

FEDERAL WORK STUDY OVERVIEW

What is Federal Work Study?

Federal Work Study (FWS) is a federally funded program that enables students to earn money for college costs through part-time employment. The federal government pays a portion of the students' wages and the employer pays the balance.

How does FWS work?

FWS is a federally-subsidized hourly wage job program. The number of hours you work each week is based on how many hours you feel you can fit into your schedule, how much you are eligible for, and what your employer's needs are.

Am I eligible to receive FWS?

You must have financial need to be offered a FWS award. You must have met all the requirements for receiving financial aid that is expected of all financial aid recipients. Generally, your file must be complete and you must be in good standing with the College. However, just having financial need is not always enough. For example, you may have all your "financial need" being met by scholarships. If your financial need is being met by a combination of scholarships and/or grants and subsidized loans, and no FWS is listed, you might be able to convert your subsidized loans to FWS.

FAQS

What does my FWS dollar amount mean?

If your financial aid includes \$3,500 in FWS, that is the total amount you can earn in a FWS position. Your financial aid offer splits it into \$1,750 fall and \$1,750 spring but as far as FWS is concerned, you can earn any portion of that amount at any point during the program year while enrolled.

Am I assigned a job by the Work Study office?

No! Students with FWS offered apply for FWS jobs just as they would any job. They need to indicate on their FAFSA that they are interested in a work study job and, if they qualify, submit an application and resume to the Financial Aid Office. The individual supervisors choose to interview students based on their application and resume and may interview you for the position.

When can I begin applying for jobs?

First make sure your FAFSA has been submitted to North Central Missouri College. If selected for Verification by the Department of Education, be sure to submit all requested documents to the Financial Aid Office. You may turn in your application and resume prior to completion of Verification of your FAFSA; however, they will not be posted for employers to review until Verification has been completed and the Financial Aid Office has confirmed you qualify for FWS.

Is my paycheck taxable?

Yes, FWS earnings are taxed. Besides Social Security and other applicable taxes, how much is deducted from your paycheck depends largely on how you fill out your W-4 form. This relates to "withholding" tax. Read the W-4 form instructions carefully to determine whether you're "Exempt" or not. Your calendar year earnings generate a W-2 form for your tax return. How do I receive my W-2 form? W-2's are usually delivered to employees in January.

Once hired, do I have to stay in that job?

No. You can leave a job at any time. You want to try to do it on good terms, give two weeks notice, and never take any displeasure out on your job duties. Conversely, employers are not obligated to keep you employed if you are not performing your job duties.

Is Work Study mandatory, do I have to get a job?

No. However, you should consider the benefits: FWS is gift aid which does not have to be repaid unlike federal loans. It's also not counted as additional income earned from work when you complete next year's FAFSA. You may choose to work off campus at a non-FWS position as well. This type of income is considered as wages when completing the FAFSA.

How can an athlete balance their commitments?

Check with your coach to see if there are Work Study positions related to your sport or within the athletic department. If not, search for jobs with multiple positions to see if you can find something that may allow absences because others can cover for you. Another option is to search for jobs wherein the employer is looking for short term commitments.

Can I continue in my position after my FWS runs out?

In most cases the answer is no. After your FWS funding (which pays your wages) runs out, you must withdraw from the position. It is your responsibility and that of your employer to ensure that you do not exceed these limitations. Your employer may choose for you to continue working and pay you out of their department budget instead; however, this is no longer considered FWS earnings.

What other requirements are there for application?

There are no other qualifications to apply for the FWS. Your FAFSA will reflect your condition. If you feel that your last tax filing does not accurately reflect your current situation, you can have your actual financial condition appraised through the program to determine actual eligibility.

Are there requirements that must be met during education?

Yes, there are several requirements that must be met during your education and employment. Your total grant amount cannot exceed the federal maximum, or your FWS may be reduced or cut out completely. You must also continue your enrollment for at least the minimum number of hours per semester, each semester. In addition, you

must make at least the minimum required grade point average and perform adequately in course work.

Additionally, there are many stipulations that go along with the FWS program. For instance, you are not allowed to work during course times. You may not begin working before the start of classes for the semester, nor can you continue to work after the end of the exams and you must meet the minimum hour requirement on the job. If you do not use up all of your allotted FWS funding during a year, it cannot be rolled over to the next year.

You are also not allowed to work more than 19.5 hours/week. Additionally, you cannot work after your FWS award has run out; any cost overruns are the responsibility of the employer, though that will usually be transferred to you, the student. Tracking the amount of FWS award remaining is your responsibility and that of your employer.

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