



Federal Work Study (FWS) Student and Supervisor Guide

Diora Hong

Federal Work Study Advisor

El Camino College | Financial Aid

(310) 660-3593 x3150

dhong@elcamino.edu

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>What is Federal Work Study (FWS)</i>	3
<i>Who is eligible for Federal Work Study?</i>	3
<i>FWS process for students</i>	3
<i>Student responsibilities</i>	4
<i>Steps to hiring FWS students</i>	4
<i>Supervisor responsibilities</i>	4
<i>Working During Winter Session</i>	5
<i>The Last Day of Work</i>	5
<i>Financial Aid Award/FWS Revisions</i>	5
<i>Award Increases</i>	5
<i>Hourly Rate</i>	6
<i>Student Pay Rates</i>	6
<i>Payroll</i>	7
<i>Termination</i>	7
<i>Rest Period</i>	7
<i>Meal Period</i>	7
<i>Sick Leave</i>	8

Introduction

Employment opportunities for students are designed to provide a balance between the academic pursuits of a student and the operational needs of a department. Student workers are not meant to be ongoing or permanent workers of the District or to be utilized as replacements for regular classified positions.

As a supervisor of a FWS student, you are an important part of the program. The purpose of this guide is to inform you about the policies and procedures of the FWS Program.

What is Federal Work Study (FWS)

The Federal Work-Study Program (FWS) is a federally funded program and is awarded to eligible students through the Financial Aid Office at El Camino College. The FWS Program affords students with an opportunity to work on or off campus and earn money to supplement expenses not covered by grants or loans. Additionally, students obtain valuable experience that may lead to their future career.

Who is eligible for Federal Work Study?

To be eligible for a FWS award, a student must:

- Complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Be determined eligible and receive a FWS award
- Be enrolled in at least six (6) units each semester (Fall and Spring)
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

FWS process for students

- Students interested in participating in FWS may submit a FWS Job Request Form beginning July 1st. A new job request form must be submitted each year the student wishes to participate.
- Student eligibility is reviewed by the Financial Aid Office and eligible students are awarded FWS.
- Approved students will receive a FWS Approval Notice via email, which will include a link to the FWS job listings.
- Students may contact departments on the job listing to inquire about employment opportunities and potential interviews.
- Once hired, students will be contact by Human Resources (HR) to complete the on-boarding process. Students must review, complete, and submit all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office, HR, and the employing department supervisor.
- Once cleared by HR to begin working, students may work through the last day of the academic year or until their FWS funds are exhausted, whichever comes first.

Student responsibilities

- Notify the supervisor as soon as possible of any necessary changes to the work schedule.
- Inform both the supervisor and the Financial Aid Office of any changes to name or enrollment status.
- Monitor earnings to ensure they do not exceed the assigned Federal Work-Study semester award. When nearing the award limit, students should consult with their supervisor. Supervisors should contact the FWS Coordinator to request an award increase, if applicable.
- Must stop working under the FWS program when the FWS award has been exhausted.

Steps to hiring FWS students

- **Complete the FWS Student Employee Request (Job Posting) Form**
The hiring department must complete the **FWS Student Employee Request (Job Posting) Form**, which includes details such as the job description, wage rate, and other pertinent information for the student worker position(s) to be filled. To ensure compliance with federal regulations, this form must be submitted and approved by the Financial Aid Office each academic year, even if the position(s) were posted or approved in previous years.
- **Verify Student Eligibility Prior to Interviewing**
Before interviewing a student, the hiring department must confirm the student's FWS eligibility by requesting documentation such as a **FWS Approval Notice** or a **Financial Aid Award Letter**.
- **Submit the FWS Student Worker Payroll Authorization**
The hiring department must complete and submit the **FWS Student Worker Authorization Form**. This authorization is required for Human Resources and Payroll processing and must be approved by the Dean or Vice President, Financial Aid Office, and Human Resources. Once approved, Human Resources will notify the department or supervisor and coordinate the student's onboarding process. If supervisors are hiring the same students who have worked for them in previous years, this form still needs to be completed and submitted each academic year.
- Inform Human Resources via email with your student employee's name and email.
- Wait for Human Resources approval before allowing the student to begin working.

Supervisor responsibilities

- Complete and submit the FWS Student Employee Request (Job Posting) Form for the appropriate academic year.
- Verify student's eligibility prior to interviewing/hiring.
- Submit the FWS Student Worker Authorization Form for the appropriate academic year when you decide to hire the student.
- Provide supervision to your student employee(s).
- Provide reasonable accommodations for student workers with approved accommodations through the Special Resource Center (SRC). The supervisor will be

- notified when a student worker has approved accommodations from the SRC.
- Monitor total hours worked each month to ensure students do not exceed their award limits or the maximum of 20 work hours per week. It is recommended that each supervisor establishes a policy for recording time worked daily.
 - Email approved timesheets to the Financial Aid Office each month for verification purposes.
 - Notify the Federal Work Study Coordinator if a student employee is terminated or has not reported to work.
 - Assume full financial responsibility for student earnings that exceed the FWS award and for any period during which the student is or was ineligible to work under FWS.

Working During Winter Session

During the winter intersession, students enrolled in at least three (3) units qualify for the “FICA exception” as a student worker and may work up to 25 hours per week. Student not enrolled in winter intersession but who completed coursework at El Camino the previous semester (fall) and can verify their enrollment for the upcoming spring semester also qualify for the FICA exemption, provided the winter intersession is five weeks or less and they have remaining funds in their award to earn. The 25-hours weekly maximum applies regardless of winter intersession enrollment.

The Last Day of Work

Students who are graduating or transferring may only work until the last day of the spring semester. Returning students may continue working until June 30th as long as they meet the following conditions:

- Students must have an award left to earn
- They must be enrolled in at least six (6) units during upcoming fall semester
- Students must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Financial Aid Award/FWS Revisions

Federal Work Study awards are based on a student’s cost of attendance. Because FWS is considered *self-help* financial aid, students must earn their funds by working.

Financial Aid Offices are required to prioritize financial aid, with grants awarded first and FWS considered second priority. A student’s Work Study Award may be reduced if they later become eligible for additional grants such as Cal Grant and Scholarships. Departments will be informed as soon as possible if any changes to a student’s FWS award occur.

Award Increases

Some students may be eligible to have their FWS award increased; the decision to increase a student’s award is based on eligibility and funding availability. To request an increase, please wait until your student has earned 50% of their award and send an email to dhong@elcamino.edu.

Hourly Rate

All students must be paid based on duties performed; refer to [The Human Resources webpage](#) for salary schedules. Financial Aid allows departments to set their employee's hourly rate; however, hourly rates must reflect job duties. For example, the hourly rate for students with no previous experience should be the minimum wage. As a reminder, Student Workers cannot exceed 20 hours of work per week.

Student Pay Rates

Student pay rates and their affiliated position titles are established by Human Resources and approved by the Board, effective January 1, 2026. A student's starting pay rate and any subsequent pay increases are determined by the supervisor and based on the scope of work being done and the level of support provided by the student position.

Student Worker Salary Schedule Effective January 1, 2026		
Position Title	Pay Rate	Job Duty Description
Student Worker 2	\$17.00	Provides very basic support working under direct supervision. Performs manual and/or quasi-clerical tasks that require no specialized knowledge, skills, experience, or training. May require minimal computer literacy. Some specialized knowledge, skills, experience, or training is required in order to perform duties adequately. Performs general and specialized tasks under direct supervision. May require prior experience or proficiency with some computer software.
Student Worker 3	\$18.00	Some level of specialized knowledge, skills, experience, or training is required. Performs general or specialized tasks using some independent judgment with little to minimal supervision. Should require prior experience or proficiency with some computer software.
Student Worker 4	\$19.00	Requires the use of specialized knowledge, skills, experience or training to perform specialized tasks. Works with minimal supervision. Requires prior experience and knowledge in a specialized skillset and/or software within the department/office setting. Must be able to direct the work of other student workers when needed.
Student Worker 5	\$20.00	Performs technically difficult work requiring the use of specialized technical knowledge and skills. This student is able to work independently

		with minimum supervision. Must be able to direct the work of other student workers when needed. Should be highly proficient concerning the technical, laboratory support of faculty and/or staff to perform daily responsibilities.
--	--	---

**Note there is no Student Worker 1.*

Payroll

Student employees are paid on the 10th of each month for hours worked during the previous pay period. It is very important that timesheets are submitted in a timely manner to ensure students receive their pay on time. If the 10th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, paychecks will be mailed on the Friday prior. Please note that students may elect to receive their pay via direct deposit. For assistance with direct deposit, students should contact the Payroll Office.

Termination

Students must stop working if any of the following occur:

- Their enrollment drops below six (6) units.
- They fail to meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). For more information regarding SAP please visit the [Financial Aid website](#).
- They have earned their full Federal Work Study Award for the semester and are not eligible for an award increase.
- They are notified by the Financial Aid Office or their supervisor that they must stop working due to other eligibility changes.
- They have reached the last day of Spring semester. Any unearned FWS funds remaining at the end of the Spring semester (or the end of the designated award period) cannot be claimed, paid out, or carried over to the next academic year.
- They are not meeting the department's expectations.

In accordance with the State of California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, the following applies to rest and meal periods:

Rest Period

Employers are required to give each employee a paid break for each four (4) hours worked. This period is not to exceed twenty (20) minutes.

Meal Period

Employees are entitled to a minimum thirty (30) minute duty-free, non-paid meal period for every five (5) hours worked. The employee cannot work more than five hours per day without a meal period.

*The exception to this may occur when, through mutual consent of both the employer and employee, the meal period may be waived if the employee does not work more than six (6) hours.

Sick Leave

Forty (40) hours of paid sick leave is granted to employees 90 calendar days after their hire date. Sick leave does not carry over to subsequent academic years.

An employer shall provide paid sick days upon the oral or written request of an employee for any of the following:

For the Employee:	For the Employee and/or Their Family Members:
To serve on a jury	Diagnosis, care or treatment of an existing health condition or preventive care
To appear in court to comply with a subpoena or other court order as a witness in a judicial proceeding	Attend judicial proceeding related to being a victim of a violent or serious felony or other specified serious offenses
For an employee who is a victim of a qualifying act of violence to obtain relief, including a restraining order, to help ensure the health, safety, or welfare of the victim or their child	For specified victim-related relief and services, for an employee who is a victim or whose family member is a victim of a qualifying act of violence if the employee works for an employer with 25 or more employees

Minimum Usage Increment

The minimum sick leave usage increment is 2 hours.

*Unused sick leave does not carry over to the following year.

Sick Leave Account (All Departments Except Grant-Funded Programs):

FWS funds may only be used for student wage earnings and do not cover sick leave.

Account number **11-52350-00-679000-8102** (Fund 11) may be used to cover eligible FWS student sick leave.