

TaxSlayer Practice Lab

TaxSlayer LLC has released its version of Practice Lab to IRS VITA/TCE partners as part of the contract with the IRS for tax preparation software. It is built on (but is different from) the commercial tax year 2015 TaxSlayer Pro product and includes some of the changes recommended by an IRS transition team. This team included representatives from several VITA/TCE partners including AARP Foundation Tax-Aide. Practice Lab is the training platform for TaxSlayer and will evolve as additional changes are incorporated. Some future modifications will be significant so treat the current version as an early release.

The primary objective continues to be that we can prepare accurate federal and state tax returns. How information is entered and the navigation within a return is different from the previous software. Some will love it, some won't like the change, most will adapt.

Practice Lab is new to most Tax-Aide volunteers and it will take some time to develop Tax-Aide resources who can answer questions and provide assistance as volunteers start using the software. Practice Lab includes links to several videos that explain how to navigate and enter information. Tax-Aide volunteers should first view these videos if there are questions and then contact their Instructors if additional assistance is needed. Similarly, Instructors should look their Training Specialist for assistance and Training Specialists to their Regional Training Advisor and then to the National Tax Training Committee through the OneSupport Help Center. The two basic objectives for this approach are to 1) distribute the support load across a broader base of local resources 2) enable consolidated feed-back of concerns, questions, suggestions and issues to TaxSlayer as one Tax-Aide voice rather than thousands of volunteers raising the same points. Keep in mind that all Tax-Aide volunteers are learning the new software and that the software is in a state of flux. You may wish to wait until the production version is released in late November.

Any issues or questions that cannot be answered by Tax-Aide resources will be referred to TaxSlayer. We will focus this year on any federal or state tax computation questions or issues that may be discovered. Consider the navigation to be what it is, how information is entered to be what it is, how information is displayed to be what it is – we will gather suggestions for changes in these areas, but do not expect any changes this year.

Please do not call or email TaxSlayer with your questions. Instead, seek assistance from your “chain of command” resources as described above.

Please review this presentation (<http://bit.ly/1ZcELb1>) for instructions on how to login to Practice Lab. **NOTE:** your Practice Lab user name should include ‘train’ as you cannot use the same user name in the production system.

Log in to Practice Lab at <https://vita.taxslayerpro.com/IRSTraining>
The generic password is “TRAINPROWEB” (without quotes)