

1. Why was the year end gift added to our paycheck? Why do we have to pay taxes on the gift?

Based on the guidance from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), employers have only two options to select from regarding the taxation of special payments to employees.

Option one: Add the bonus payment to current (or immediate past pay period) gross wages and calculate taxes on the total gross wage and bonus amount, or

Option two: Calculate taxes on the bonus amount separately with a higher flat tax rate (22% for 2023 calendar year).

In both options special payments are taxed at a higher tax rate.

UCP uses option one when processing special payments. Therefore, special payments are currently added to your paycheck when paid. If we want to process special payments on a separate payroll, we still must add the special payment amount on the immediate past pay period gross wage to calculate the taxes. This means there will be no change on the tax amount whether we do a separate payroll for the special payment or add it with the current payroll.

Moving forward, we are planning to process two separate pay statements and deposit amounts on the *same pay date* for the regular and special payment pays. This will help employees to see how much they are receiving from special payments after taxes. Keep in mind your deductions (taxes, retirement, health insurance) will be split among the two checks.

2. How will the mentorship continue and go outside of our normal group home?

The mentorship program is active and new employees who request a mentor are assigned a mentor. Any questions about the mentor program should be directed to Bridget Pugh at bridget.pugh@ucpcentralpa.org.

3. If the office is closed due to inclement weather and a department implements work from home protocol- If a staff is unable to work from home, must they use PTO to cover for the hours they are unable to work? If a staff person's daycare or child's school is closed due to weather and UCP is closed for the day, can that staff person work remotely or must they use PTO for that day?

Operating in a COVID environment really expanded our ability to be flexible and continue our agency operations remotely when necessary. In the event an office closes, and we implement remote work, employees would need to use PTO for the hours they are unable to work. If an employee has children and their childcare or school is closed for the day due to weather, they can work from home provided they are able to fulfill the obligations of their daily tasks while their children are home.

- 4. Allowing staff in administrative positions to leave 2 or 3 hrs. early the day before a holiday. Those 2 or 3 hours make a big difference for those who must travel during holiday travel time and relieves a lot of stress for UCP employees.**

We have done this periodically, however many people have full schedules, and we have various routine employee training/meeting schedules that make this a challenging practice to implement in advance of all holidays.

- 5. Career Pathfinders is a great opportunity for employees to participate in continuing education to serve as a key role to further develop knowledge, skills, and abilities. I am grateful for the opportunities that are available to all staff. I would like to see more opportunities for those in the management positions (some have 1 opportunity, and some have 0). Staff are offered several opportunities (3-4 in some cases), with those opportunities, comes a salary adjustment/and or bonus. For those in the management positions, this allows for staff they may supervise to obtain a pay rate that is comparable to a management position.**

We are excited about the Career Pathfinder program. This program was made possible by funding through the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). The program offers multiple opportunities for most operational Managers and Supervisors including certifications through NADSP (Frontline Supervisor), Charting the LifeCourse and SHIFT. Additionally, we continue to evaluate options to provide additional professional development opportunities for mid-level managers and staff who were not part of the program through ODP.

- 6. Related to the CPS Consolidation, how are you going to accommodate those that are losing their jobs? The jobs available are less hours and less pay than what they are making currently.**

We will be working to make available, wherever possible based on our staffing needs between now and February 22, comparable positions (e.g., similar hours, similar pay) to those employees who wish to remain with UCP. For those who do not, we will be working with them upon request to assist with mock interviewing, job search techniques, and resume critiques to help equip them to find new employment.

7. This is the season for illness. We are asking staff to take precautions if they are not feeling 100%.

If you learn that you were exposed to someone with COVID, you should follow the guidance of the CDC which currently includes *masking for up to 10 days*:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html>

If you are experiencing symptoms of illness, you should follow the guidance of the CDC for COVID precautions which currently includes *testing after day 5*:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

Currently, UCP is not going back to requiring masking. However, we are asking staff to be diligent in taking precautions to protect their coworkers and participants especially when experiencing symptoms of illness.

A quick chart to identify what you may be experiencing:

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLU, RSV, COVID-19, AND THE COMMON COLD

Common symptoms may include cough, headaches, sneezing, runny nose, and congestion. Different symptoms may include:

	COLD	FLU	COVID-19	RSV
 ACHES	XX	XXX	XX	X
 DIFFICULTY BREATHING	X	X	XXX	XX
 FATIGUE	XX	XXX	XXX	X
 FEVER	X	XXX	XX	XX
 LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL	X	X	XX	X
 SORE THROAT	XXX	XX	XXX	X
 WHEEZING	X	X	X	XXX

Legend: X (Green) = Rarely, X (Yellow) = Sometimes, X (Red) = Often

<https://www.nfid.org/resource/how-to-tell-the-difference-between-flu-rsv-covid-19-and-the-common-cold/>