

January/February 2016

FREE TAX PREPARATION

Training Schedule

Classes are held at the Housing Authority Office unless specified otherwise.

Cherokee Nation in partnership with the IRS is offering free tax preparation and filing at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites beginning February 1 through April 15, 2016 for families who earned less than \$54,000 in 2015. Cherokee Nation will begin taking calls to schedule tax preparation appointments January 18th.

Homebuyers Training

Jay

Jan. 19 & 20 10am to 5pm

Sallisaw

Jan 26-28 5:30pm to 9:30pm

Feb. 9-11 5:30pm to 9:30pm

Claremore

Feb. 20 & 21 10am to 5pm

Tahlequah

*Classes held in the Tsa La Gi Annex

Jan. 23 & 24 10am to 5pm

Feb. 1-3 6pm to 10pm

You can also prepare and file your own federal and state taxes for free online if your income is under \$62,000 at <http://www.myfreetaxes.com>.

All locations are by appointment only unless otherwise noted.

Tahlequah Mon. & Wed. 9am-4pm (918) 453-5536 *(Not 2/15)*
 appointments and walk ins

Pryor Thurs. 9am-3pm (918) 342-6803

Stilwell Wed. 9am-3pm (918) 453-5536

Sallisaw Mon. 9am-3:30pm (918) 774-0770 x221
 Tues. 9am-3:30pm (918) 774-0770 x222

Catoosa Tues. 9am-3pm (918) 342-2607

Claremore Wed. 9am-3:30pm (918) 342-6814
 Fri. 9am-3:30pm (918) 342-6807 *(Not 3/25)*

Jay Tues. 8:30am-3:30pm (918) 453-5536

Collinsville Tues. thru March 29 9am-1pm (918) 342-6807

Salina Tues. 9am-3pm (918) 207-3939

Muskogee Thurs. 9am-3pm (918) 453-5536 *(Not 2/18 or 3/17)*

Westville Feb 9, 23 & March 8, 22 9am-4pm, *walk ins only

Vinita Feb 1 & 29; Mar 21; April 11 9am -3pm (918) 342-6803

Ochelata Feb 8; Mar 7 & 28 10am-3pm (918) 342-6803

Nowata Feb 22; Mar 14; April 4 10am-3pm (918) 342-6803

Financial Education Workshops

Claremore

Pay Check to Pay Check Jan. 28 1pm to 4pm

Why Do I Need an Emergency Fund? Feb. 25 1pm to 4pm

Tahlequah

Why Do I Need an Emergency Fund? Feb. 11 1pm to 4pm

Please RSVP with **Rita Whaler**

rita-whaler@cherokee.org
 (918)772-4149 or
 (918) 453-5536

Six Most Important Resolutions This Year

A new year is here and it's a perfect time to turn over a new leaf. Here are six steps to make 2016 the year when your spending, saving and debt repayment practices truly improve.

1. Get back in touch with your finances. Sometimes we let our finances get lost in all the hustle and bustle of daily life. As the year begins, take time to sit down and review accounts to see where you stand.
2. Commit to pay bills on time. Paying every bill on time is the most important element of good credit. The good news? It is the most attainable. For 2016, set up a system that works for you to remind you to pay each bill you regularly receive. This could be automatic online payments, a reminder on your cell phone or a list on the refrigerator.
3. Pay more than the minimum. The best rule is never charge more in any given month than you can repay that month. If you already have debt, pay more than the minimum amount, especially for credit cards. Even adding \$10 to your payment will knock debt down faster. Paying off debt is a task that requires hard work and discipline.
4. Set specific savings goals. A rule of thumb is to save 10% of your income, although many experts suggest 15-20%. Build an emergency fund that would cover six to nine months of your expenses. Take advantage of Kiplinger's retirement calculator to find out if you are on the right track with planning for your future. Even if you can only manage a few dollars a week, save something.
5. Pay taxes early. The IRS reports that 2.6 million returns had errors in 2013. This may be due, in part, to the fact that 28% of people wait until April to file their returns. Preparing your tax return earlier gives you time to review and ensure it is accurate. To avoid penalties, file your taxes on or before April 15, with any tax due. You may want to adjust your withholding if needed. If your refund was

large, have fewer taxes withheld so you are not giving an interest-free loan to the government during the year. Instead, use that money to save or to repay debt.

6. Evaluate your debt situation honestly. If you cannot make minimum payments, or believe you cannot get out of debt on your own, take action to get help. Many options exist, which can include debt negotiation, debt consolidation or credit counseling.

As we move into 2016, vow to eliminate debt and overspending. Use the new year as an opportunity to give yourself a fresh take on your finances so can end the year financially better off than you began it.

Source: Bills.com

Your Free Credit Report

Did you know you can get a free copy of your credit report every twelve months?

You are entitled to one free report every 12 months from each of the three major credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

You can request your report by going to www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228.

Foreclosure Prevention

Foreclosure prevention counseling services are provided free of charge by the Cherokee Nation Commerce Department. To schedule an appointment with a self sufficiency counselor call 918-453-5536.