

# Extension Puts Money Back Into Citizens' Pockets

## Free tax preparation at county's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site

Extension Program: Family and Consumer Sciences/Home and Family

In partnership with El Centro and NextStep KC, Extension annually hosts a Volunteer Income Tax (VITA) site at the Sunset Drive Office Building. It is the only VITA site in Johnson County.

This ever-growing county service is available for tax payers with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or less.

Trained volunteers:

- file federal and state returns electronically,
- know the latest tax information, helping to find deductions that may increase refunds,
- inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as:
  - the earned income tax credit,
  - child tax credit,
  - credit for the elderly or disabled, and
  - Homestead Refund/Tax Credit

This year, the Sunset VITA site prepared 1,102 returns, a 32.5% increase in the number of returns prepared last year. The Average Gross Income was \$26,381.98. To increase convenience, drop-off service was added. One hundred and fifty four participants dropped-off their paperwork and avoided the waiting lines.

Between refunds, credit and savings, \$1,425,171 was returned to citizens — an increase of 27% over last year.



## KEY FIGURES

- Number of Returns: **1102**
- Youngest: **17** years
- Oldest: **92** years
- Caucasian: **70%**
- Hispanic: **25%**
- Other: **5%**
- Seniors Served: **46%**
- Members of the Deaf Community Served: **33**



**\$1,425,171**  
RETURNED  
TO CITIZENS

# Medicare Open Enrollment Counseling

Extension Program: Family and Consumer Sciences/Home and Family

Every day, 10,000 Americans become eligible for Medicare. But many do not understand health insurance or Medicare. Insufficient or inaccurate information can lead to:

- late enrollment penalties,
- gaps in coverage,
- strained finances, and
- delayed health-care treatment.

In 2017, Extension agent Denise Dias focused on expanding the Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) services in Johnson County. This free program offers Kansans the opportunity to talk with trained volunteers and get answers to questions about Medicare and other insurance issues.

“ I SAVED OVER \$11,200 PER YEAR

This service saved me time and money. They did the research to find me the most compatible prescription plan for my needs. My premium for the entire year cost less than the co-pay of one drug last year, thank you very much. ”

James Meeker

During 2017 Medicare Open Enrollment, Extension provided Medicare Part D counseling. Participants that received counseling through Extension saved, as a whole, \$218,403.

Throughout the year, Extension offers Medicare classes for those approaching retirement, newly retired, human services staff, county employees, and family members who assist someone on Medicare.

## KEY FIGURES

- Number of Participants Counseled: 53

**\$218,403**  
PARTICIPANTS SAVED



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**\$1,643,574.00**

TOTAL RETURNED FROM THESE TWO EXTENSION PROGRAMS

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