

Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

Federal Work-Study – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Federal Work-Study (FWS)?

Federal Work-Study is a program that partially funds jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. Awards are based on need as determined by the FAFSA to help pay for college expenses.

How do I qualify for Federal Work-Study (FWS)?

Every year, in October, students need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA can be completed on the web at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

Once a student has completed the FAFSA, the Federal Government determines a student's financial need and notifies the school. If a student has financial need, they may be eligible for FWS.

How do I know if I qualify for FWS?

If you are eligible for the Federal Work-Study Program, the FWS offer will appear on your award letter that you receive from the university that lists all of the financial aid you are being offered. There will be an amount listed for FWS. This is the maximum amount that you are allowed to earn under the Federal Work-Study Program.

Once you have worked and earned your total FWS amount, your hiring supervisor will move you from a FWS employee to a Student Wage (SW) employee.

If I qualify, what do I do next?

The next step would be to accept your Federal Work-Study award by September 30th. This can be done by going in to your LOUIE account. From your LOUIE account, you will select the following menus: Main Menu > Self Service > Finances > Accept/Decline Awards.

You will then select the Aid Year for the financial aid you want to review.

Next to the Federal Work-Study award, you will click the "Accepted" box to accept your Federal Work-Study award, and then click the "Submit" button.

If you do not want your Federal Work-Study Award, it is equally important that you "Decline" the award, as this updates your financial aid account.

I accepted my award, now what do I do?

Once you have accepted your award, you will need to begin searching for a job. NAU posts all open positions on the Handshake website located at <https://nau.edu/career/handshake/>.

Students already have a Handshake account. You will login to Handshake using your LOUIE login. You will then need to update your Handshake profile. Once your profile is updated, you will be able to begin searching for jobs and applying for jobs you are interested in.

The Handshake Help Center has tutorials and How To Information if you have issues, or you can also call 928/523-1087 during business hours to speak with a Career Development staff member.

What types of FWS jobs are available?

There are three types of Federal Work-Study jobs: on-campus, off-campus, and America Reads.

On-campus jobs are located within NAU Departments. **Note:** this does NOT include third party contractors, including Sodexo, Starbucks, or the bookstore (eFollett).

Off-campus jobs are located throughout the Flagstaff community and are available with a wide variety of non-profit or community service organizations.

America Reads is a collaboration between the Federal Work-Study program and the NAU College of Education to provide tutoring in Flagstaff schools to elementary school children.

I applied for a job and now I have an interview. What is the next step?

Once you have an interview, be sure to show up to your interview on time and dressed in a professional manner. Answer the questions to the very best of your ability. Remember, this is your opportunity to shine and demonstrate why you are the best person for the job.

I completed my interview, now what happens?

After your interview, the supervisor or person who interviewed you should contact you to notify you of your interview status.

If you are not offered the job, then go back to Handshake and start applying for other positions. There are plenty of job opportunities on campus!

If you are offered the job, your supervisor will complete a FWS Hiring Form for you and submit it to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. There is nothing else you need to do except to enjoy your work experience!

Now that I have been hired, how do I get paid?

Once you are hired, your supervisor should provide instructions on how you login to your timesheet as well as how you clock in/out after each shift.

You will have two position codes: one for Federal Work-Study, and one for Student Wage. You will begin clocking in under the Federal Work-Study position code.

Your supervisor will track your hours and once you reach your FWS award, your supervisor will inform you to start clocking in and out under your Student Wage position code.

Regardless of whether you are paid by Federal Work-Study or Student Wage, you will receive a paycheck every two weeks through automatic deposit. If you do not have automatic deposit set up on your LOUIE account, you will be mailed a check every two weeks to your home address listed in LOUIE.

Can I resign from a FWS position?

At any time, you may resign from your Federal Work-Study position by notifying your supervisor of your intention to resign.

Also, you can be terminated from a Federal Work-Study position for poor performance or for not meeting the expectation of the employer.

If I was originally awarded FWS and declined it but now I want to accept it, what should I do?

If you declined your FWS but now want to accept it, you must contact the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. Keep in mind you must still show financial need for the FWS to be offered. Other financial aid you may have received, including loans, may impact your eligibility.

If I owe money to NAU, can they take my Federal Work-Study check?

No, Federal Work-Study money is earned by you, just like any other job.

If you owe outstanding charges to the University, you can make a payment on your account using your FWS earnings, but the money will never be automatically applied to outstanding charges.

How much will I be paid per hour?

You will be paid at least the Federal minimum wage, but the amount may be higher depending on the type of work you do and the skill level required.

Is FWS taxable income?

If a student earns enough income to file a tax return, it must be included as taxable income for federal and state purposes.

Do I have to report FWS earnings on the FAFSA?

Students must report FWS earnings on the FAFSA.

Do FWS earnings count against me when applying for financial aid next year? Does work study affect financial aid?

FWS earnings do not count against the student for the following year's federal financial aid. Even though students report FWS as part of their total income on the FAFSA, there is another place on the FAFSA where FWS earnings are reported separately and the FAFSA formula does not count that against the student.

Is there a Federal Work-Study job for every eligible student?

Unfortunately, no. Students are placed in jobs on a first-come, first-serve basis once eligibility has been determined.

Federal Work-Study funding is limited and not all students who are eligible will be offered Federal Work-Study.

Do I have to accept any job that is offered to me?

You will have an opportunity to consider the jobs available at the time you want to start working. After interviewing with a department supervisor, you decide whether or not to accept the job if an offer is extended to you. If you decide not to accept a job, you may consider others.

Am I paid to study?

Federal Work-Study jobs are real jobs with real responsibilities. You are paid to work, not study or do homework.

If I don't use all the award money this year, can I use the Federal Work-Study funds I got this year to work next year?

Federal Work-Study is a form of financial aid and, like other forms of financial aid, may only be used in the year for which it was awarded.

If I have FWS this year, will I have it next year?

You must reapply for financial aid every year by completing the FAFSA on October 1st at www.fafsa.gov.

There is no guarantee that you will receive FWS each year, as it is part of your total financial aid package and will be influenced by other types of aid you receive (including loans), family income, and your non-Federal Work-Study income during the previous year. All of these items are variable and can impact your eligibility.

Can I return to the same FWS job each year?

If you are deemed eligible for Federal Work-Study and want to return to the same department, you may return, assuming the department would like you back. You will need to communicate with your department supervisor regarding the possibility of returning the following year.