Federal Work-Study Information

What is Federal Work-Study (FWS)?
Federal Work-Study (FWS) is an employment program for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. You receive a paycheck for the time you work on a job. FWS jobs are available with most OSU departments and many community employers. Types of jobs, pay rates, and work schedules vary greatly. Paid community service jobs are available to students, as well as jobs related to most majors.

Why should I consider working through the Work-Study Program?
FWS jobs give you the opportunity to build your experience, develop working relationships with future job references, and develop or improve your time management skills, all while earning a paycheck to help cover some of your costs. In addition:
- The money you earn through the Federal Work-Study program is exempted from the financial aid calculation the following year.
- You have the chance to meet more people from campus and the community (and add job references to your resume).
- Work hours are scheduled around your classes and University breaks.

Will Working Hurt My Grades?
Most students find that working helps them better manage their time and set their priorities. And, national studies show that students who work 15-18 hours/week or less actually maintain a slightly higher GPA than students who work more hours or who don’t work at all.

Are all Work-Study positions on campus?
No, they are not. To provide as many unique opportunities for our student employees as possible, the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid has a number of off-campus FWS positions available. These positions allow students to earn their Work-Study award through involvement within the community.

What is “Community Service Work-Study”?
The community service aspect of OSU’s Federal Work-Study (FWS) program provides a remarkable opportunity for OSU students to take an active role in the greater community while still earning money. We have many community service positions available, ranging from reading and math tutoring in elementary schools to working with agencies in the Stillwater community or assisting researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

How much, and how, will I be paid?
All FWS employees earn at least federal minimum wage. Many employers offer positions with pay rates higher than the minimum, depending on employer, type of work, and skills required. Most positions are paid hourly; however, if you are a graduate student, you may receive a monthly salary in lieu of an hourly rate. You will be paid through the OSU payroll system according to the pay rate and the number of hours you work. Hourly positions are paid every two weeks; salary positions pay once per month. You can elect to receive your earnings via direct deposit to your bank account or printed check.

How do I find a job?
All Federal Work-Study positions will be listed on the Career Services website beginning in May prior to the fall semester. Students enrolling at OSU for the first time should be able to access positions within 7-10 days following enrollment (typically after the New Student Orientation and Enrollment program).

To view the available positions, access Career Services’ website at www.hireosugrads.com, and select “Students.” From there, click on “Login to HIRE System.” You will need to set up an account if you are a first-time user of the HIRE System. You can then review the available positions.

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What if I’m interested in Community Service jobs?
All Community Service jobs are posted at www.hireosugrads.com and you'll search for them as you would for any FWS position (see “How do I find a job?” on the previous page)

Once you find a Community Service position that interests you, complete the following steps:

1. Contact the agency for more information about the job and to apply.
2. Contact the OSU Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid once you have been hired, to schedule an appointment to sign up for payroll. Be sure to bring your Social Security Card and Photo ID. **You must sign up for payroll PRIOR to beginning work in order to be paid for employment.**
3. Together with your employer, decide on a work schedule that does not conflict with your class schedule. Most agencies prefer a consistent schedule from week to week.
4. Know the name of the person at the agency who is authorized to sign your time sheets. Unauthorized signatures will delay the process of receiving your paycheck. Community Service FWS timesheets are to be turned in to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 119 Student Union, by fax at (405) 744-6438, or by scan/email to finaid@okstate.edu every two weeks.

If you have any questions, please stop by our office in 119 Student Union, email us at finaid@okstate.edu or call (405)744-6604.

What should I take to the interview?
You should take a photo ID, your Social Security card, a copy of your class schedule and the most recent print-out of your awards from the financial aid section of the OSU student portal at my.okstate.edu indicating your FWS award. Make a good impression when you go for your job interview. Dress neatly and be prepared to answer any questions about prior work experience.

I'm a new OSU student. Can I interview when I come for Orientation and Enrollment?
Always contact the employer ahead of time to set up an appointment for your interview. Your orientation and enrollment day will be a busy day, so we encourage you to schedule an interview the day before, or the day after, you enroll. Even better, sign up for one of the overnight orientation days so you can set up an interview for the afternoon of the second day or orientation!

What else do I need to know about working in the FWS Program?

- FWS awards are made for the fall and spring semesters and cannot be used in the summer.
- You may (but are not required to) work during pre-finals week, finals week, Fall Break, Thanksgiving, and Spring Break (and, in some cases, during semester break in December).
- All FWS wages are subject to federal and state income tax. OSU Payroll Services will provide you with a W-2 wage form once the calendar year in which you were employed has ended.
- Always know how much of your FWS award you’ve earned; you must stop working when you have earned the full award.
- Be a responsible employee: report to work as scheduled and on-time and call as early as possible if you are unable to be at work.

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