



December 29, 2020

TO: Business, Payroll, and Personnel Administrators
HRS District Coordinators
Los Angeles County School and Community College Districts
Charter Schools and Other Local Educational Agencies

FROM: April R. Casey, School Financial Systems and Services Manager
District Personnel Information Services
Division of School Financial Services

SUBJECT: Year 2021 Income Tax Updates

This bulletin is intended to provide school districts and local educational agencies (LEAs) with updated information pertaining to federal and state income tax rates for calendar year 2021. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) implemented a major redesign of the 2020 Form W-4, retitled *Employee's Withholding Certificate*, and along with that release, expanded the methods and tables utilized in calculating standard withholdings. This redesign represented the first major revision of the W-4 in more than 30 years. As a result, LACOE's Human Resource System (HRS) required extensive programming changes and testing. This culminated in a successful implementation in October 2020.

Federal and state withholding taxes have been updated with 2021 rates in both the HRS and Human Capital Management (HCM) systems.

Income Taxes

The attached federal and state income tax withholding chart is effective for all payrolls issued on or after January 1, 2021. The tax chart is also available online at <https://www.lacoe.edu/payroll>.

This bulletin includes:

- Updated Tax Withholding Rates
- Resources/links to federal and state forms
- Sample Notice to Employees

Social Security/OASDI and Medicare

Social Security/OASDI: The employee rate for 2021 remains unchanged at 6.2 percent. The employer rate is also 6.2 percent. The maximum wages subject to Social Security/OASDI in 2021 has increased to \$142,800 for employees and employers.

Medicare: There is no wage base limit for either employee or employer. Employee rates on wages up to \$200,000 and employer rates remain unchanged at 1.45 percent. The Additional Medicare Tax initiated in 2013 requires that employers withhold an additional 0.9 percent on wages paid to employees in excess of \$200,000. This additional tax must be withheld in the pay period in which wages are paid in excess of \$200,000. There is no employer portion of Additional Medicare Tax.

California State DE 4 Employee Withholding

Due to the new withholding structure of the 2020 IRS Form W-4, employees must now file a California State Form DE 4 any time an IRS Form W-4 change is made. The State Franchise Tax Board no longer requires a copy of this form for exempt employees. As of this publication date, Form DE 4 has not been updated for 2021.

IRS Form W-4 “Exempt from Withholding”

Employees claiming exemption from tax withholding must meet the requirements outlined on the IRS Form W-4 (Employee’s Withholding Certificate) for this exclusion. The 2020 W-4 exemption expires on February 16, 2021. A new IRS Form W-4 must be received in order for the employee to continue with this exemption for 2021.

Employees should be advised that the district must apply the tax withholding status of “Single/Standard Withholding” until a current and valid IRS Form W-4 is received. To claim exempt on the 2021 Form W-4, employees must complete “Step 1” (personal information) and write the word “EXEMPT” in the space below box 4C. The form must be signed and dated to be valid. A California State Form DE 4 should also be collected from employees submitting as exempt.

Resources for Employees

A 2021 IRS Form W-4 is required for anyone hired after January 1, 2021, claiming exempt, or wishing to update or change their withholding. Employees who submitted a Form W-4 before 2020 are not required to submit a new form if they have no changes to their withholding allowances.

Because the new W-4 format is so different, employees may request assistance in completing the form. Districts should not provide tax guidance but should instead suggest employees explore other available resources, such as professional tax services or on-line tools. The IRS

recommends all taxpayers use their Tax Withholding Estimator to perform a “paycheck checkup.” This will help employees ensure they have the right amount of tax withheld from their paycheck. There is a link provided for the IRS estimator in the “Resource” section of this document.

Supplemental Wage Payment Taxation – HRS and HCM

HRS: The aggregate tax method is approved by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) for tax withholding calculations on each supplemental wage payment, unless the district has authorized the special flat-tax withholding rates. IRS Publication 15-T (Federal Income Tax Withholding Methods) contains additional information. Aggregate taxes are calculated as follows in HRS:

1. The last prime cycle taxable wages and all separate payments in the period, such as additional pay, overtime, and extra assignments, are combined with the current supplemental payments as one wage amount;
2. A tax is calculated on this combined total of wages;
3. The taxes actually withheld on each of the previous payments are then subtracted from the total tax calculation in (2); and
4. The result of the calculation in (3) is the tax amount to be withheld on the current supplemental payment.

As an option to the aggregate method, the IRS provides for the use of a flat-tax option. The 2021 flat-tax withholding rate for federal (22 percent) and state (6.6 percent) is available for use in HRS.

HCM: Supplemental payments in HCM will generally aggregate back to the last payroll and be taxed at the appropriate marginal rate. Payments meeting the IRS definition of supplemental wages (such as bonuses) shall be subject to a flat-tax, federal (22 percent) and state (6.6 percent).

Resources

2021 IRS Form W-4

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4.pdf>

IRS Tax Withholding Estimator

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator>

<https://www.irs.gov/paycheck-checkup>

IRS Publication 15-T – Federal Income Tax Reporting Methods 2021

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15t.pdf>

California Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate - DE 4 Rev. 49 (2-20)

https://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_public_ctr/de4.pdf

Sample Notice to Employees

A sample information notice is included for annual district communication to employees. Each employer can modify or change the content to suit their needs.

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact the payroll team at [SFS Payroll Manager@lacoed.edu](mailto:SFS_Payroll_Manager@lacoed.edu).

Approved:

Nkeiruka Benson, Director

Division of School Financial Services

ARC:lt

Attachments

SFS-A28-2020-2021

YEAR 2021 TAX RATES

and Other Employee Deductions

FEDERAL ANNUAL TAX RATES

2021 Percentage Method Tables

STANDARD Withholding Rate Schedules (Use these if the Form W-4 is from 2019 or earlier, or if the Form W-4 is from 2020 or later and the box in Step 2 of Form W-4 is <u>NOT</u> checked.)				
If the Adjusted Annual Wage Amount is		The tentative amount to withhold is...		of the amount that exceeds
At least...	But less than...	A	B	E
Married Filing Jointly				
\$0	\$12,200	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$12,200	\$32,100	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$12,200
\$32,100	\$93,250	\$1,990.00	plus 12%	\$32,100
\$93,250	\$184,950	\$9,328.00	plus 22%	\$93,250
\$184,950	\$342,050	\$29,502.00	plus 24%	\$184,950
\$342,050	\$431,050	\$67,206.00	plus 32%	\$342,050
\$431,050	\$640,500	\$95,686.00	plus 35%	\$431,050
\$640,500		\$168,993.50	plus 37%	\$640,500
Single or Married Filing Separately				
\$0	\$3,950	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$3,950	\$13,900	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$3,950
\$13,900	\$44,475	\$995.00	plus 12%	\$13,900
\$44,475	\$90,325	\$4,664.00	plus 22%	\$44,475
\$90,325	\$168,875	\$14,751.00	plus 24%	\$90,325
\$168,875	\$213,375	\$33,603.00	plus 32%	\$168,875
\$213,375	\$527,550	\$47,843.00	plus 35%	\$213,375
\$527,550		\$157,804.25	plus 37%	\$527,550
Head of Household				
\$0	\$10,200	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$10,200	\$24,400	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$10,200
\$24,400	\$64,400	\$1,420.00	plus 12%	\$24,400
\$64,400	\$96,550	\$6,220.00	plus 22%	\$64,400
\$96,550	\$175,100	\$13,293.00	plus 24%	\$96,550
\$175,100	\$219,600	\$32,145.00	plus 32%	\$175,100
\$219,600	\$533,800	\$46,385.00	plus 35%	\$219,600
\$533,800		\$156,355.00	plus 37%	\$533,800

MULTIPLE JOB Withholding Rate Schedules (Use these if the Form W-4 is from 2020 or later and the box in Step 2 of Form W-4 is <u>IS</u> checked.)				
If the Adjusted Annual Wage Amount is		The tentative amount to withhold is...		of the amount that exceeds
At least...	But less than...	A	B	E
Married Filing Jointly				
\$0	\$12,550	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$12,550	\$22,500	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$12,550
\$22,500	\$53,075	\$995.00	plus 12%	\$22,500
\$53,075	\$98,925	\$4,664.00	plus 22%	\$53,075
\$98,925	\$177,475	\$14,751.00	plus 24%	\$98,925
\$177,475	\$221,975	\$33,603.00	plus 32%	\$177,475
\$221,975	\$326,700	\$47,843.00	plus 35%	\$221,975
\$326,700		\$84,496.75	plus 37%	\$326,700
Single or Married Filing Separately				
\$0	\$6,275	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$6,275	\$11,250	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$6,275
\$11,250	\$26,538	\$497.50	plus 12%	\$11,250
\$26,538	\$49,463	\$2,332.00	plus 22%	\$26,538
\$49,463	\$88,738	\$7,375.50	plus 24%	\$49,463
\$88,738	\$110,988	\$16,801.50	plus 32%	\$88,738
\$110,988	\$268,075	\$23,921.50	plus 35%	\$110,988
\$268,075		\$78,902.13	plus 37%	\$268,075
Head of Household				
\$0	\$9,400	\$0.00	plus 0%	\$0
\$9,400	\$16,500	\$0.00	plus 10%	\$9,400
\$16,500	\$36,500	\$710.00	plus 12%	\$16,500
\$36,500	\$52,575	\$3,110.00	plus 22%	\$36,500
\$52,575	\$91,850	\$6,646.50	plus 24%	\$52,575
\$91,850	\$114,100	\$16,072.50	plus 32%	\$91,850
\$114,100	\$271,200	\$23,192.50	plus 35%	\$114,100
\$271,200		\$78,177.50	plus 37%	\$271,200

The IRS encourages everyone to use their Tax Withholding Estimator located at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator>. The tables above will be utilized in the estimator after January 1, 2021.

OVER FOR CALIFORNIA STATE ANNUAL TAX RATES AND OTHER RATES

(SAMPLE) NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

Date

TO: Employees
FROM: (District Administrator)
SUBJECT: Year 2021 Income Tax Changes and Withholding
Information Effective January 1, 2021

Federal and State Income Tax Withholding

Updated tax changes have been implemented for payrolls **issuing** on and after January 1, 2021. Federal and state income tax withholding brackets have been revised and are included with this notice.

Employee Social Security/OASDI and Medicare

The Social Security/OASDI employee rate for 2021 remains unchanged at 6.2 percent, however the maximum subject wages have increased. There is no Medicare wage cap for employees. Employee rates remain unchanged at 1.45 percent; however, the Additional Medicare Tax requires that employers withhold an additional 0.9 percent on wages paid to employees in excess of \$200,000 in a calendar year.

Tax Year Comparison	Year 2020	Year 2021
Social Security/OASDI Rate	6.2 percent	6.2 percent
Medicare Rate	1.45 percent	1.45 percent
Social Security Maximum Wage Base	\$137,700	\$142,800
Medicare Maximum Wage Base	no limit	no limit
Maximum Medicare Contribution (1.45%)	no limit	no limit

Federal Withholding – IRS Form W-4

IRS Form W-4 changed significantly in 2020. The IRS recommends all taxpayers perform a “paycheck checkup” by using their online tool located at <https://www.irs.gov/paycheck-checkup>. Your employer cannot tell you how to complete Form W-4. Please read the instructions carefully and/or consult a tax professional. Only new employees and those wishing to make withholding adjustments, or those claiming exempt must complete the new *IRS 2021 Form W-4, “Employee’s Withholding Certificate”*.

Federal Exempt from Withholding

If you claimed exempt from withholding tax in 2020 and wish to continue in 2021, you must complete a new *IRS 2021 Form W-4* no later than February 15, 2021. The form requires those wishing to claim exempt to write the word “EXEMPT” in “Step 4”, in the space directly under the box 4(c). If you no longer wish to claim exempt status, you must file a new form W-4 for January tax withholding.

State Withholding – Form DE 4

All employees updating their IRS Form W-4 must now also complete a California State Withholding Form (DE 4).

Some items in this notice are intended to comply with employee notification requirements of the IRS.

Should you have any questions regarding this information, please [insert district procedure].