** Noemi Crawford, Shaun Cottle, Wanda Amparro, Vilmary Abanto, Cindy Velasquez, Dane Kosaka, Daniel Kreisler, Magaly Maquera, Elizabeth Jimenez, Anne Curran, Peter Curran, Peter Delitter, Gail Bolden, Kim Bolden, Magda Rodriguez, Keiko Anraku, Elena Vlad, Paul Dolor, Annette Meeks, Jairo Baquero-Buitrago, Daphne Tasi, Maritza Couto, Kajal Mukherjee, Jennifer McDonald, Kajal Mukherjee, Roger Wolf, Jessica Salinas, Rona Balidemaj, Jeremy Morris, Omar McDowell, Khai Yon, Sonia Hollie, Natasa Saric, Carlos Manzuela, Hernan Checchi, Emily Duarte, Aisha Byfield, Christain Nunez Santana, Tara Jean Foley, Rosemary Andersen, Brendan Wolfert, David Calle, Kevin Garcia

### Special thanks are due to our partners:

Westchester Community College / Westchester Community College Education Opportunity Center / Westchester Community Opportunity Program (WestCOP) / AARP Westchester, Mercy College Westchester / Mercy College Bronx / United Way Westchester-Putnam / United Way 2-1-1 / Internal Revenue Service / Interfaith Council for Action, Inc. / Community Capital NY / Child Care Council of Westchester / Southern Westchester BOCES / Westchester County Department of Social Services / Yonkers Public Library

### VITA Stats:

**Number of Tax Payers Served:** 2,298

**Earned Income Tax Credit:** \$1,124,722.00

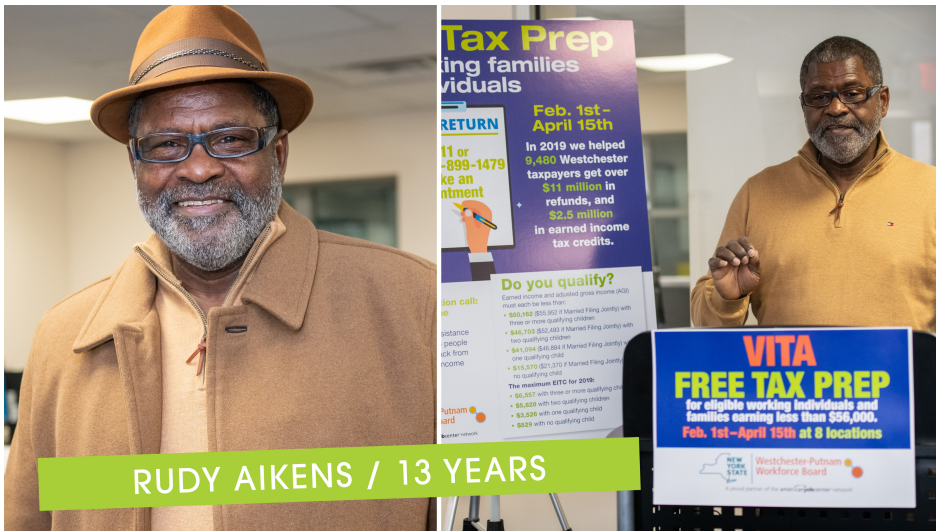
**Child Tax Credit:** \$745,802.00

**Education Credit:** \$238,508.00

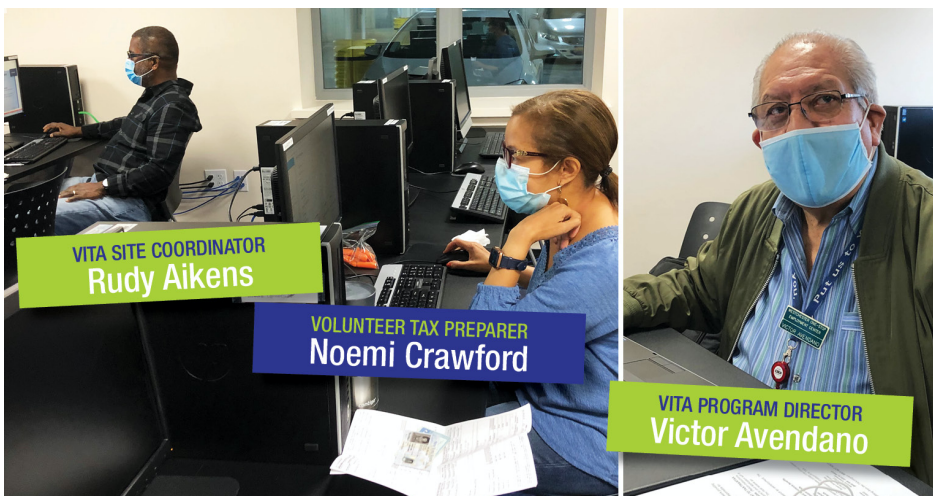
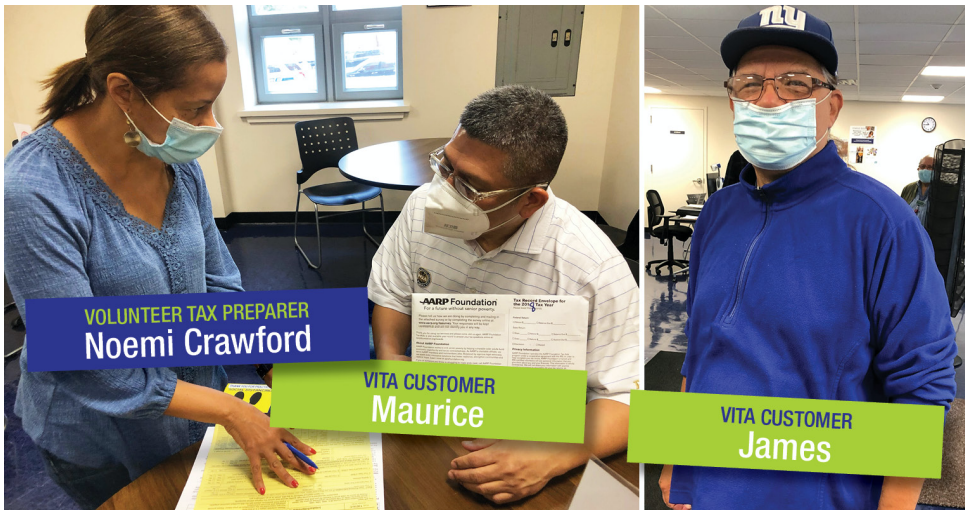
**Federal Refund:** \$3,107,210.00

**NYS Refund:** \$664,601.00

To watch the end of year slideshow go to: [https://youtu.be/etSR\\_1Ci5t4](https://youtu.be/etSR_1Ci5t4)



Also this year we celebrated Rudy Aikens' retirement. Rudy has been program coordinator for 13 years and we greatly appreciate his hard work and dedication, especially during the pandemic. Congratulations and good luck Rudy!





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**THE WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WPWDB)** is comprised of leaders and staff of state and county government agencies, non-profits, public education, and the private sector who work together to strengthen the partnerships between business, education, and service providers within the “Career Center Network” to meet the needs for a skilled workforce. The WPWDB pursues funding opportunities and develops model programs and leading-edge practices. The “Network” is made up of four Career Centers (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and Carmel) as well as partner agencies that provide state-of-the-art technology, training, resources, and services to youth, adults and employers. For more information, visit [www.westchesterputnamonestop.com](http://www.westchesterputnamonestop.com).

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