



FTA Awards Nomination/Entry Form

Person who led this effort or project

Name Neena Savage

Agency Name Rhode Island Division of Taxation

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About your program, idea, or project

Name your program, idea, or project: Tax Compliance Day-A Taxpayer Outreach Model

What is the problem that you wanted to solve?

Identifying obstacles to voluntary compliance is at the forefront of the Rhode Island Division of Taxation Taxpayer Experience Office's initiatives.

Such an obstacle is the complex and multi-agency nature of certain tax situations. Taxpayers can struggle with and are intimidated by the best sequence in which to visit, call, and email numerous agencies, at multiple levels of government, over many days. A lack of access to transportation and time off from work may further make it difficult for taxpayers to navigate their issue.

Taxpayers with a desire to reach compliance, but who are having difficulty resolving their issues, need an opportunity to access same-day multi-agency collaborative service.

All Rhode Islanders deserve to have government accessible and working to meet them where they are. The goal of this project is to reach taxpayers that are noncompliant and/or have personal or financial barriers to communicating with government. By increasing accessibility and "facetime" with taxpayers and the community, the Division's reach, with a positive, empathetic experience, not only eased the burden of voluntary compliance but extended beyond those attending Tax Compliance Day. As the approach and positive experience are communicated by these taxpayers to others in their families and/or communities, increased contact and compliance result.

Who was involved in addressing the problem?

This was a true team effort. The idea for Tax Compliance Day stemmed from prior outreach and an initiative from Tax Administrator Neena Savage. The Division continually assesses taxpayer needs and works to develop innovative ideas to solve problems and make government accessible and approachable.

In addition to Administrator Savage, members of the Taxpayer Experience Office Team - Leo Lebeuf (Taxpayer Experience Liaison) and Amanda Tirocchi (Internet Communication Specialist) – planned and implemented the two Tax Compliance Day events held to date. The Chiefs of Personal Income Tax (Carlita Annicelli) and Compliance and Collections (Crystal Cote), along with their staff, attended the events. These team members assisted the taxpayer-attendees in reaching compliance, or in developing plans to reach compliance. Additionally, Gail Belasco (Chief Program Development) coordinated the venues; Bethany Whitmarsh (Assistant Tax Administrator) and Rahul Sarathy (Chief of Tax Analytics & Strategy) attended the events and provided support and guidance; and the Audit and Investigation Unit and Excise and Estate Tax Section were on call and available for specific tax issues.

How did they go about finding a solution?

The idea for Tax Compliance Day was inspired by a young, recently discharged veteran. In September 2023, the Division hosted a kiosk at Operation Stand Down RI's Veteran Service Event. At the event,

representatives from the Division were able to coordinate with other agencies, on-site, to expeditiously resolve multi-agency issues.

The young veteran explained that he had fallen on hard times. An old outstanding state income tax balance and a traffic ticket prevented him from renewing his driver's license. Without access to his vehicle, he was having trouble obtaining gainful employment and was facing homelessness.

It was clear that these issues needed to be resolved immediately. IRS VITA was in attendance and VITA volunteers assisted him in getting his filings up to date. This allowed the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service representative, also on-site for the event, to discover a refund the veteran was due. The Division of Taxation applied his refund to his RI debt, and the remainder of the refund was used to pay for his vehicle violation. The Division of Motor Vehicles, also in attendance, renewed his license while he waited. After the event, this young veteran was able get back to work and continue to move his life forward.

This taxpayer's story exemplified how government can work to best serve taxpayers. This inspired the initiative and resulted in leveraging contacts and mobilizing agencies to bring this level of collaborative service into the larger community. The need for same-day multi-agency collaborative service for all Rhode Islanders necessitated the development of the Tax Compliance Day initiative.

Tax Administrator Savage spoke to the IRS VITA and IRS Taxpayer Advocate on-site at the September 2023 event to garner commitment to holding a Tax Compliance Day in early January 2024. The Division of Taxation coordinated the planning, including media coverage and posts, registration, arranging for space/food, technical support, and communication with all stakeholders. The IRS and other State Partners were only asked to bring personnel, computers/printers, and any other materials they needed.

The Division of Taxation also publicized the event via the various social media and communication platforms used by the Governor's office, the General Assembly, the local affiliates of the IRS, and tax professional organizations.

Describe the outcome. What is the new idea, approach, program, or activity?

On January 10, 2024, the Division hosted its inaugural Tax Compliance Day assistance event. Free to attend, and open to all individual and business entity taxpayers, the event was hosted at a local college close to major roadways and easily accessed by public transit. The IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service, RI DMV, IRS VITA, RI Department of State, and RI Central Collections Unit came together for the event. These agencies collaborated to resolve tax debts and delinquencies, remove tax-related license blocks, and provide refunds that taxpayers were unaware they were entitled to. The event assisted a number of taxpayers that would have remained noncompliant without this event.

The success of the first Tax Compliance Day, and an overwhelmingly positive response from taxpayers, showcased the necessity of such an event on a regular basis. The Division hosted a second Tax Compliance Day on April 8, 2024. The April 8th Tax Compliance Day shifted registration to a later window of 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. to increase accessibility to the event. The April 8th Tax Compliance Day included an agent from IRS Collections, with the RI DMV and other agencies available to provide phone support, as needed. The second Tax Compliance Day had a greater turnout and ran even more smoothly than the first.

What has changed since this was implemented? How have your operations improved? Include any data, analytics or metrics that would show the value of your program. Don't forget management advantages such as improved morale.

Across both event dates, many taxpayers entered voluntary compliance or began work to achieve voluntary compliance. Additionally, the already strong relationships the Division has with the IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service, RI DMV, IRS VITA, RI Department of State – Division of Business Services, IRS Collections, and RI Central Collections Unit, have grown further. Open lines of communication and discussion have provided Tax Compliance Day program improvements, continued taxpayer issue resolution, and created dialog around strategies for continuing innovation in taxpayer service.

The event was also an opportunity for staff to holistically help taxpayers at one time--and the appreciation demonstrated by taxpayers and resulting reputational impact on the Division of Taxation is needed to shift the narrative of tax agencies being bureaucratic or intimidating. The hope is that every taxpayer helped will spread the message that tax compliance does not have to be difficult or insurmountable.

Is there any component of your program that makes it workable only in your state or city?

Everybody ought to be doing this.

Is this an in-house project, or did you partner with an outside vendor or service-provider?

100% in-house

Additional information or comments about your usage of outside vendors or service providers.

The IRS Taxpayer Advocate Service, RI DMV, IRS VITA, RI Department of State – Division of Business Services, and RI Central Collections Unit attended the January 10th Tax Compliance Day. The April 8th Tax Compliance Day included an agent from IRS Collections, with the RI DMV and other agencies available to provide phone support, as needed.

Rhode Island College and Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training provided event venue space for the January 10th and April 8th events, respectively. Tax Compliance Day events will continue to be held in different locations across Rhode Island for ease of access for taxpayers utilizing public transportation. Additionally, some taxpayers reported that interacting with IRS and Division of Taxation representatives at community locations felt more approachable.

The following is a further summary of how we advertised the event:

- Social media posts on X (Handle: <https://twitter.com/RhodeIslandTax> : approximately 20
- Advisory (on our website and by email)
- Email blasts, and newsletter mentions: approximately 8
- Media coverage examples:

ABC 6 Rhode Island Division of Taxation to hold first Tax Compliance Day to assist taxpayers | ABC6, and WPRI 12 RI Division of Taxation to host free compliance event next week – WPRI.com .

What comes next – will you be adding to your program, rolling it out more widely, trying additional approaches?


The Division of Taxation plans to continue to offer Tax Compliance Day events at rotating locations across Rhode Island. The unique geographic advantage of being the smallest state, in addition to the central location, relative to the rest of Rhode Island, of the Division of Taxation offices in Providence, enables the Division to often take to the road to provide presentations in every region of Rhode Island. This includes islands only accessible by bridges and in some instances, ferries. The Division's approach to delivering service to taxpayers, directly in the communities where they live and work, informs event location selection for all outreach events, including Tax Compliance Days. The process of selecting event dates and times for Tax Compliance Day events has thus far been coordinated by using data regarding staffing availability at partner agencies and taxpayer convenience. This approach has produced better-than-forecasted results.

As the program grows, our hope is to expand this model to serve taxpayers' needs based on areas where there is a tax compliance cap, do outreach to underserved communities, and have specific tax-type compliance projects with other non-IRS stakeholders for excise and other business taxes.


Additional Optional Materials

Website/Documentation URL (Must be publicly accessible) <https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/tax-compliance-day>

Documentation Upload




STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Division of Taxation
Department of Revenue




Tax Compliance Day


Collaborative event with the Division of Taxation, IRS, VITA free tax preparation, Secretary of State, RI DMV, and Department of Revenue – Central Collections Unit.



January 10, 2024
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Adverse weather day January 17




Rhode Island College
Alger Hall – Room 110
600 MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE
PROVIDENCE, RI 02908





Reserve your preferred time at:
<https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/tax-compliance-day>
Walk-ins welcome


In collaboration with:




DOR Rhode Island Department of Revenue
Central Collections Unit







**TAXPAYER
ADVOCATE
SERVICE**
YOUR VOICE AT THE IRS





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Division of Taxation
Department of Revenue



Día del Cumplimiento de Impuestos

Evento de colaboración con la División de Impuestos, el IRS, la preparación gratuita de impuestos de VITA, la Secretaría de Estado, el DMV de RI, y Departamento de Ingresos – Unidad Central de Colección.



10 de enero del 2024
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Fecha alternativa en caso de tormenta,
17 de enero



Rhode Island College
Alger Hall – Sala 110
600 MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE
PROVIDENCE, RI 02908



Haga su cita y reserve su espacio en:
<https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/tax-compliance-day>
Se aceptan visitas sin cita previa.

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En colaboración con:



RI Business
Services



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Division of Taxation

Department of Revenue

Tax Compliance Day

Collaborative event with the
Division of Taxation, IRS, Volunteer
Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and
the RI Department of State
Department of Business Services.



April 8, 2024

12:00 PM – 7:00 PM



**RI Department
of Labor & Training**

1511 PONTIAC AVENUE
BUILDING 73
CRANSTON, RI 02920

Reserve your preferred time at:

<https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/tax-compliance-day>

Walk-ins welcome

In collaboration with:



RI Business
Services





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Division of Taxation
Department of Revenue



Día del Cumplimiento de Impuestos

Evento de colaboración con la División de Impuestos, el IRS, la preparación gratuita de impuestos de VITA, y la Secretaría de Estado.



8 de abril de 2024
12:00 PM - 7:00 PM



El Departamento de Labor y Entrenamiento de Rhode Island
1511 PONTIAC AVENUE
EDIFICIO 73
CRANSTON, RI 02920



Haga su cita y reserve su espacio en:
<https://tax.ri.gov/about-us/tax-compliance-day>
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