Community Work-Study Program

Campus-Partners Handbook

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Welcome!

On behalf of the Cornell Public Service Center (PSC) and Cornell University, we are delighted that you have discovered the Community Work-Study Program (CWSP). Made possible in part by Federal Work Study (FWS) monies provided by the U.S. Department of Education and Cornell University, CWSP allows Cornell students who have received a Federal Work Study award to work off campus for nonprofit organizations, schools, and municipalities primarily in Ithaca and Tompkins County but also throughout New York State and the U.S. Your participation will offer many benefits besides a paycheck: an introduction to Ithaca and the Tompkins County community, real-world work experience, a break from campus and classes, and an opportunity for you to earn critical employment- and career-related references.

On average, 200 students participate during the academic year, who work part-time, and an additional 70-80 students work during the summer employment period, who work mainly full-time. At any given time, the program works with 50 different non-profit organizations, including municipalities and schools, and students work in numerous areas, including education, women and children, health services (physical and mental), programs for the elderly, food and nutrition, environmental programs, urban planning, public works and engineering, business and marketing, IT and social media, and the arts.

The following pages detail information and resources useful to you in your off-campus employment. Please direct all initial questions to Sandy Hickey, the CWSP Coordinator, by phone at 607-255-7882 or email at cwsp-psc@cornell.edu. We are here to help you succeed. We also invite your feedback and comments on this handbook.

We hope that you will enjoy being of service to the wider community, getting to know more people from all walks of life, developing your skills, and building a network for your future endeavors. Welcome again to the Community Work-Study Program!

Sincerely,

Renée Farkas
Associate Director,
Public Service Center

Sandy Hickey
CWSP Coordinator
Federal Work-Study Overview & Guidelines

Federal Work-Study (FWS) regulations from the US Department of Education require that Cornell use at least 7% of its FWS allocation each fiscal year to employ students in community-service jobs.

The Community Work-Study Program (CWSP), sponsored by the Cornell University Public Service Center (PSC), enables Cornell Federal Work-Study (FWS) students to work for nonprofit organizations, schools, and municipalities mainly in Ithaca and Tompkins County but also anywhere in the U.S. Jobs affiliated with Cornell departments or organizations may qualify for CWSP funding if the student’s work benefits local residents or U.S. residents.

How are Community-Service Jobs Defined?

To be considered employed in a community-service job for FWS purposes, a FWS student does not have to provide a “direct service”. The student must simply provide services that are designed to improve the quality of life for community residents or to solve particular problems related to those residents’ needs. For example, FWS students working for meals-on-wheels programs may prepare meals for the programs without having any direct contact with community residents, yet the service they are providing is very important in meeting community needs. However, the work performed must be in the public interest. Work in the public interest is defined as work performed for the welfare of the nation or community, rather than work performed for a particular interest or group.

A University may use its discretion to determine what jobs provide indirect or direct service to the community.

What Qualifies as Community-Service?

- Work done must benefit communities within the United States.
- Cornell campus jobs can meet the definition of community services, provided the work is designed to improve the quality of life for off-campus community residents, or to solve problems related to their needs.
- Cornell campus positions require that the department pay the remaining 25% from departmental funding once the position is determined to be a community work-study placement.

Job Eligibility

Although the following jobs may be in the nonprofit sector, they are not considered in the public interest according to federal guidelines, and work-study funds may not be used to pay students employed in these jobs:
• Primarily benefit the members of an organization that has membership limits, such as a credit union, fraternal or religious order, labor union or a cooperative
• Involving any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or association with a faction in an election for public or party office
• Working for an elected official
• Consider the student’s political affiliation for hiring purposes
• Involve lobbying on the federal, state, or local level

To participate in the CWSP Campus Partners:
1. Submit a Job Description Form

The Community Work-Study Program of the Public Service Center, together with the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment, will review to verify eligibility. Upon confirmation you will be notified in writing.

2. Provide Access to the Department JM Student Org in Workday

The CWSP Coordinator MUST be provided with access to the student JM Org (specifically the roles of Student Employment Management Partner & Compensation Finance Partner) for the Cornell department that the student is aligned with for the employment term.

Students must be appointed in Workday by the CWSP Coordinator to receive the community-service split. This is required for accounting and auditing purposes specific to this program and the usage and tracking of the community-service split. No exceptions.

Hours worked or wages earned prior to their appointment by the office are not eligible for the community-service split.

Work Hours

During the academic-year employment term, students’ work hours should be limited to 1520 hours/week. During breaks, with their supervisor’s approval, and during the summer, students may work full-time if not taking classes.

Hourly Pay/Wage Rates

To determine hourly pay, in accordance with FWS guidelines the following must be considered and taken into effect when establishing wage rates:
• The skills needed to perform the job;
• How much people with those skills are paid in the local area for doing the same type of job;
• Rates the school would normally pay similar non-FWS employees;
• Any applicable federal, state, or local laws that require a specific wage rate; and
• The fact that it is not acceptable to base the wage on need or any other factor not related to the student’s skills or job description.

Please also refer to:
• The Cornell Student-Wage Scale, and
• The Cornell Student-Job Grade Levels

Raises are the responsibility of the employer or supervisor and can be awarded at the beginning of a semester or summer term. Requests will not be given mid-term. Requests for raises must be received in writing (on agency stationary or by email with electronic signature included). Merit-based raises may not exceed 5% of the student employee’s current wage in an employment period (academic year or summer).

How to Submit and Post Job Description

Download the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Job Description Form (pdf). Review the instructions and complete the form in full.

Jobs are listed on Cornell’s Student Job and Internship Postings site.

Note: Any jobs submitted to the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment, either in hard copy or electronically, are rerouted to CWSP, and delays may be incurred when requests are sent to that office first.

Edit, Reactivate or Remove a Job

Send an email to CWSP with the action to be taken: “edit” (with changes), “re-post” (with any changes), or “delete.”

Ready to Hire a Student? Next Steps:
• Email the CWSP Coordinator the student’s name and Cornell net ID, so the coordinator can check the student’s eligibility.
• When extending an offer of employment, get up-to-date contact information. Review the exact job title, hourly wage, and the full name of the supervisor and agency. This information is needed by students to complete their Student Information Form that will be used for WorkDay.
• Once you’ve decided which student(s) to hire, direct them to the Public Service Center, 300 Kennedy Hall, to begin the appointment process.
• The student employee and the supervisor will each receive an email confirming the student’s appointment to the payroll and their start date.

Do not allow students to begin working until you each have received the “CWSP Work Status Notification” email. Any wages earned prior to the student’s official start date will be charged 100% to the hiring department.
Federal Work-Study Awards and Student Eligibility

- FWS awards are determined for a specific employment period – academic year or summer.
- Funding not used during an academic year or summer does not roll over. Students must apply for FWS for the academic year, and then again for the summer, if they wish to work during this time. For more information about the summer employment term, see Summer Hiring, below.
- FWS award calculations are based on a student’s financial need; thus, an academic year award does not guarantee a summer award, and vice versa, as situations are liable to change.
- Academic-year work-study awards can be earned in one semester or spread across the academic year.
- FWS eligibility can be reduced or cancelled by the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment at any time based on changes to a student’s financial aid resources and/or status at Cornell.

Conditions that Restrict a Student’s Employment Eligibility

Students are not eligible to work if any of the following exist:
- Has a hold on their college or university bursar account;
- Is not registered with the university;
- Has a dean’s hold;
- Has an incomplete Financial Aid package (has not been finalized); and
- Does not have an I-9 form on file (it proves eligibility to work in the United States).

When an employee has earned 75% of their FWS award, an email warning is sent from the Office of Student Employment to the departments pay rep asking students to track their hours carefully, so they do not exceed the FWS award.

If a student continues to work after their FWS award ends, or after their employment term ends, 100% of their wages will be charged to their employer/department.

Department Share of Wages
- The hiring department is the “employer” of record and responsible for supervising and confirming hours worked.
- FWS funds 75% of a student’s gross wages, and the campus partner funds the remaining 25%.

Supervisor Expectations

The work performed by the student will be directly supervised and consistent with the approved job description on file.
Supervisors are expected to review, verify, and approve hours worked for each student they employ through the CWSP in accordance with the payroll schedule and deadlines. By approving time, you are verifying that the time recorded is true and accurate.

**Hiring for the Summer Employment Term**

**Student Eligibility:**
- Students must be registered as full-time for the current spring semester.
- Students must intend to register as full-time for the upcoming fall semester.

**Two Ways Students Can Apply for Summer Work-Study Funding:**
- If they are taking classes of 6 credits or more, they apply for a summer financial-aid package that includes federal work-study. Students can read [Summer Session Financial Aid](#) for more information.
- If they are not taking classes or less than 6 credits, they download the [summer Federal Work-Study application](#), complete section 1, and email, fax, mail, or bring it to the CWSP Coordinator.

How many hours can a student employee work in the summer?

Students may work full-time over the summer. The Federal Work-Study program does not allow students to receive holiday pay on federal holidays (see [Important CWSP Program Dates](#)).

*Note:* FWS students are not eligible for FWS on federal holidays, or for vacation or sick pay. If a student does work on a federal holiday, including remotely, he or she cannot be paid with work-study; the employer would need to pay 100% of the student’s wages for that day.

**To Hire a Student for the Summer**

The student will need to be appointed for the summer work-study term, review [How to Hire a Student](#) and [Payroll Resources and Policies](#).

Watch for email notification from CWSP when the student is re-appointed to payroll, with the date they may begin work. Wages earned prior to the designated payroll start date will be billed 100% to the employer.

**Evaluations**

Federal Work-Study regulations require that the employee and supervisor complete evaluations at the end of employment. CWSP uses these forms to assess how its students are assisting community agencies and the opportunities being offered to students, as well as, to assess and monitor off-campus positions.
Dismissals

May I terminate a student employee?
Yes, but specific guidelines must be followed. Before a situation becomes this serious, contact the PSC’s Associate Director or the CWSP Coordinator to discuss your options and the proper way to proceed. See Student Employment Policies for discipline policies and procedures.

Miscellaneous

For detailed list of policies and resources for employees, employers and supervisors, visit: https://psc.cornell.edu/community-work-study/program-resources-policies-students-employers