

## For the VITA Tax Preparer: Help Your Clients Save

As a VITA tax preparer you can play a key role in helping people become more financially secure. Help them begin or boost their savings.

Surveys suggest that almost half of those who decide to save some of their federal income tax refunds make that decision at the tax site<sup>1</sup>.

This means that you have one of the most effective opportunities to promote the benefits of saving.

The information provided below will help you talk about ways lower-income families can split their refunds into multiple accounts using IRS Form 8888.

### Before the client arrives

1. Familiarize yourself with IRS Form 8888, *Allocation of Refund (Including Savings Bond Purchases)*. You can download the form and instructions at [irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8888.pdf](https://irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8888.pdf).

Form 8888 lets taxpayers split their refund into three accounts. The taxpayer must have account and routing numbers.

You can also use Form 8888 to deposit refunds into retirement accounts, mutual funds, and U.S. Savings Bonds.

2. Download the *Ready, Set, Save* taxpayer information and worksheet from [ConsumerFinance.gov/vita](https://ConsumerFinance.gov/vita). (If possible, print the two pages on the front and back of a single sheet of paper.)

### Greeting the client

3. As you greet the clients, ask if they would be interested in saving some of their refund.

If they are interested or undecided, ask them to review the *Ready, Set, Save* information and worksheet while you begin working on their taxes. This will provide the clients with enough time to read the information, consider their options, and choose to complete the worksheet.

These documents are informational tools for clients to consider and retain if they wish.

## If they receive a refund

4. When you complete the tax return, tell the clients how much their tax refund will be, and ask if they would like to automatically deposit some of it into their savings account.

If they are still unsure, you may want to discuss some of the benefits of saving (see the talking points below).

5. If they decide to save some of their refund, ask if they have their savings account number and routing number and complete IRS Form 8888.

**NOTE:** Savings accounts and checking accounts may have unique routing numbers. Verify you are using the routing number for the savings account.

6. If they do not have their account and routing numbers, ask them if they would be interested in buying U.S. Savings Bonds. (If they don't have a savings account, you may consider telling them about the benefits of having a savings account and how to open one. See *Talking Points: Why Save?*)

Bonds are for longer term savers and must be held for at least one year. They can be cashed without penalty after five years (see the talking points below).

If they are not interested in buying savings bonds, ask them if they would like to complete the *Ready, Set, Save* worksheet and keep it in a visible location in their home as a reminder of their decision to save some of their refund when it arrives.

**NOTE:** The worksheet is theirs to keep. Do not take it from them.

---

<sup>i</sup> This information is based on research and pilot programs conducted by the Doorways to Dreams (D2D) Fund.