

Centennial State Libraries

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Tax Time Services at Colorado Libraries

Libraries vary in their services for people preparing tax returns. A good initial place to look is the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center's Denison Memorial Library's tax info page: <http://denison.uchsc.edu/QOM/taxes.html>. This summarizes online resources accessible from virtually anywhere.

Years ago, many public libraries stock hundreds of forms. This no longer is the case. Assistance often is via the Internet with printed copies from that source. Continuing to offer hard-copy copies of at least the most popular forms are:

- Adams County Library District
- Arapahoe Library District
- Auraria Library
- Aurora Public Library
- Bemis Public Library (Littleton)
- Community College of Aurora
- Douglas County Libraries
- Englewood Public Library
- Estes Park Public Library

- Jefferson County Public Library
- Lafayette Public Library
- Loveland Public Library
- Mamie Doud Eisenhower Public Library (Broomfield)
- University of Northern Colorado, Government Publications Department
- Westminster Public Library College Hill Branch-,
- Weld Library District

Be sure to call if referring people because not all sites or branches have all forms. More tax assistance comes from volunteers, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, in partnership with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) TAX-AIDE program. Many library patrons may be eligible to have their federal and State of Colorado tax returns completed free of charge by trained IRS and AARP volunteers at the area sites enclosed. For sites outside the State of Colorado, please contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

VITA and TAX-AIDE sites prepare basic tax returns free of charge for individuals and families with limited income, those who speak English as a second language, individuals who are disabled or handicapped, and senior citizens. Many of our sites do not require appointments, offer free e-file, and provide translators for those who do not speak English. This service is for basic tax return preparation only. Please check the site listing carefully to determine what services are offered in your area.

Many low-income individuals and families qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). These credits help working individuals/families reduce any tax owed and also may be refunded if there is no tax obligation on the return. The EITC is offered on the federal return only (the State of Colorado no longer offers this credit). Qualified individuals may receive as much as \$4204 from the federal EITC. The Child Tax Credit is also offered on the federal return only (the State of Colorado no longer offers this credit). In partnership with The Piton Foundation and Channel 7News in Denver, a hotline has been established to help qualify individuals for all of these credits, determine if they are eligible for free tax services, and refer them to free tax site locations that can assist them with the completion of their return. This hotline will open after January 17, 2004. Call (303) 83-CALL7 for additional information. Individuals may also call 1-800-829-1040 for general IRS tax information.

The Piton Foundation has an electronic version of this list that may be accessed via the Internet at www.piton.org. Sites will also be listed on the Channel 7News website at www.thedenverchannel.com.

Jamie LaRue, director of Douglas County Libraries, says, "Yes, we will be distributing tax forms again this year. A survey from about two years ago showed that for some citizens, this was the ONLY service visit they made to the library."

Young Adult Book Awards Underway

The Colorado Blue Spruce Young Adult Book Award recognizes the most popular books among middle and high school students in the state of Colorado. Teens nominate their favorite titles and select the winner - adults do not vote. All the materials needed to participate in the Blue Spruce Award can be found on the web

site (<http://www.cal-webs.org/bluespruce/>) and may be freely printed and distributed.

The deadline for Blue Spruce voting this year is February 1 (or Monday February 2 if you do not work weekends). You can find information about the voting process at : <http://www.cal-webs.org/bluespruce/voting.htm>. This is a great way to encourage teens to read.

Comments Due for National Ed-Tech Plan

Time is running out to comment on national ed-tech plan. The U.S. Department of Education invites educators to visit the web site of the National Education Technology Plan and contribute your ideas. Comments are due by March 12. In the new Participate section of the site, users can provide comments on nine different themes, including technology and teacher quality, special education, and leadership; upload files such as reports, articles, and presentations; contribute to a blog; and more. Visit the site at www.nationaledtechplan.org. Library folks can include the need for library resources, information literacy, and library staffing in schools to help support implementation of the national ed tech plan in their comments. (Source: <http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/>)

Power Your Arguments About Summer Reading

The New York State Library's Statewide Summer Reading Program has put together a wide compilation of citations about summer reading programs. "Highlights of Research on Summer Reading and Effects on Student Achievement" provides validation as you talk to educators and potential supporters about the important role of libraries in student achievement. Visit the site at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/research.htm>.

Festival of Stories Showcases Colorado Storytellers


The Winter Festival of Stories Showcasing presented by the Rocky Mountain Storytellers Guild and the Boulder Public Library is scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Boulder Public Library Auditorium, 1000 Canyon Blvd.

This festival, now in its fourth year, is an opportunity for hearing storytellers from all over the Front Range in a two-day, "catch-as-many-as-you-can" program format. Come for an hour, a day, or the whole weekend!. Programs for all ages will fill both days with terrific tales and music by some of the state's pre-eminent storytellers and musicians.

Free! Made possible by funding from the Boulder Public Library Foundation and The Rocky Mountain Storytellers Guild. Pick up a complete program schedule at any of the Library's branches, call 303-441-3196 or see <http://www.boulder.lib.co.us/calendar/storytelling.html> for a complete schedule.

For additional information, E-Mail: [B. McCune](mailto:B.McCune)

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