Community Work-Study Program

Student-Employee 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
Am I Eligible?
There are four requirements for students to participate in our program. To see if you are eligible, please review the checklist on our webpage, Am I Eligible?

How is this program different from other on-campus work-study jobs?
The U.S. Department of Education requires all institutions of higher-learning that receive federal funding to use at least 7% of its Federal Work-Study funds to employ students in eligible community-service jobs. Community services are provided by nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations and designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs. These services include:

- Work in health care, child care, literacy training, education (including tutorial services), welfare, social services, transportation, housing and neighborhood improvement, public safety, food and nutrition, crime prevention and control, recreation, rural development, and community improvement;
- Serving as a literacy (reading and writing) or math tutor, or a coordinator of such tutoring, for children in PreK through ninth grade through the America Reads and America Counts Challenge programs.

In addition, these positions are subsidized at a higher rate than regular on-campus work study jobs which decreases the amount that is paid by the non-profit employer. In many cases this can be 25-50% less making the program more accessible to non-profit organizations to participate.

How Do I Find a Job?
Watch a short (2-min) Cornell video about finding a student job, and to get more information about CWSP job openings: Finding a Job.

Interview Tips
- Contact the employer/supervisor directly who is listed on the job posting.
- Be prepared for an interview that could include a review of the job description, tasks, and responsibilities associated with the job, as well as, any relevant skills, experience, or coursework.
- Discuss scheduling, whether they want you to work during breaks, transportation needs, your extracurriculars/co-curricular activities, the office dress code, and the employer’s preference for communication so that each of you is clear on expectations and your availability.
- Be sure to tell the employer if you work at another Cornell job(s) or plan on finding another job that employment term (academic year or summer), so the employer understand that wages will be earned from multiple jobs.
Once hired, review the details of your new job with your supervisor.

- Hourly rate
- Start and end dates
- Duties and responsibilities
- Work schedule
- Supervisor’s name/contact information
- Agency name and address

Payroll: How Do I get Paid
You cannot begin working or be paid until you have been appointed to the University payroll for this position.
IMPORTANT: If you work or submit time before your start date, your employer will be billed 100%. Such billing would be a hardship for your employer, because most employers pay only 10-25% of your gross wage.

- Make sure your I-9 is complete. View a list of acceptable documents. You cannot begin working until this is complete.
- Come to the Public Service Center at 300 Kennedy Hall to complete hiring paperwork with the CWSP Coordinator. This meeting is mandatory. Until this is done, you cannot be paid.
- You will be notified via email by the CWSP Coordinator when your hiring is complete, and you may begin working.
- You will receive access and usage instructions to WorkDay, the University’s online timekeeping system. Watch for this email and upon receipt, try accessing immediately so that any issues can be addressed.

How do I submit my work hours?
Check out these two short presentations on your WorkDay home page. After logging in click on “Getting to Know WorkDay” and watch:
- “Navigation Basics for Employees”
- “Enter and Submit Time”

Submitting and Approving Time Worked
- Students must submit their WorkDay timesheets by noon every other Wednesday, with supervisors approving the timesheets by the end of the Wednesday.
- When a supervisor approves a timesheet in WorkDay, they are certifying that the hours entered are correct and were worked. It is the agency’s responsibility to contact CWSP if the student does not record their hours or if the student is no longer working.
• Students cannot add hours from a previous pay period to a current pay period.
• If a student forgets to enter hours worked into a previous pay period, they may request “retro hours.” Such hours are allowed if the student requests them in an email to their supervisor and the supervisor approves them. The supervisor then forwards the email to the CWSP Coordinator, who then forwards the email to the Business Service Center. BSC staff are the only staff allowed to enter retro hours.
• FWS regulations forbid students from recording work hours when they are registered to be in class or lab.

IMPORTANT: Pay periods end every other Wednesday, and you must enter your hours for that pay period by noon that Wednesday, so your supervisor has time to approve your hours before the end of the workday. (If you plan on working that Wednesday between 12:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m., enter the hours you anticipate working. Your supervisor can always adjust the hours to match what you worked.)

If you have more than one job and record duplicate hours, the WorkDay timekeeping system will identify this – and this is, of course, against the law.

How Does My Federal Work-Study (FWS) Award Work?
• FWS award calculations are based on your financial need; thus, an academic-year award does not guarantee a summer award, and vice versa.
• Your FWS award is for a specific employment period – academic year or summer.
• Academic-year work-study awards can be earned in one semester or spread across the academic year.
• FWS funding not used during an academic year or summer does not roll over. You must apply for FWS for the academic year, and then again for the summer, if you wish to work during this time.
• The FWS balance you do not earn cannot be converted to cash, nor can it be applied to your Bursar balance. Basically, if you don’t use it, you lose it.
• Students are automatically terminated at the end of the academic year and at the end of the summer employment session.

Your employer will be billed for your wages at 100% (as opposed to 10-25%) if any of the following occur:
• You earn wages in excess of your Federal Work-Study award;
• You work prior to receiving your appointment email;
• You lose your work-study eligibility and continue to work; or
• You submit hours to be paid after the end of the academic year or summer for which you were hired.
How much may I earn?
You may earn the amount stated in your financial-aid package as a Federal Work-Study award. This figure is equal to your “gross wages,” not the taxable portion of your earnings. If you have more than one work-study position, remember to add earnings from all jobs when calculating how much of your award remains.

How many jobs may I have?
You may hold multiple jobs, as your schedule permits, as long as you:
• Do not work more than a total of 20 hours a week during the academic year;
• Do not exceed your FWS award for that term (academic year or summer);
• Are not working when you are schedule to attend class, lab, or exams; and
• Share this information with your supervisors, so they understand that wages are being earned from multiple jobs.

FWS award reduction or cancellation
Your FWS eligibility can be reduced or cancelled by the Office of Financial Aid at any time based on changes to your financial-aid package and/or status at Cornell.

Status Changes
Changes that directly affect financial-aid eligibility or your employment eligibility include:
• Taking a leave of absence or withdrawing from Cornell;
• Registering for part-time enrollment;
• Registration holds, including bursar, dean’s, Office of Judicial Administrator, and medical holds;
• Not maintaining satisfactory academic progress; and
• Receiving outside funding or scholarships.

Be sure to email the CWSP Coordinator about any of these status changes. If you do not contact the CWSP Coordinator and you continue to work, your hours may be charged 100% to your employer.

Running Out of Federal Work-Study
When you have earned 75% of your FWS award, you will receive an email from the Office of Student Employment with a subject heading “FWS Warning Notification.”

If your FWS award is depleted or low, you have the following options:
• First: Petition your Financial Aid counselor for an increase to your FWS award. Do not wait to look into this option; it should be done immediately. During this period, you are not eligible to work.
• Second: If you are a Cornell Tradition Fellow, notify the Cornell Tradition office that you have exhausted your Federal Work-Study award. The Tradition office will notify the CWSP Coordinator with proper documentation.
• Third: Ask your employer if they are able to pay 100% of your wages. If yes, they need to communicate this in writing to the CWSP Coordinator.

If your FWS award is increased, it is your responsibility to notify the CWSP Coordinator immediately.

Payroll Policies and Resources

To View the Payroll Schedule
Visit Pay Calendars and scroll down to “Nonexempt Biweekly Calendar.”

Meal Breaks
Meal breaks are New York State law and must be provided and taken. Meal breaks are unpaid. Learn more by reading Meal Periods.

Direct Deposit
We encourage students to sign up for direct deposit to ensure timely delivery of paychecks. If students do not sign up for direct deposit, their paychecks will be mailed to their local address on file in Student Essentials (click on “Personal,” then “Update Addresses”).

Will taxes be taken out of my check?
Yes, your income is subject to tax withholding. You are responsible for completing required federal or state tax withholding forms through WorkDay. For instructions, read the PDF, “How to Update Your Federal and State Withholding Allowances.” If you need further information, Tax Withholdings and Forms or contact the Payroll Office at 607-255-5194 or uco-payroll@cornell.edu.

May I work during university breaks?
During breaks (winter, spring, and summer), you may work full-time as long as you are not taking classes. Your supervisor must approve your request to work during a school break.

Can I view my paycheck online?
Why didn’t I get my paycheck?
You may have forgotten to submit your hours in WorkDay, or, if you don’t have Direct Deposit, you may need to check that your correct local address is listed in Student Essentials (click on “Personal,” then “Update Addresses”).

Holiday, Vacation, and Sick Pay
FWS will not subsidize student wages on federal holidays (see Important CWSP Program Dates). If a student works on a federal holiday, including remotely, the student cannot be paid with work-study; the employer will be billed 100% of the student’s wages for that day at an overtime rate of time-and-a-half. FWS will also not subsidize vacation or sick pay for student employees.

Reunion
If you have a FWS job and want to work during Reunion (June), you are not allowed to work simultaneously at your CWSP job during this period.

Jury Duty
If a student serves on a jury, FWS will not pay for any portion of the student’s wage or jury fee. The off-campus employer is the employer of record, and the jury fee is paid by New York State or by the employer, depending on the day of service and size of employer. To learn more about jury duty regulations, read Jury Information for Employers or contact the CWSP Coordinator.

May I change jobs or quit?
Yes, you may change jobs or quit, but you must give your current employer adequate (i.e., two weeks’) notice, and you must notify CWSP of your intentions. Be sure to submit your time in WorkDay by the end of your last day on the job.

To change jobs, you will be required to come to CWSP in the Public Service Center, 300 Kennedy Hall, and complete another Student Information Form for the new position.

Can my off-campus employer fire me?
Yes. Your off-campus employer/supervisor has the right to dismiss you for unsatisfactory job performance. This may include, but is not limited to:
• Repeated failure to comply with the agreed work schedule;
• Unwillingness to accomplish assigned tasks;
• Insubordination or lack of cooperation which results in disturbing other workers or work progress; and
• Illicit behavior, such as falsifying timecards; stealing; or misuse of computers, phones, or other equipment, etc.
You may also be dismissed due to changes in the employer’s available funding and/or because you have run out of federal work study eligibility.

If you feel that you have been unjustly terminated from a position, speak to the Associate Director of the Public Service Center, 300 Kennedy Hall.

**CWSP Listserv**
Supervisors and students will be added to CWSP listserv during their participation with CWSP. This listserv is used to communicate important payroll and employment information, as well as, awards and funding that may be of interest to employers or students.

**Program Calendar**
Please take a moment to check out our Important CWSP Program Dates.

**Evaluations**
How do I give CWSP feedback on my job?
Federal Work-Study regulations require that both you and your supervisor complete evaluations at the end of your 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.

**Summer Employment**

Summer Federal Work-Study awards are separate from awards for the academic year.

**Am I Eligible?**
- You must be registered as full-time for the current spring semester.
- You must intend to register as full-time for the upcoming fall semester.

**Process to Apply for Summer Work-Study Funding**
- Are you taking classes – 6 credits or more? Then you apply for a summer financial-aid package that includes federal work study. Students can read Summer Session Financial Aid for more information.
- You are not taking classes or less than 6 credits – download the Summer Federal Work-Study Application, complete section 1, and email, fax, mail, or bring it to the CWSP Coordinator.

**How Do I Get Paid?**
Visit the Payroll: How Do I get Paid section of the website.
How many hours may I 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).

Useful Contacts

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Ithaca, New York 14853-1601
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Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment
203 Day Hall
Cornell University
Ph: 607-255-5145
Fax: 607-254-1586
Financial Aid: https://finaid.cornell.edu
Student Employment: https://studentemployment.cornell.edu
Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except Tue 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Telephone Hours: Mon-Fri 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Financial Aid: finaid@cornell.edu
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