

Federal Work-Study

HANDBOOK

STUDENT'S GUIDE

Hunter College
The City University of New York

The Application

You must apply for the Federal Work Study Program by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

It is recommended that all students file their FAFSA application on the World Wide Web: www.fafsa.ed.gov. Students should apply for a PIN # online: www.pin.ed.gov. Dependent Undergraduate students should apply for PIN # for one parent.

To be considered for an award it is important that the application is processed early. Funds are awarded on the basis of financial need and are allocated on a first come first served basis. **A new FAFSA application must be filed each academic year.**

The following conditions must be fulfilled in order to be considered eligible for the Federal Work Study program:

1. New students, transfer students and continuing students must be matriculated and enrolled at least half-time (six credits). During the summer session continuing students do not have to be enrolled but you must enroll the following fall semester.
2. Be enrolled in a degree-granting program.
3. Be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen as per the program guidelines.
4. Must be in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress.
5. Demonstrate financial need. Need is established by a uniform need analysis evaluation performed by CUNY according to the Federal guidelines.
6. Must not be in overpayment on any financial aid program and not in default of a student loan.

The Award Letter

Once you are determined eligible, you will receive an award letter in the mail. Enclosed with the award letter will be additional instructions. The amount of your FWS award is indicated on the award letter and you can only work for the awarded amount. **You cannot work in excess of your award.**

Employment Opportunities

The employment opportunities available to you during placement are from several sources: Off-Campus, On-Campus and Public Service Corps. We are encouraging all students to consider community service opportunities.

Community service – “Community services include the terms “service opportunity” and “youth corps program”. Section 101 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 defines the term as follows:

Service opportunity- A program or project, including a service learning program or project, that enables students or out of school youth to perform meaningful and constructive service in agencies, institutions, and situations where the application of human talent and dedication may help to meet human, educational, linguistic, and environmental community needs, especially those relating to poverty.

Youth corps program- “A program, such as a conservation corps or youth service program, that offers full-time, productive work (to be financed through stipends) with visible community benefits in a natural resource or human service setting and that gives participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, training and support services.” This information is quoted from SFA Handbook 2008 - 2009 Volume 6 Chapter 2 pgs. 34-35.

America Reads/America Counts Challenge- FWS students work as tutors to preschool and elementary school students and their families in reading and mathematics. This is an extension of the community service goal for the FWS program. This is your opportunity to participate in a rewarding and challenging work experience and gain professional skills. You will impact the life of a child and their family and ultimately the community.

Placement

Off-Campus Placement- If you seek employment opportunities off-campus, you may work in a variety of eligible non-profit agencies or for profit companies. These organizations have signed an agreement with CUNY's OSFA Central Office that specify the conditions under which students are eligible to be employed.

The job opportunities are varied and numerous within the five boroughs of New York City. Job assignments may range from counselor in a youth center to an accountant's assistant in a small business. Salaries vary depending on the job description (the duties and skill requirements). The general range is from \$7.25 to \$9.00 per hour and payment is made every two weeks.

On-campus placement- If you choose to work at an on-campus site, you may be placed in one of the campus' offices. There are a variety of positions to be filled that may include clerical support, student services, research, laboratory support, computers, accounting, and tutoring. The hourly rate for Undergraduate ranges from \$7.25 to \$8.00 per hour. Salaries vary depending on the job description (the duties and skill requirements).

All Graduate students are paid \$9.00 per hour. You will be paid in accordance with the Federal Work Study payroll calendar; that is usually every two weeks.

Public Service Corps- Public Service Corps program operates on a year round basis and provides students with an opportunity to work in city agencies that include the public school system. This program seeks to complement the student's academic studies by providing a job-

related learning experience. Their payroll is on a bi-weekly schedule (every two weeks). Please remember that they have a separate time sheet and payroll calendar. The hourly rate of pay ranges from \$7.25 per hour to a maximum of \$9.00. Public Service Corps staff will explain their payroll procedures.

Placement Procedures- You will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of your placement session. You will be given a packet, which contains all the necessary forms:

1. FWS Student Employment Contract
2. I-9 Form – Employment Eligibility Verification Form
3. W-4 Form – Withholding form for the IRS
4. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Non-Disclosure Agreement and the FWS Acknowledgement of Student Responsibility form.
5. IT-2104/IT-2104-E – Withholding and Exemption form Withholding forms for New York State
6. Supervisor Rights & Responsibility Form

You can only accept one position. You may choose to work On-Campus, Off-Campus or Public Service Corps [For an explanation go to Employment Opportunity Section]. **No student may begin working without approval from the Federal Work Study Coordinator.** Only one FWS job contract will be issued at the time of referral. You are not considered eligible to work until all the appropriate forms are returned to the FWS Coordinator or designee. Once you select a job site, are hired, and officially placed, that site is your assignment for the entire contract period.

Intersession

1. Intersession is the period from the last day of finals for the fall semester to the day before the first day of classes for the spring semester.

2. FICA (Federal Insurance Contribution Act – Social Security Tax). During intersession students will pay FICA tax at a rate of 6.75%.
3. FWS Placement restrictions:
 - a. If a student is not registered for at least 6 credits in the previous Fall Semester the student may not work during intersession.
 - b. If a student does not intend to register for at least 6 credits for the spring semester – then he/she cannot work during intersession.
 - c. If the student is going to graduate at the end of the fall Semester, the student must not work during intersession.

The Job Interview- After job selection and the arrangements for an interview have been made; you should take the following steps in preparation for that interview:

1. Be on time for your appointment; bring at least 3 well-prepared resumes and the FWS contract.
2. Be well groomed and appropriately dressed for an interview. Your clothing plays a major role in the interview process.
3. Be prepared to discuss the reasons you are qualified for the position.
4. Be ready to answer questions regarding when you are available to work.
5. Be familiar with the position you are applying for and have questions for your interviewer about their agency or company.
6. Be sure not to take children or friends with you on the day of the interview.
7. Be ready to give a copy of your class schedule to your supervisor.

Once you are hired, the supervisor must sign the contract and any other additional documents that are necessary. You sign the bottom portion of the contract and return all forms to the FAO – Room 241N. You are now ready to be placed on the payroll. It is important that you return the form promptly for this is only way the Financial Aid Office knows that you have been hired.

Time sheets **will not** be processed for payment unless a properly completed and signed contract has been received.

The contract will contain your name, social security number, address, and telephone number. It also provides the assigned supervisor's name and the location of the job site. The award amount is indicated on the contract along with the hourly rate of pay. Also indicated on the contract is the total number of hours you can work during the academic year. You should review the contract to make sure that all of the information is correct prior to signing it. There are two statements on the contract, one for you the student and the other is for your supervisor. Before signing make sure that all information on the contract is accurate to assure a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of you and your supervisor.

Student Responsibilities- After you are hired at a job site you are expected to take on the following responsibilities:

1. You are not allowed to work during class hours.
2. Learn your duties and complete all assignments on time.
3. Act in a professional manner.
4. Maintain the work schedule that you and your supervisor agreed upon.
5. Verify that your supervisor submitted an accurate time sheet on time.
6. Familiarize yourself with the instructions on your student copy of the time sheet.
7. Make sure the dates on student copy of the time sheet match the FWS payroll calendar.
8. Keep the pink copy of the time sheet for future reference.
9. Notify your supervisor as early in the day as possible that you will be out or if you are going to be late.
10. Make sure you do not work in excess of your FWS award.
11. If you withdraw, take a leave of absence, or are academically dismissed from school inform the FWS Coordinator immediately.

12. Report any change of address to the OASIS and Bursar's Offices immediately in writing.
13. Students cannot work for the same supervisor and be paid from FWS monies and any other fund/line at the same time. The schedules must be different and the FWS Coordinator must have the separate work schedules on file in the FWS Coordinator's Office. This applies to students who have internships or other aid programs that have a service requirement. Failure to comply will suspend FWS payments to the student – until the missing document is received from the FWS supervisor.

On the job behavior- Any job is a serious obligation and your performance, attitude and conduct should reflect this. Wherever you work, all organizations strive to create an atmosphere of courteous and efficient service to your colleagues and the public. Keeping this in mind, we have constructed a list of job behaviors and attitudes that will help you if you follow them. These behaviors are applicable in any work situation.

- Show Initiative. Learn all you can about the area or department in which you are assigned. The more you know about the area, the more valuable you will become to the office.
- Be part of the team. Have a positive attitude. Be cooperative and show a willingness to learn.
- Always strive to do your best. Your work reflects your attitude as well as your level of competency.
- Conduct your self in a professional manner. Maintain confidentiality of all information that you may see or hear.
- Know your area of responsibility. Complete your work thoroughly and accurately. If you do not understand or you are unsure of your assignment always ask questions.
- Only official calls should be made on a business telephone unless otherwise stated or in the case of an emergency.

- Use titles correctly. You will be meeting, addressing and speaking to many different people with various titles. Remember to address them using their correct titles.
- Represent your office well. You may be the first contact that a person has with the job site. Remember the manner in which the person is received leaves a lasting impression.

PAYMENT

The only way a student can be paid is through the submission of a time sheet. In order to be paid on time, you and your supervisor must submit an accurately completed time sheet to the Financial Aid Processing Center- Room# 1605-East. To ensure that a time sheet is accurately completed, both you and your supervisor should adhere to the following:

- Make sure the name and social security number of the student is printed clearly on the time sheet.
- Work out a system to record hours worked on a daily basis.
- Timesheets should be submitted using the dates listed on the Federal Work-Study Payment schedule. Only indicate one pay period per time sheet. Please do not split pay periods; follow the FWS calendar.
- An unpaid work break is mandatory after 5 consecutive hours of work.
- Total hours worked should not include any breaks, vacations, sick days or lunch hour.
- All entries must be made in blue or black ink only (do not use erasable ink or pencil).
- The supervisor must initial all changes made on the time sheet.
- Do not work in excess of your FWS award.

Stop Payments and Reissued Checks- If the student still has not received a check after checking with the FWS Coordinator and the Bursar's Office, the student should put a stop payment on the check in the Bursar's Office. A replacement check will be issued by the university in approximately eight (8) weeks. The student will be notified by the Bursar's Office when the replacement check has been generated. If the student receives the original check after the stop payment process has begun – the student must return the original check to the Bursar's

Office immediately. This check has been voided and cannot be cashed nor can the check replacement process be stopped. Please do not attempt to cash this check. It will not be honored by the University and it will bounce against your account.

Reporting Lost or Stolen Checks- Immediately inform the Bursar's Office.

The Time Sheet and FWS Payment Schedule- A time sheet and a FWS payment schedule will be sent to the site supervisor after you return the necessary forms to the Financial Aid Office .The FWS calendar provides the following information:

- The pay periods for the whole academic year.
- The time sheets due dates.
- The projected distribution dates for direct deposits or check distribution.

Direct Deposit Option. You are eligible to apply for the direct deposit. CUNY is offering the option of having federal financial aid payments deposited directly into your own bank account. You can obtain on in the Financial Aid Office-241N. Completed forms must be returned to the Financial Aid Processing Center-1605-E

FICA [Federal Insurance Contribution Act/Social Security Tax – 7.65%]. As mandated by Ruling 98-16 by the Internal Revenue Service:

- **On-Campus:** Students enrolled for six or more credits will not have FICA withheld unless they elect to pay in to their social security account.
- **Off-Campus:** All students will be subject to the withholding of FICA taxes during the summer and the academic year sessions.
- **Intercession:** Any period of non-enrollment of 5 weeks or greater FICA taxes will be withheld for all students working during intercession.
- **Summer Session:** If students are enrolled for six or more credits FICA will not be withheld. If a student is not enrolled or taking 5 or less credits FICA will be withheld.

Unearned FWS Funds- You will be paid for only the hours you have worked. If you do not earn your entire FWS award before the end of the academic year, the unearned portion of your award is returned to the Federal Work Study Program.

Wage Statement. After the end of the calendar year and before February 1st of the following year, CUNY will mail a W – 2 form to the student's local address. The information on this W – 2 Form will reflect the student's annual earnings for the calendar year (January – December) while in the FWS program. This information is furnished to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), New York State and local taxing agencies. Students who receive Public Assistance Benefits should be advised that earnings accumulated from the Federal Work Study Program are reported to the Human Resources Administration.

Taxable FWS Earnings- This information is for those students who file income taxes and are not exempt from paying taxes on their FWS wages. On the FAFSA application there is a question regarding income exclusions that include taxable FWS wages. It is in your best interest to include your Federal Work Study wages because it has a positive impact on the calculation of your Estimated Family Contribution number (EFC) on the FAFSA application for the next academic year. As an example: FWS taxable wages earned Jan. to Dec. 2003 will be reported on the FAFSA 04/05 Application. Please review the worksheet on the paper or online FAFSA application.

Reporting FWS Earnings When Receiving Unemployment Benefit- You must notify your local unemployment office if you are participating in the FWS program. The NY State Department of Labor considers it willful misrepresentation to collect unemployment benefits without revealing that you are receiving FWS funds.

Unemployment Benefits- When you have earned your full or partial FWS award you cannot apply to the NY State Department of Labor to receive unemployment benefits.