

Federal Work Study (FWS) FAQ's

1. What is Federal Work Study?

Federal Work Study (FWS) is a federally regulated financial aid program authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments and reauthorizations. A certain percentage of your paycheck is provided through Federal Title IV funds.

The Federal Work Study Program provides students financial aid in the form of wages paid to the student for services rendered as a Federal Work-Study employee. As a Federal Work Study employee, you are paid hourly. This is in accordance with MUSC payroll guidelines. You may not work during class time, nor should work interfere with schoolwork.

The exact amount of your Federal Work Study award depends on your demonstrated financial need determined by the Office of Financial Aid Services and available funding from the Federal Government. If you are awarded, the amount awarded is what you may expect to earn during the academic year as a result of work performed and the hours necessary to perform such work. The average FWS award is \$7,000. Depending on the type and amount of other financial aid assistance you receive, your FWS award may be less than \$7,000.

Schools are required to spend at least 7% of their annual allocation earmarked for jobs whose services benefit the community or general public, Community-Service Work Study. Example of community service jobs include those in the clinics, hospital, outreach programs from the departments, research studies and the library.

2. What are the benefits of having a Federal Work Study position?

Work Study offers you the opportunity to:

- Gain work experience
- Explore possible career opportunities
- Gain valuable references for future employment
- Reduce loan indebtedness

3. Why should I participate in Federal Work Study instead of getting a regular job?

Students can work right on campus versus securing employment outside of the University. Convenience of location and flexibility with scheduling are definite advantages to FWS versus employment in the community.

4. Can I use Work Study off campus?

All FWS jobs must be on campus.

5. Can I work more than one Work Study job at a time?

No.

6. How do I apply for FWS?

Interested students should contact the Work Study Coordinator (WSC) in the Office of Enrollment Management – Student Financial Aid Services (843-792-2536). WSC will email student information about the FWS Program and ask if they are still interested after reviewing the information, they should indicate they want to proceed, and the onboarding process can begin. If there is a Waiting List, then their name will be placed on the Federal Work Study Waitlist until the hiring process can begin.

7. How is eligibility for FWS determined?

Eligibility is determined by students completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Students must exhibit financial need as determined by the FAFSA. A Financial Aid Counselor will determine your eligibility based on your financial need and federal regulations.

8. How does FWS fit into my financial aid package?

Work study is counted in a student's Cost of Attendance, just as loans and scholarships are. If a student has requested maximum loans, then we are required to reduce the loans to accommodate work study. If you have met your budget, you cannot go over it. You may reduce your loans proportionate to the amount of FWS funds. Ex: Your budget is \$40,000. You've received \$40,000 in loans. You can reduce your loans to \$33,000 to receive a \$7,000 FWS award.

9. What if I don't earn the entire amount I have been awarded?

There is no penalty if you don't earn the entire amount of your FWS award. Your award is the *maximum amount* you can earn for the academic year.

10. What happens when my Work Study award is exhausted?

We will notify you when you get close to your limit. Generally, your work study job will end once your funds are depleted or when the end of the contract is reached. It may be possible to increase the award, but only if funds are available *and* if you still have remaining eligibility.

11. Are there Work Study awards for every eligible student?

NO. Federal Work Study funds are awarded to the school by the government, not directly to each student or each department. Placement in a work study job is a first-come, first-served basis, once eligibility is determined. Once the funds granted to the school are fully awarded, the government does not award additional funds until the following year.

12. Will I receive a Work Study award each year?

Work Study eligibility is recalculated each school year. Although we try to award eligible students every year, our funding is limited and based on the student's financial need and other financial aid received. Students should complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1st for priority consideration. It is possible to be eligible one year and not the next.

13. How many hours a week can I work?

You may work a *minimum* of 2 hours and a *maximum* of 20 hours per week (40 hours bi-weekly). You may not work more than 8 hours in a day. Students working 8-hour shifts must be provided with a lunch break.

14. Termination from FWS program.

If you do not submit hours into OurDay on a *regular* basis, FWS Policy states that we terminate you after **3 pay periods** of inactivity, which means you must be working on a regular basis to avoid being terminated.

15. What if I need to resign my contract early?

If you need to resign your contract early, a written notice is required and you will be terminated from the program, effective your last day worked.

16. What happens when I need to be out on rotation schedule?

If you are going out on rotations for a semester and intend to come back to FWS, a written notice to the FWS Coordinator is required. You will be placed on a Leave of Absence (LOA) until your return. The notice will prevent premature termination. Please note that LOA is only intended for an average of six to eight weeks. If your rotation schedule is longer than that, you will have to be terminated from the program.

17. What is the rate of pay?

Pay rates for all FWS employees is \$13.00/hour (as of Feb. '23).

18. How do I get paid?

Direct Deposit.

19. How do I submit my time worked for payment?

Time is submitted through OurDay.

20. Dual Employment - Not Allowed

For individuals with other employment *within* MUSC, you will not be eligible to apply. If your job is outside of MUSC, it should not interfere with applying for the work study program.

Once hired, you must notify the FWS Coordinator if you start working in another department at MUSC/MUHA, as you will not be allowed to continue in your federal work study assignment. Coordination between FWS and the other employing department on campus must be made to ensure that you are transferred properly through the OurDay system. Failure to communicate dual employment information before being hired may place the student in a situation where the student is ineligible for federal work study.

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<https://education.musc.edu/students/enrollment>