

# HOMEROOM

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## 8 Things You Should Know About Federal Work-Study



If you're looking for another way to pay for college, [Federal Work-Study \(https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/work-study\)](https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/work-study) may be a great option for you. Work-study is a way for students to earn money to pay for school through part-time on (and sometimes off) campus jobs. Work-study gives students an opportunity to gain valuable work experience while pursuing a college degree. However, not every school participates in the Federal Work-Study Program. Schools that do participate have a limited amount of funds they can award to students who are eligible. This is why it is so important for students to fill out the FAFSA as early as possible, as some schools award work-study funds on a first come, first served basis.

Here are 8 things you should know about the Federal Work-Study Program:

### 1. Being Awarded Federal Work-Study Does Not Guarantee You a Job

Accepting the federal work-study funds you're offered is just the first step. In order to receive those funds, you need to earn them, which means you need to start by finding a work-study job. Some schools may match students to jobs, but most schools require the student to find, apply and interview for positions on their own, just like any other job. It is important that students who are interested in work-study or who have already been awarded work-study contact the financial aid office at their school to find out what positions are available, how to apply, and how the process works at their school.

### 2. Not All Work-Study Jobs are on Campus

The availability of work-study positions includes community service options with non-profit employers, which means some work-study jobs are available for off-campus work. An example might be reading or tutoring for elementary children at local public schools. If you are curious about securing a community service work-study position, contact the financial aid office or the student employment center at your school.

### **3. Work-Study Funds Are Not Applied Directly to Your Tuition**

Unlike other types of financial aid, work-study earnings are not applied directly to your tuition and fees. Students who are awarded work-study receive the funds in a paycheck as they earn them, based on hours worked, just like a normal job. These earnings are meant to help with the day to day expenses that students have and are not meant to cover large costs like tuition and housing.

### **4. Work-Study Jobs May Be Limited**

You may still be able to work on campus without work-study if your school does not have enough work-study funds to cover all on-campus student employees. Many campuses offer jobs for students with or without work-study. Check with the student employment office on your campus to find out what is available.

### **5. Federal Work-Study is not Guaranteed from Year to Year**

There are several factors that can determine whether or not you receive work-study from year to year. These include your family income or financial need, whether you used the work-study funds that were offered to you in a prior year, or how much work-study funding your school receives that year. Contact your school for specific awarding criteria if you are interested in work-study. Typically, students who file the FAFSA early (in January/February prior to the academic year) and answer on the FAFSA that they are interested in Federal Work-Study will have a higher chance of being awarded funds from the program.

### **6. Pay May Vary**

Work-study jobs vary in qualifications and responsibilities, so the pay will depend on the job that you are hired to do. Pay may also depend on your school's policies and/or the minimum wage requirements in the state.

### **7. Work-study Earnings Are Removed From Your FAFSA Calculation for the Next Year**

One of the benefits of earning income through a federal work-study position is that those earnings do not count against you when you complete the next year's FAFSA. Be sure to answer the question regarding how much was earned through work-study on your FAFSA accurately. If you do not know the answer, you can contact the financial aid office at your school for help. Some schools will send you a notice in early spring regarding your earnings from the last calendar year to help you file your FAFSA.

### **8. Hours Worked May Vary**

How many hours you work each week will depend on the type of job you get and your employer's expectations. Most student employment positions, however, will work around your class schedule and only require between 10-20 hours/week, but again –that can vary!

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