

# Richmond Times-Dispatch

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## TRADE NAMES

# Tax Solutions Alliance is ally for filers before IRS

Expertise in agency's ins, outs brings the firm return business

BY JOAN TUPPENCE  
Special correspondent

Certified public accountant Kevin Stewart consults with Chesterfield County-based Tax Solutions Alliance when he has a client with a very complex tax collection issue.

"They have a specific expertise in negotiating the collection," said Stewart, of Stewart & Co. in Virginia Beach.

"Most CPAs aren't taught that. If you have a client with a lot of money at stake, Tax Solutions has the knowledge of the inner workings of the Internal Revenue Service process," Stewart said. "They know the rules so well. They don't let the IRS outfox them."

Vaughan Long started Tax Solutions Alliance in 2010. The tax resolution and consulting company specializes in representing individuals and businesses before federal and state taxing authorities.

As an enrolled agent, he has earned the ability to represent taxpayers before the Internal Revenue Service. Enrolled agents are licensed to practice in all 50 states.

"We know the IRS system's ins and outs and where the flexibilities are," Long said. "We know the IRS revenue officers we negotiate with. Every taxpayer's situation is different, and each IRS agent's approach is different. There is flexibility and bargaining room built into the IRS

### Tax Solutions Alliance

**What is it?:** Tax resolution and consulting company

**Location:** 7825 Midlothian Turnpike, Suite 214, in Chesterfield County

**Employees:** Five, including the owner

**Owner:** Vaughan Long

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system."

Seventy percent of the tax resolution company's clients are small businesses. The remaining 30 percent are individuals with a tax problem.

"Clients either owe money and the IRS is pursuing them, or they haven't filed their returns in years," Long said.

All Tax Solutions Alliance's business is based on referrals from CPAs, attorneys and enrolled agents.

"We work with tax professionals," Long said. "We see them as partners, not competitors."

The majority of the company's clients are from the Richmond area, but it also has customers throughout the state and the country.

"We will sit with clients and learn about their problem and then work with the IRS on their behalf," Long said. "We look for a solution that works for the IRS and the taxpayer."

One of the common tax problems small businesses face is not paying their payroll taxes.

"The next biggest problem

involves individuals and businesses not filing their tax returns," Long said.

Many people and businesses have gotten into trouble because they didn't have a budget in place that accounted for the recent economic downturn.

"They got caught off-guard," Long said. "People will say they will catch their taxes up in a few months, but then the expenses increase and the income is not growing. People will think to themselves, 'I can't pay my taxes, so I won't file the return.' But that thought process makes the situation worse. You should always file your tax return, even if you can't pay it."

Long spends some of his time giving tax-related presentations to organizations.

"I teach people to treat paying your taxes like it's your rent or mortgage," he said.

"Pay it every month. It can be catastrophic if you don't. It's better to budget it."

He also teaches continuing-education classes to CPAs and enrolled agents.

"I teach on a number of different topics, including tax resolution," he said. "I have a passion for teaching."

Years before founding Tax Solutions Alliance, Long worked at the now-defunct Circuit City — initially in its tax department, then as a business analyst in space planning and then in merchandising.

"When that job ended, I thought there was an opportunity for me to bring my negotiating skills and my retail



MARK GORMUS/TIMES-DISPATCH

**Tax Solutions Alliance uses its knowledge of flexibilities in the IRS system to help its clients, says founder Vaughan Long.**

background together to solve tax issues," he said.

Long learned to deal with the IRS through his mentor, Otis E. Snowa Jr.

Snowa, who now works with Long at Tax Solutions Alliance, had worked for the IRS for 28 years before becoming an enrolled agent.

"He taught me everything I know about how the system works at the IRS," Long said of Snowa.

Tax Solutions Alliance has grown 20 percent in referrals each year since 2010.

"The growth in referrals is an awareness factor," Long said. "More people know we are available and we are a resource."

Todd Ofslager of Todd Ofslager Accounting and Tax Services Inc. in Chesterfield appreciates the niche service Tax Solutions Alliance provides.

"Not everybody is practiced in it," he said of tax resolution work. "Tax Solutions stays on top of it. My clients always seem satisfied with the work they do."

David Cheatham of Chesterfield-based CPA firm Adams, Jenkins and Cheatham finds Tax Solutions Alliance to always be upfront and honest with clients.

"They are able to tell somebody what their options are," he said. "They have always been point on."