



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Federal Work-Study Program

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Federal Work-Study (FWS) Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

What is the FWS program?

The FWS program is a federally funded program designed to assist students in meeting their education expenses through part-time employment. Many of the FWS employers are located on campus and a few are off-campus including the National Archives & Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Will my FWS award credit to my university expenses on my bill?

No, you will not receive the FWS funds up front. The FWS award is earned based upon the number hours worked. Therefore, the FWS award earnings will be paid directly to you in the form a paycheck and not posted to your student account. The amount you earn depends on your hourly rate and how many hours you work.

Are Work-Study student employees paid the same way as any other hourly employees?

Just like an hourly job, you are paid according to the number of hours that you work. Your pay will equal your hourly wage times the number of hours you worked each week. Every two weeks, you will receive a paycheck for the pay you earned in the past two weeks, up to your FWS award. *Due to payroll procedures, you will receive your first paycheck one pay period (approximately four weeks) after the pay period in which you started working.* Once you receive your paycheck, you are free to spend it on personal and educational expenses.

How much can I earn through FWS?

Your total fall/spring FWS earnings cannot exceed your FWS award amount. If your total fall/spring FWS earnings reach your award amount, you can request an increase in your award by filling out an FWS appeal form, terminate your employment or your employer can start paying you from department funds.

Your actual earnings depend entirely on your hourly wage and the number of hours you work. If you do not earn your full award amount, you forfeit whatever funds remain. **There is no penalty for not earning your full FWS award**, other than having to forfeit the unearned amount. Unearned amounts are not transferrable to summer or to future academic years.

How do I find a FWS job?

Please view the available FWS job openings on the FWS website, www.financialaid.umd.edu/FWS under the “Search for a Job” link. Find several jobs that interest you and contact the employers to schedule interviews. Be professional when contacting your potential employer(s) and when proceeding through the interview process.



Federal Work-Study (FWS) Frequently Asked Questions & Answers Continued

Should I bring anything for my interview?

Yes, bring a print out of your financial aid 'My Awards' page and your FWS Work Authorization form. These forms will inform your employer that you are a participant of the FWS program and will also serve as verification of your FWS award amount. You may also want to bring a copy of your class schedule to discuss possible work hours. Once you are offered a position, you and your employer will need to complete the FWS Work Authorization form and submit it to the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA).

Where do I return the FWS Work Authorization form?

You may drop it off in 1135 Lee Building, fax to 301-314-9587 or mail to 0102 Lee Building.

What if I can't find a FWS Job?

If you have searched the FWS web site and have pursued positions, but still cannot locate a job, call 301-314-5302 to set up a counseling session.

What do I need to show my FWS employer in order to be placed on payroll?

Once you are hired, in order to be placed on payroll you need to show 2 types of proof of citizenship (usually driver's license and Social Security card), a copy of your financial aid 'My Awards' page, the FWS Work Authorization form, and a copy of your class schedule. Your employer will provide you with some payroll paperwork that you will need to complete.

How many hours can I work per week?

If you are full-time student, you may only work up to 20 hours per week while classes are in session. If you are enrolled in less than 12 credits you must contact the FWS office for permission to work more than 20 hours a week when school is in session. You are never allowed to work overtime.

How many jobs can I have?

FWS students may only work one FWS job at a time although you may hold one additional on-campus position provided that your total work hours between the two jobs does not exceed 20 hours per week. Additionally, you may still participate in the FWS program if you hold employment positions off-campus that are not paid through the university payroll system.

What if I don't like my job?

FWS employment should be treated like any other type of employment. You may resign from a position whenever you feel necessary; however, we ask that you be professional and give your FWS employer at least 2 weeks written notice of your departure.

What do I do if I switch employers?

If you choose to switch FWS jobs during the year, you need to get a new Work Authorization form from 1135 Lee Building, and return a copy to the FWS office with your new employer's information.



Federal Work-Study (FWS) Frequently Asked Questions & Answers Continued

Can my employer adjust my pay rate to ensure I earn my total FWS award?

Employers set pay rates based on the complexity of the job and the qualifications of the applicant. A pay rate cannot be based upon a student's FWS award amount.

How can I increase my FWS award amount?

If you have earned over 50% of your award amount, you may submit an appeal for an increase. The FWS Appeal form can be found at www.financialaid.umd.edu, under the link "Printable Forms".

Do I have to work both semesters?

No. Your FWS award is valid for employment during the fall, winter, and spring semesters however it is up to you to decide when to work. If you choose, you can earn the entire amount of your award in the fall semester. Conversely, if you choose not to work in the fall semester, your entire award will automatically be made available to you for the winter and spring semesters, you do not need to contact the FWS office to have your award rolled over. Similarly, you do not need to inform the FWS office of your decision not to work.

Can I work during the winter break?

With the permission of your FWS employer, you may work during the winter break using your fall/spring FWS award. Keep in mind that if you work during the winter, you may have less to earn in the spring semester. If you are enrolled in classes during the winter session you may work up to 20 hours a week. If not enrolled you may work up to 40 hours per week.

Can I participate in the FWS program during the summer term?

Students interested in participating in the FWS program during the summer term will need to apply for a summer FWS award. Please contact the OSFA for more information about applying for a summer FWS award.