

Wondering about Federal Work Study at GW?

FWS information for students is at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/career/fws/>



● What is the Federal Work Study (FWS) Program?

The Federal Work Study Program (“FWS”) is a financial aid program funded jointly by the U.S. Federal Government and your work study employer. You work at a part-time job and earn an hourly wage, up to (but not exceeding) the amount of the FWS award you’ve been allocated. Your work study employer is either an *on-campus* department of GW or an *off-campus* non-profit agency that has been pre-approved by GW as a FWS employer.

● How many hours am I supposed to work? How will I find time?

You choose your schedule - there is no minimum number of hours per week that you “must” work. Most freshmen work less than 10 hours per week. FWS employers know that academics are your priority; many offer flexible scheduling. This does *not* mean that you study at your FWS job – it means that you and your supervisor determine your work schedule with your academic obligations in mind. Here’s another way to look at it: if you have a \$2,200 FWS allocation and the job pays \$10/hour, you can work 220 hours throughout the course of the FWS program year. There are roughly 30 work weeks in the year, so if you work the same hours each week, you’ll work about 8 hours per week. If you need time off or if you need to leave your job, *be professional and give your supervisor ample notice.*

Did you know that published studies show that students who work up to 10 hours per week outperform their peers academically? Why? They develop superior time management skills that improve study habits and confidence.

● What kind of job will I get?

There are many kinds of FWS jobs at GW. We consider your FWS job to be the first step on your career path. You’ll gain valuable skills and experience and build your resume. Many jobs involve office administrative work which can include greeting office visitors, answering phones or e-mail, performing web-based tasks, using Microsoft Office software, helping to plan office or departmental events, and helping staff members with their projects and professional responsibilities.

● **On-campus** work sites include (but are not limited to) Gelman Library, the Marvin Center, Lisner Auditorium, Lerner Health & Wellness Center, GW Housing Programs, Academic Technologies, campus offices such as Admissions, science and language labs, research institutes, policy centers, and the offices of academic departments at the Foggy Bottom and Mt. Vernon campuses.

● **Off-campus** work sites have included the Smithsonian’s Air & Space Museum, the National Archives, the Peace Corps (Washington headquarters), federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and community service providers who improve literacy in elementary schools. *Every off-campus FWS employer must be pre-approved by the GW Career Center.* We list the approved employers on our website in early August. Most are within walking distance or can be accessed with a short Metro ride.

● What kinds of skills will I gain?

In addition to learning about the operations of the organization where you work, you will acquire transferable skills that you can list on your resume and carry forward to future interviews. These include interviewing skills, time management skills, customer service skills, professional communication skills (speaking and writing), real-time problem solving skills, and teamwork skills. Most FWS students also gain experience training and supervising junior colleagues.

● How do I obtain Federal Work Study funds?

You’ll fill out a GW Financial Aid Application each year – this process is handled by the Office of Student Financial Assistance in Colonial Central in the Marvin Center. <http://gwired.gwu.edu/finaid/>



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● **How do I find my FWS job?** Three main ways:

#1: Starting 8/23, search online through GWork (GW's online jobs database, <http://www.gwork.gwu.edu>)

#2: Attend the FWS Job Fair on Thu., 9/3/09 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm, Marvin Center Ballrooms

#3: Contact on-campus departments directly and ask “Do you hire FWS students? How should I apply?”

Details will be provided at the September 2nd FWS Orientation and on our website at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/career/fws/>

● **Will I definitely find a FWS job?**

Available jobs have always exceeded FWS job seekers. If you start your search early in the semester, you will have many jobs to choose from. There are still many options at the beginning of the Spring semester.

● **I've accepted a FWS job offer. Now what do I do? When can I start?**

Accepting a job doesn't mean you're fully “hired” – your employer now needs to inform the GW Career Center so that we can create an employment record for you in GW's employment system. Once we've done *that*, then you're really “hired.” After accepting your offer, you'll fill out an Employment Forms Packet (pick it up in the Career Center or print it from our website – it comes with full instructions) which includes the federal I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification process. Read all about this and print a checklist at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/career/fws/> You'll know you can legally begin working when GW's employment system (runs Oracle software) sends you an e-mail telling you so. Your employer receives the same e-mail message and will contact you about your start date.

● **What documents do I need to complete the I-9 form?**

Very important – you are legally required to complete an I-9 before you start working. This form proves that you're legally allowed to work in the US. On the back of this form you'll see lists of documents. You choose which documents to present – employers (that includes us) are not allowed to tell you what to bring. You **MUST** bring the **ORIGINALS**. It's the law. Google “I-9 form” to view the list of documents.

● **How often do I get paid?**

GW employees are paid every other Friday, although it can take up to four weeks to receive your *first* paycheck. Sign up for direct deposit (form is in the packet) – it's faster, safer and easier.

● **How much can I earn? How much will I be paid?**

You can earn up to the amount of your FWS allocation. If you're allocated \$2,200 in FWS funds for the 2009-2010 academic year, this means that you can earn up to (but not more than) \$2,200 at your FWS job. Each employer determines the hourly wage based on the skills required to perform the job, your experience, and what similar competing positions pay. All jobs pay at least the minimum wage for the District of Columbia. (\$8.25/hour as of 7/24/09) Some FWS jobs pay minimum wage, some pay \$12 per hour, a few pay \$14 or \$15 per hour – most pay somewhere in between.

● **Are taxes deducted from my paychecks?**

Yes. The GW Career Center cannot provide tax advice or answer questions about your tax status, but the GW Tax Office is located in Rome Hall 100. Visit their student page online at <http://www.gwu.edu/~tax/student.cfm>

● **Do I have to pay FWS money back? How can I spend it? What if I don't earn it all?**

You are not obligated to pay your earnings back to GW - you decide how to spend your paychecks. You are only entitled the portion of your FWS award that you actually earn. Unearned funds cannot be claimed.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FWS JOBS? → The GW Career Center, fws@gwu.edu
QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FWS FUNDING? → GW's OSFA, finaid@gwu.edu

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