

Federal Work Study – Podcast Transcript

Opening:

Hi, I'm Nick Darracq, a work study student at the University of Oregon, speaking to you today on behalf of the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, also called OSAC for short.

Today, I am going to talk about the process and benefits of becoming a Federal Work Study student.

Body:

When you start your first couple months of college you may notice that your funds dwindle a lot faster than you may have anticipated. Luckily, I had applied for federal work study before I began at the University of Oregon.

Federal Work Study, often called FWS, is part of your financial aid package and is based on financial need as well as meeting certain eligibility requirements. It is much like a scholarship in that you are awarded a certain amount of money. However, to obtain your allotted amount you must be hired as a work study student. Once you are hired you are paid by the hour, no less than minimum wage, and your earnings cannot exceed your total financial work study award.

Applying for work study is very easy. You simply mark 'YES' to the question asking if you are interested in student employment on your Free Application for Federal student aid, also known as your FAFSA. However, it is **imperative** that you make sure you say YES and you get your FAFSA in as soon as possible after January 1 of each year. If you are eligible for FWS it will be listed on your financial aid award letter.

The MOST important thing about applying for work study is to check with the financial aid office at your school so you can be aware of your eligibility. There are many different amounts awarded as well as different options in terms of the semesters or terms in which you are eligible to work. You can spread out your working hours in a number of different ways, subject to the needs of the employer. It will be your responsibility to work with your employer to create a schedule and keep track of your hours. Just remember that if you wait until spring semester to get a job, your employer may not be able to give you enough hours to reach your allotted amount for the academic year. You will still get paid by the hour, but if you don't use the amount allotted to you, it does not carry over to the next year.

If you are eligible for FWS it makes the job hunt much easier because there are many more opportunities for those seeking work, but you need to actively search for FWS job opportunities. The best way to find out about FWS opportunities is to go in to your school's financial aid office to get a list of available FWS jobs. Often times your school may also have a link to a job search website where you can set up an account and then look online at places that are hiring work study students. Most federal work study opportunities are usually various jobs around your Campus, which is extremely convenient. However, if working on campus doesn't interest you, many private non-profit or public agencies hire

work study students as well. Generally, there are usually a good amount of places hiring work study students.

Once you've found a position that you're interested in, the next step is to contact the employer. You will most likely fill out an application or give a resume just like you would at any other job. Then you will probably have an interview for the position.

My work study position is with the OSAC and my position can probably best be described as an office assistant. My day to day responsibilities in this position have changed each term. During the fall term, my responsibilities were primarily surrounded preparing scholarship information packets. During the winter term, I was responsible processing and reviewing incoming scholarships. The spring term was pretty relaxed at OSAC and most of my duties included general office maintenance. My position as a work study student for OSAC has been a fun and enjoyable experience that has provided me with valuable experience working in an office environment. I would definitely suggest applying to be a work study student if you are eligible.

If you are not eligible for FWS or you did not apply for FWS, there are also non-federal work study jobs that are not based on financial need. You can inquire with your school's career services to find out more about non-FWS job opportunities.

There are a wide variety of work study opportunities including fun and interesting jobs that give you great experience. And remember, work study hours can be very flexible because the employers understand that you are a student and that academic success takes precedence.

Conclusion:

Don't forget to get your FAFSA in on time and mark yes to the question asking if you are interested in student employment, and check with the financial aid office at your school regarding your eligibility as well as job opportunities. Once you find a work study job that interests you and are hired, be sure to plan out how you'll allocate your time and FWS funds throughout the year.

Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important topic. For more podcast topics, please visit our website at www.OregonStudentAid.gov. From all of us here at the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, this is Nick Darracq. We look forward to helping you again soon.