



## How do I read my W-2?

### Q & A

**Question:** Why doesn't the amount in Box 1 match the "YTD Earnings" listed on the bottom of my final 2011 paycheck?

**Answer:** Box 1 excludes tax-deferred retirement contributions as well as pre-tax benefits such as medical, dental, health care reimbursement, dependent care reimbursement, parking and vision insurance.

**Question:** Why doesn't Box 1 match Box 3 and Box 5?

**Answer:** Box 3 and Box 5 include your tax-deferred retirement contributions. Box 1 does not.

**Question:** Is there a simple explanation for what is in each box of my W-2?

**Answer:** Here is a brief explanation of what is in each box.

**Box 1:** These are your earnings/wages minus all of your pre-tax deductions. If you contributed on a tax-deferred basis to retirement or had any pre-tax benefits, this will not match your year-to-date earnings on your final paycheck. It will also not match if you are a foreign national with a tax treaty that reduces your wages subject to federal income tax withholding.

**Box 2:** This is how much federal income tax was withheld from your paychecks throughout the year and should match "Federal Withholding Tax" on your final 2011 paycheck.

**Box 3:** These are your wages that are subject to Social Security tax. This is generally your wages minus all of your pre-tax benefits (except retirement) up to a maximum of \$106,800. If you made more than \$106,800 or had any pre-tax benefits, this will not match your year-to-date earnings on your final 2011 paycheck.

**Box 4:** This is how much Social Security tax was withheld from your paycheck and should match "Fed EE Social Security" on your final 2011 paycheck.

Box 5: These are your wages that are subject to Medicare taxes. This is generally your wages minus all of your pre-tax benefits (except retirement). There is no limit on the amount taxed for Medicare. If you had any pre-tax benefits, this will not match your year-to-date earnings on your final paycheck.

Box 6: This is how much Medicare tax was withheld from your paycheck and should match "Fed EE Medicare" on your final 2011 paycheck.

Box 9: This is the Advanced Earned Income Credit Payment box. It will have an amount in it only if you were paid an Advanced Earned Income Credit. The amount should match the EIC amount on your final 2011 paycheck.

Box 10: This is the amount that you contributed to the flexible spending account for dependent care (daycare). It should match the "dependent care reimbursement" amount on your final 2011 check.

Box 12a and 12b: "E" shows how much you contributed to your **403(b)** retirement plan on a tax-deferred basis and should match your pre-tax 403(b) contributions on your final 2011 check. "G" shows how much you contributed to your **457b** retirement plan on a tax-deferred basis and should match your pre-tax 457(b) contributions on your final 2011 paycheck. "BB" shows how much you contributed to your **Roth 403(b)** retirement plan and should match your Roth contributions on your final 2011 paycheck.

Box 13: There is an X under Retirement plan if you participated in any retirement plan at UAMS. This includes those who did not contribute to retirement as well as those who did.

Box 14: This shows any imputed income you received, such as taxable FGP benefits.

Box 15: This shows the state to whom we submitted state income tax (normally Arkansas.)

Box 16: This shows your state taxable wages. This should match Box 1 (unless you are a foreign national covered under a federal tax treaty).

Box 17: This shows how much state income tax was withheld. It should match "AR Withholding Tax" on your final 2011 paycheck.

**Question**: Is there anything I can do now that will help me next year at tax time so I won't owe money like I did this year?

**Answer**: Make sure you are contributing the maximum that you can afford to the retirement plan. This will lower your taxable income. The limits for 2012 are \$34,000 if you are under 50 and \$45,000 if you are 50 or over. You may contribute even if you are

not benefits eligible or if you are participating in an alternative State retirement system. To start contributing to retirement or to increase your contribution, complete a [Salary Deferral Agreement](#).

You may also need to have more federal or state tax withheld out of each check. You may change your federal and/or state tax withholdings online via Employee Self Service. Forms are also available in Human Resources. You may still end up owing next year if you do not withhold enough throughout this year.

For more information about taxes, please visit the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Employee Self Service (ESS) – Via ESS you can create, change, and display the information included on the W-4 form, change direct deposit information, view your benefits, view sick and vacation balances, print your current and prior check stubs, etc. You must know your domain login and password. Log on to ESS via the [OHR Website](#).

If you have other questions please contact the UAMS Payroll Office at 501-686-6100.

For a W-2 reprint send an email to [payroll@uams.edu](mailto:payroll@uams.edu) or call the payroll office at (501) 686-6100. Or complete the [reprint request form](#) and fax to 501-603-1578.