

The FAQs of FWS at PSU

What is [Federal Work-Study \(FWS\)](#)? Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study.

Do I have FWS? Students who submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and meet Federal and Penn State Student Financial Aid Eligibility Requirements will receive financial aid notification from our office, the Office of Student Aid. Your financial aid notification will provide you with instructions on how to access your Student Aid Summary, which will list all of the student financial aid (loans, grants, work-study, and scholarships) for which you qualify, based on your eligibility.

How can I get FWS? If you were not offered work-study and are interested in consideration, please contact the Office of Student Aid to request a review. You may also want to consider other employment opportunities.

Why didn't I get FWS? All students who have submitted their FAFSA by the University's recommended deadline and have indicated an interest in work-study on the FAFSA will be considered during awarding. Penn State does not require a separate application for Federal Work-Study. Due to limited funding, not all students who are eligible will receive an offer of Work-Study. If you are offered work-study, it will appear in your Student Aid Summary in LionPATH. Your work-study offer must be [accepted](#).

If you were not offered work-study and are interested in consideration, please contact the [Office of Student Aid](#) to request a review. You may also want to consider other [employment opportunities](#).

Are all FWS positions on campus? No. Penn State offers Work-Study positions both on-campus and off.

Traditional Work-Study

Positions are on-campus and vary in job duties. Some positions are clerical in nature, such as filing, answering phones, or running errands. Others offer customer service or even research opportunities.

The complete list of available positions is available on the [Penn State Human Resources](#) website.

Nittany Lions Read/Nittany Lions Count

A mentoring program designed to enhance early reading, math, and science skills of children, while providing Penn State students the opportunity to give back to their community, gain work experience, and earn federal financial aid through Federal Work Study. While there are limited positions available on-campus, the majority of these positions are located in the communities surrounding Penn State Campuses (childcare centers, elementary/middle schools, literacy centers, etc...). These positions are not available at all campuses.

Community Service Federal Work-Study

Encourages eligible Penn State students to participate in community service and service-learning experiences that benefit the community, promote social responsibility, and enhance their educational

experiences. Students participating in this program are placed in non-profit organizations within the community or local government offices. These positions are not available at all campuses.

How much would I make in a FWS job? Undergraduate work-study students will typically earn \$12.00/hour and graduate work-study students will typically earn \$14.00/hour. Some positions, however, may offer a higher wage. Nittany Lions Read/Nittany Lions Count and Community Service work-study students will earn \$14.00/hour.

Although a form of student aid, Federal Work-Study earnings are not applied as credit on your tuition bill. All wages earned are directly deposited into your checking or savings account every two weeks according to [Penn State's Bi-Weekly Pay Schedule](#).

Earnings are not applied as credit on your tuition bill. Wages earned through work-study are reported as "Earned Income" on the FAFSA for the subsequent year and may be deducted as "Title IV exclusions."

Submitting falsified time sheets is considered fraud against the University and the federal government; legal action may be taken against you. Federal regulation 34 CFR 668.16(g) requires the University to report to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Inspector General if a school has credible information that a student may have committed fraud or other criminal misconduct in connection with his or her application or eligibility for federal student aid.

Are my FWS earnings taxed? Yes. All earnings are taxed - FWS or not. During the academic year, while you are attending classes full-time, state and federal taxes are withheld from your pay, but FICA (social security tax) is not.

How much can I work in a FWS job?

Hours

Work-study participants may never work more than 8 hours/day and 20 hours/week when classes are in session. Should you hold more than one work-study position, the sum of all positions may not exceed these limits.

Offer amounts

- Typical Federal Work Study Offers per academic year is \$3500 for undergraduate students and \$4000 for graduate students.
- To ensure optimal use through the semester, plan your work schedule before you begin earning funds.

How do I get a FWS job?

Search the job website:

- Filter your search by 'campus' and 'federal work-study' to find the most appropriate opportunities for you.
- Positions are listed by job title with the most recently posted positions listed first. Each title is linked to a complete job description.
- Consider your academic interests, professional aspirations, position location, class schedule, and course load when determining if a position is right for you.

Apply for a position:

- Once you have selected a position (or positions), apply directly from the job posting page by selecting 'apply.' The online application takes only a few minutes to complete.
- You can apply for a Federal Work-Study position at any time, but you must accept your Work-Study offer in LionPATH for consideration.
- When interviewing for Federal Work Study positions you should clarify expectations with the potential employer regarding either on/off-campus/in person or remote work arrangements.

Am I guaranteed a FWS job? An offer of Federal Work Study does not guarantee a job position is available.

When can/should I apply for a FWS job? Although applications can be submitted at any point, it is recommended that students begin to apply for positions no more than four weeks prior to the start of the semester.

How do I select a FWS job? Consider your academic interests, professional aspirations, position location, class schedule, and course load when determining if a position is right for you.

I have applied for a FWS position, but I have not heard anything back. What should I do? You can make contact with the hiring manager to inquire as to the continued availability of the position. You may also want to apply to additional positions.

If selected for a FWS job, what do I need to do to get hired? Federal Work-Study positions require you to be 'hired' by the University. One necessary step in this hiring process is for you to attend an I-9 Verification appointment in-person. At this appointment, you will be required to present original supporting documentation. Please consider this requirement and plan to have those documents available in their original form for that appointment.

If I don't have FWS, can I still work on campus? There are many employment opportunities offering part-time, hourly positions across the University. [Penn State Human Resources Website](#) identifies employment opportunities available at all Penn State campuses.

What's the difference between FWS and a part-time job? Work-study can be a great choice for incoming freshman and rising sophomores who might still be unsure of their majors. With work-study, they can find a job that focuses on giving to the community while they decide which program of study to pursue. On-campus work-study can help students acclimate to their school environment — like different departments, staff, processes — which in turn can help them narrow down a field of study.

Work-study is friendly to college students' schedules. For example, when holiday breaks come around, students don't have to worry about asking for time off from work. There's also flexibility when it comes to tests, finals, and special events related to college.

Work-study is a form of financial aid. It ultimately can lower the amount of money you take out in student loans, meaning there's less you have to pay back, and less interest accrued.

Things to remember: A work-study offer doesn't guarantee a job. Students are still required to go through the application and interview process to secure a job.

Work-study also limits how much students can work, thus how much they can earn. While those restrictions can be beneficial for underclassmen, upperclassmen might need to earn beyond what work-study allows, in the form of an off-campus job with the business or organization of their choice.

What if my job is not listed as a FWS job? Speak to your manager/supervisor about the possibility that your position can be posted as a federal work-study opportunity. Only they can make this happen. Support is available to them, however, via the [Federal Work-Study Resource Center](#) or they can contact The Office of Student Aid for assistance.

How do I know how much I have earned of my FWS funding? You can see your earnings weekly in their payroll details in Workday. You are responsible for monitoring your balance and communicating with your manager as your funds near exhaustion.

- You will receive a warning email regarding the balance when you have earned 50% or more of your total funds for the academic year.
- You will receive a warning email when you are close to exhausting your funds.
- Over-earning can have negative impacts on your financial aid.
- At this time, supervisors are not informed directly by the Office of Student Aid.

What happens if my FWS funding is reduced or removed? You are responsible for monitoring your balance and communicating with your manager. Should you lose your funding or eligibility it is your responsibility to communicate with your supervisor/manager.

Should your funds be exhausted, you will need to cease working as a federal work-study student. Additional opportunities for continued employment in your position would be at the discretion of the manager/supervisor as any future earnings would be their department's responsibility.

What if I exhaust all of my FWS funding? You are responsible for monitoring your balance and communicating with your manager as your funds near exhaustion.

- You will receive a warning email regarding the balance when you have earned 50% or more of your total funds for the academic year.
- You will receive a warning email when you are close to exhausting your funds.
- Over-earning can have negative impacts on your financial aid.
- At this time, supervisors are not informed directly by the Office of Student Aid.

Should your funds be exhausted, you will need to cease working as a federal work-study student. Additional opportunities for continued employment in your position would be at the discretion of the manager/supervisor as any future earnings would be their department's responsibility.

What happens if I do not earn all of my FWS funding? Federal work-study funds are applicable only to the term in which they are offered. Any funding not earned cannot be deferred or applied to a subsequent academic term.