

SPEC's Volunteer Programs

Is it VRPP? Or is it VITA? What about TCE? Have these program acronyms changed? Has the VITA name ceased to exist?

In a word, no! Because there has been confusion recently at both the Headquarters and Field levels, SPEC Directors would like to clarify this issue.

Our VITA, TCE, TCE-AARP, etc. acronyms signify programs that have existed for more than 30 years, gaining customer recognition and brand equity. SPEC is not moving away from these acronyms, and you and your partners can still refer to your volunteer programs by using these letters.

As you know, the VITA Program offers free tax help for low- to moderate-income (under \$38,000) people who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Volunteers, sponsored by various organizations, receive training to help prepare basic tax returns in communities across the country. Our TCE Programs (whether sponsored through AARP or not) provide free tax help to people aged 60 and older. Volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

These programs and their acronyms—VITA, TCE, etc.—are still the same as they always have been and should continue to be used with and by your partners.

The confusion comes with the phrase, *volunteer return preparation programs*, which became elevated to VRPP. It actually is a phrase used internally within SPEC to refer to our many volunteer programs, and generally should not be capitalized or used as an acronym. Correct usage, for example, would be: *SPEC's volunteer return preparation programs completed more than 2 million returns in 2005*. The acronym, VRPP, has been used in various documents and materials this year, but will be updated for next year to remove the VRPP acronym.

Please note that there is one exception to this. The acronym VRPP can be used in reference to the VRPP Quality process, which is a formalized review process that addresses all of our volunteer programs so therefore, the use of the acronym is accurately descriptive. You will continue to see the acronym VRPP Quality and VRPP QIP (quality improvement program) on such forms and reports as it relates to this formal quality initiative, but that should be the only use of the acronym VRPP.