The Librarian's Tax Toolkit: Essential Federal and State Resources

Presented by Jon Suarez and Laurie Smith

Wiss & Company LLP – Who We Are

Who We Are

- Wiss & Co. is a regional accounting and advisory firm providing tax, audit, and consulting services to individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. We help clients navigate complex federal and state tax matters, compliance requirements, and strategic financial planning.

Presenters:

- Jonathan Suarez, CPA – Manager, Tax
- Laurie Smith, CPA – Partner, Tax

Jonathan Suarez, CPA

Jonathan Suarez is a Manager in the tax department with 11 years of experience. He specializes in assisting high-net-worth individuals and their families across various industries with their tax compliance and tax planning needs. Jonathan's day-to-day responsibilities include overseeing the progress of engagements, fostering strong relationships with his clients, and training and mentoring staff. Prior to working at Wiss, he worked as a Tax Auditor for the Franchise Tax Board at KPMG with their State and Local Tax group, and at Withum in their Private Client Service group.

Laurie Smith, CPA

Laurie is an accomplished Tax Partner, distinguished as a leading expert in our Family Office practice. Specializing in serving high-net-worth individuals across various industries, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to navigate the complex landscape of tax regulations with finesse. Laurie goes beyond traditional tax services, adopting a holistic approach to address the unique financial needs of affluent clients.

Her expertise lies in meticulously addressing individual and fiduciary compliance requirements, excelling in developing comprehensive tax strategies aligned with the personal and family goals of her clients.

Agenda

Today’s session will cover four key areas:

1. IRS Resources & Reliable Information Sources
2. IRS Dirty Dozen Tax Scams
3. VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Programs
4. New Jersey Property Tax Relief Programs (ANCHOR, Senior Freeze, Stay NJ)

These resources are designed to help librarians confidently guide patrons to safe and reliable tax resources.

SECTION 1: IRS & NJ RESOURCES & RELIABLE INFORMATION SOURCES

Librarians can assist patrons in locating trusted federal tax tools and information.

Key IRS Links for Patrons:

- IRS Forms & Publications: https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs
- Interactive Tax Assistant (Q&A Tool): https://www.irs.gov/help/ita
- IRS Refund Tracker (Where's My Refund): https://www.irs.gov/refunds
- IRS Free File (If income-eligible): https://www.irs.gov/freefile

Key NJ Links for Patrons

- NJ Individual Tax Home Page: https://nj.gov/treasury/taxation/individuals/freqqiti.shtml
- NJ Refund Tracker (Where's My Refund): https://nj.gov/treasury/taxation/checkrefundstatus.shtml

SECTION 2: IRS DIRTY DOZEN TAX SCAMS

The “Dirty Dozen” is the IRS’s annual list of the 12 most common tax scams designed to steal money or personal information. Scams peak during tax season but occur year-round.

Key scams librarians should warn patrons about:

1. Email Phishing & Smishing – Fake IRS emails/texts.
2. Bad Social Media Tax Advice – Viral misinformation encouraging fraudulent filings.
3. Scammers Offering IRS Online Account “Help” – Third parties trying to steal personal info.
4. Fake Charities – Fraudulent organizations soliciting donations.
5. False Fuel Tax Credit Claims – Promoters pushing credits taxpayers do not qualify for.
6. Improper Sick Leave & Family Leave Credit Claims – Using Form 7202 for years it no longer applies.

SECTION 2: IRS DIRTY DOZEN TAX SCAMS (CONT.)

Key scams librarians should warn patrons about (continued):

7. Bogus Self-Employment Tax Credit – A nonexistent credit promoted online.
8. Improper Household Employment Tax Claims – Fake Schedule H filings.
9. Overstated Withholding Scam – Filing fabricated W2s or 1099s to claim large refunds.
10. Misleading Offer in Compromise Mills – Companies promising impossible tax settlements.
11. Ghost Tax Preparers – Preparers who refuse to sign returns.
12. New Client Spear Phishing Attacks – Fake prospective clients targeting tax professionals.

IRS Dirty Dozen Website: https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/dirty-dozen

SECTION 2: IRS DIRTY DOZEN TAX SCAMS (CONT.)

IRS Tips to Avoid Tax Scams:

- Don’t click suspicious IRS emails/texts. The IRS never initiates contact this way.
- Use only trusted sources for tax information. Stick to IRS.gov or licensed professionals.
- Set up your IRS Online Account yourself. Never allow third parties to create it.
- Verify charities before donating. Use the IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search tool: https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/search-for-tax-exempt-organizations
- Be skeptical of big refund promises. Many scams involve fake credits.
- Avoid ghost preparers. Always ensure your preparer signs the return.
- Report suspicious schemes. Use IRS Form 14242.

SECTION 3: VITA PROGRAMS

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax preparation to eligible residents.

What Librarians Should Know

- VITA = Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
- Free tax prep for low-to-moderate income households, seniors, disabled individuals, and limited-English-proficiency residents
- Volunteers are IRS-certified
- Sites include libraries, universities, and community centers

SECTION 3: VITA PROGRAMS (CONT.)

Key Links

- Program Info: https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers
- VITA Site Locator: https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/
- Phone: 1-800-906-9887

Who Qualifies

- Low- to moderate-income individuals
- Seniors
- Disabled individuals
- Individuals with limited English proficiency

SECTION 4: NEW JERSEY PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS

Many patron questions relate to New Jersey's property tax relief programs (ANCHOR, Senior Freeze, and Stay NJ).

Residents who are 65+ or receiving Social Security disability benefits now file Form PAS1, which serves as the combined application for all three programs:

- ANCHOR Program
- Senior Freeze (Property Tax Reimbursement)
- Stay NJ (Beginning 2026)

SECTION 4: NEW JERSEY PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS (CONT.)

ANCHOR Program

Provides annual property tax relief to eligible homeowners and renters.

- Based on 2024 residency, income, and age
- Filing deadline for current cycle: October 31, 2025
- Payments issued beginning September 2025
- Website: https://www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/anchor
- Phone: 609-826-4282

SECTION 4: NEW JERSEY PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS (CONT.)

Senior Freeze (Property Tax Reimbursement)

Reimburses eligible seniors and disabled residents for property tax increases.

- Reimburses eligible seniors/disabled individuals for property tax increases.
- Must be 65+ or receiving Social Security disability
- Must own and live in the home continuously from 2020–2024
- Website: https://www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/ptr/index.shtml
- Phone: 609-826-4282

SECTION 4: NEW JERSEY PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS (CONT.)

Stay NJ (Beginning 2026)

Provides seniors with a reimbursement equal to 50% of their property tax bill.

- Quarterly payments begin Feb/May/Aug/Nov 2026
- For residents 65+ with income under $500,000
- Uses the combined PAS-1 application
- Website: https://www.nj.gov/treasury/taxation/staynj/index.shtml
- Phone: 609-826-4282

DISCLAIMER

This presentation contains general information only and Wiss & Company, LLP and affiliates is not, by any means of this presentation, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, legal, tax, or other professional advice or services. This presentation is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser.

Wiss & Company, LLP shall not be responsible for any loss sustained by any person who relies on this presentation.

wiss