

OVERCOMING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

RESOURCE GUIDE



Brought to you by:

The NAACP Economic Department

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This Resource Guide seeks to share financial and economic empowerment services and programs to those readers who are experiencing economic hardships. This document does not seek to be all inclusive, but rather serves to act as an introduction to these resources. Please note that the information included is general and not specific to any state.



EMPOWERMENT TOOLS/ SERVICES

❖ Free Tax Preparation Assistance

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify.

VITA

The VITA Program generally offers free tax help to people who make \$50,000 or less and need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation to qualified individuals in local communities. They can inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing. Find a VITA site by calling 1-800-906-9887.

TCE

The TCE Program offers free tax help for all with priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement issues unique to seniors. IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

Find an AARP Tax-Aide site by calling 1-888-227-7669 for more information on TCE

Facilitated Self-Assistance

In addition to traditional face-to-face tax preparation, the IRS is launching a self-assistance service at select locations. If individuals have a simple tax return and need a little help or do not have access to a computer, they can visit one of the participating tax preparation sites and an IRS-certified volunteer will guide them through the process.

Items you need to bring to the VITA/TCE sites to have your tax returns prepared:

- Proof of identification – Picture ID
- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse and dependents or a Social Security Number verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration or
- Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assignment letter for you, your spouse and dependents
- Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns if available
- Proof of bank account routing numbers and account numbers for Direct Deposit, such as a blank check



❖ **Credit Repair**

Federal Trade Commission

To learn how to improve your credit worthiness and find legitimate resources for low or no-cost help, please see the following publications at ftc.gov/credit.

- Your Access to Free Credit Reports: Explains why it is important to monitor your credit history, how to request a report, and how to dispute errors.
- How to Dispute Credit Report Errors: Explains how to dispute and correct inaccurate information in your credit report. Includes a sample dispute letter.
- Building a Better Credit Report — Learn how to legally improve your credit report, how to deal with debt, how to spot credit-related scams, and more.
- Knee Deep in Debt: Discusses options to help you get back in the black, including: realistic budgeting, credit counseling from a reputable organization, debt consolidation, or bankruptcy.
- Fiscal Fitness: Choosing a Credit Counselor: Defines debt repayment plans, explains the differences between secured and unsecured debt, and offers questions to ask credit counseling agencies if you consider using their services.

The FTC works to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumer's spot stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261.

National Foundation for Credit Counseling

As the nation's largest financial counseling organization, the NFCC Member Agency Network includes more than 700 community-based offices located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. More than 3 million consumers annually receive financial counseling and education from NFCC Member Agencies in person, over the phone, or online. To locate an NFCC Member Agency in your area call 800-388-2227

Get free and low-cost help from a trained, certified counselor who will assist you in determining the best options to meet your individual needs.

Our Certified Consumer Credit Counselors will:

- Advise you on managing your money;
- Offer solutions to your current financial problems;
- Develop a personalized plan to help you prevent future difficulties.

EMPOWERMENT TOOLS/ SERVICES CONT

❖ Financial Education

The screenshot shows the MyMoney.gov website. At the top left, it displays the date "Wednesday, July 25, 2012" and the American flag. The main header features the "MYMONEY.GOV" logo in large white letters on a blue background, with the tagline "Your trust" to the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with buttons for "Home", "Life Events", "My Resources", and "Tools". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "Life Events" and features a green tree icon. Below the title, it says: "Find helpful financial information based on where you are in life - from the birth of a child to retirement." The right column is titled "My Resources" and features an icon of a stack of books. Below the title, it says: "Explore our collection of financial information from trusted resources."

MyMoney.gov is the U.S. government's website dedicated to teaching all Americans the basics about financial education. Whether you are buying a home, balancing your checkbook, or investing in your 401(k), the resources on MyMoney.gov can help you maximize your financial decisions. Throughout the site, you will find important information from 20 Federal agencies and Bureaus designed to help you make smart financial choices.

The screenshot shows the Financial Planning Association (FPA) website. The top left features the FPA logo with the text "FINANCIAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION". To the right of the logo is a decorative graphic of a grid pattern. Below the logo and graphic is a navigation menu with buttons for "HOME", "LIFE GOALS", "LIFE CRISES", "FIND A PLANNER", and "TOOLS & RESOU". A dropdown menu is open over the "CONSUMERS" button. Below the navigation menu is a green box with the text: "Welcome to FPA. A community of financial planning experts ready to help you. Learn more about FPA >". To the right of the green box is a photograph of a person sitting on a lawn, with the text "I have big plans" overlaid at the bottom.

The Financial Planning Association (FPA[®]) is the largest membership organization for personal financial planning experts in the U.S. and includes professionals from all backgrounds and business models. We help connect thousands of consumers to competent and ethical planners who uphold the FPA Standard of Care.

❖ **Housing Assistance**

Rent.Com: An online apartment search tool with detailed rental listings nationwide.

HUD Approved Housing Counselors: Counselors who can assist in identifying local affordable housing options through a nonprofit housing developer or the city/county housing department.

Public Housing or a Subsidized Housing Voucher: Programs, such as Section 8, may be an option depending on how much an individual's income may have declined.

Social Serve.Com: A website that maintains a list of housing options for numerous cities across the country, including Section 8 housing.

Many cities maintain a weekly rental guide that can be found at convenience stores and supermarkets.

Rental agencies include their listings in the yellow pages.

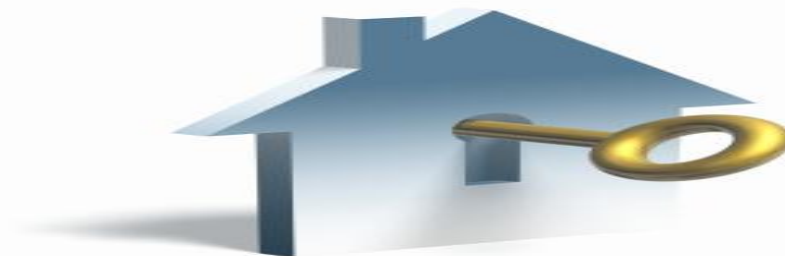
The Federal Housing Administration: provides mortgage insurance on loans made by FHA-approved lenders. FHA insures these loans on single family and multi-family homes in the United States and its territories. It is the largest insurer of residential mortgages in the world, insuring tens of millions of properties since 1934. http://www.fha.com/fha_loan_requirements.cfm

Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America:

The Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America ("NACA") is a non-profit, community advocacy and homeownership organization. NACA's primary goal is to build strong, healthy neighborhoods in urban and rural areas nationwide through affordable homeownership. NACA has made the dream of homeownership a reality for thousands of working people by counseling them honestly and effectively, enabling even those with poor credit to purchase a home or refinance a predatory loan with far better terms than those provided even in the prime market. www.naca.com/

Avoiding Rental Scams

Prospective tenants must be careful of properties that may be fraudulently advertised. There is an increase in properties in the process of foreclosure being advertised as rentals. It is important to verify that the person(s) renting the property have the legal right to do so and that the property is not pending foreclosure. Prospective tenants can check the status of the property at www.rentalforeclosure.com.



❖ **Employment Assistance**

National Resource Directory
Connecting Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans,
Their Families and Caregivers with Those Who Support Them

SEARCH FOR RESOURCES Find national, state and local programs and services

NRD.GOV

SEARCH FOR A JOB Find jobs for to hire Veterans

FIND INFORMATION BY SUBJECT

- Benefits & Compensation
- Education & Training
- Employment

Home » Homeless Assistance » Employment & Income Assistance

Employment & Income Assistance

Get help with employment and benefits, including vocational training and

Listed Alphabetically | List by Popularity | Hide Descriptions

The **National Resource Directory (NRD)** is a United States Government inter-agency web portal for Wounded Warriors, Service Members, Veterans, their families and caregivers. It provides information and links to thousand of national, state and local resources. The NRD was established to support the reintegration, recovery and rehabilitation of our members of the United States Armed Forces.

Job Corps A U.S. Department of Labor Web Site

JOB CORPUS

Success lasts a lifetime!

Home About Job Corps How Job Corps Works Employment Locations Frequently Asked Questions Contact Us

Information for: [Young Adults](#) | [Parents](#) | [Business Partners](#)

Success Lasts a Lifetime with Job Corps

Job Corps is a **free** education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or GED, and find and keep a good job. For eligible young people at least 16 years of age that qualify as low income, Job Corps provides the all-around skills needed to succeed in a career and in life.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining

Job Corps is a program administered by the United States Department of Labor that offers free-of-charge education and vocational training to youth ages 16 to 24. Job Corps offers career planning, on-the-job training, job placement, residential housing, food service, etc.

EMPOWERMENT TOOLS/ SERVICES CONT

❖ Small Business

Since its founding on July 30, 1953, the U.S. Small Business Administration has delivered millions of loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses. SBA provides assistances primarily through its four programmatic functions:

- Business Financing
- Technical Assistance/Training
- Government Procurement
- Advocacy

CORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. We have been doing this for nearly fifty years.

Because our work is supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and thanks to our network of 13,000+ volunteers, we are able to deliver our services at no charge or at very low cost.

- Score-provides:
- Mentors
 - Tools/Workshops
 - Counseling

WORKFORCE TRAINING & JOB REFERRALS

The U.S. Department of Labor funds a large number of workforce training programs to improve the employment prospects of adults, youth, and dislocated workers. These programs are delivered primarily by states through a system One-Stop Career Center . Training programs can vary from state to state depending on the skills that are needed to compete for jobs in the local area.

America's Service Locator

- This website is sponsored by the Department of Labor to provide specific information on One-Stop Career Centers unemployment benefits, workforce training and job referral at the national, state, and local level.

Avoiding job scams

- Fraudulent job offers and employment scams are on the rise as criminals find ways to prey on desperate job seekers during this protracted economic downturn. PhishBucket.org is a website operated by a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting job seekers from fraudulent job offers. It maintains a list of some of the most popular tactics that a job seeker should look out for.¹



ACCESSING PUBLIC BENEFITS/ SUPPORT SERVICES



[2-1-1 Help Hotline](#): In most areas, 2-1-1 is a free telephone service that connects the caller to social service providers or a United Way office. 2-1-1 operators, known as information and referral specialists, provide referrals to local information and resources for basic life needs such as food, shelter, and financial assistance.

[Human Service and Social Service Agencies](#): Social services department and public health departments offer public benefits such as food stamp or health services.

[Community Action Agencies](#): Community action agencies are local private and nonprofit organizations that are funded by state and federal programs to provide services to foster self-sufficiency and alleviate poverty. Some of the services available through a community action agency include utility bill assistance and home weatherization for low-income individuals, administration of Head Start pre-school programs, job training, and operating food pantries.

[American Red Cross](#): Local branches of the American Red Cross may be able to provide assistance with paying electric and heating bills.

[Catholic Charities](#): Catholic Charities offers medical bill assistance to those in need of help with health care bills throughout the United States.

[The Diaper Bank](#): The Diaper Bank provides and distributes free diapers to lower income families through existing service providers, including daycare centers, soup kitchens, food pantries, social service agencies, shelters and more.

Free Prescription Medications: [Dispensary of Hope](#), [Together RX Access](#), [NeedyMeds](#) and [Patient Advocate Foundation](#) are programs that offer discounted and free prescription medications.

[HealthWell Foundation](#): HealthWell Foundation helps people pay for prescription medications. This group provides financial assistance and grants to help patients to pay for various out-of-pocket health care expenses including health insurance premiums, prescription drugs, and a wide variety of other costs.

[United Way](#): United way advocates for and connects distressed individuals and communities to free and inexpensive resources in the areas of health, education and financial planning nationwide.

[The Urban League](#): The Urban League has over 100 local affiliates in 36 states and the District of Columbia, providing direct services like job training programs, financial literacy programs, preparing for homeownership programs, free health screenings and counseling, etc.

[Salvation Family Emergency Services](#): The Salvation Army Family Emergency Services helps support basic human needs. Some of the services provided by the Salvation Army include clothing, food, electric bill help and counseling.

[Goodwill Industries International](#): Goodwill is a not-for-profit organization that provides job training, employment placement services and other community-based programs for people who have a disability, lack education or job experience, or face employment challenges.