Understanding Your W-2 Tax Form

The below information is designed to assist employees in understanding their W-2 tax form and answer the most commonly asked questions. The payroll team cannot provide tax advice. Therefore it is recommended that employees consult their tax advisor with any specific tax related questions. The IRS website also has helpful tax information for employees.

Box 1, 3, and 16: Your gross pay (which includes all earnings and any flex credits) is not actually printed anywhere on your W-2 form. See the chart below to understand how your FICA Wages and Federal taxable wages are determined.

**Gross Pay (includes all earnings and flex credits)**

- Group Term Life Tax
- 457 Employer Contributions
- Mileage reimbursement (non-taxable)
- Health, Dental, and Vision insurance deductions
- Basic & Add’l life deductions (EEs with flex credits only)
- HSA deductions
- Flex Spending deductions (Medical & Dependent Care)

= Social Security (FICA) Wages*

*This is what is in box 3 on your W-2 Form

= Federal (and State) Taxable Wages

*This is what is in box 1 and 16 on your W-2 Form

Box 12: This box lists group term life tax, 403b employee deductions, 457 contributions for both employee and employer, Roth 457 contributions, HSA contributions, and the cost of health insurance. The codes for each type do not relate to where they should be entered in the boxes 12a through 12d on the form. If more than 4 items need to be reported in box 12, they will be printed on an additional, separate W-2 form.

Box 13: Retirement plan is checked if the employee was an active participant for any part of the year in a 403b plan, PERA pension plan or SPTRFA pension plan.

Box 14: This box lists other deductions or items that the employee may need when filing taxes such as the total amount of union dues contributed, mileage reimbursement, and employer contributions to your pension (PERA or SPTRFA), and 403b employer match amount.