Federal Work-study FAQs

How may I apply for Federal Work-study?
Each year, you should apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov. Be sure to indicate your preference for Federal Work-study on the FAFSA.

When should I apply?
Applications for the upcoming school year are accepted beginning Jan. 1 of each year. As with many financial aid programs, Federal Work-study funding is limited, so you should apply as soon after Jan. 1 as you are able.

Once I receive a Federal Work-study award, will I automatically receive one the following year?
No. You must reapply for financial aid each school year. Also, you must apply separately for summer I and summer II financial aid. The summer I application will be available in February each year, and the summer II application will be available in April each year.

Who qualifies for Federal Work-study?
Students are awarded college Federal Work-study based on criteria such as demonstrated financial need, previous Federal Work-study experience and Federal Work-study preference indicated on the FAFSA. Because Federal Work-study is a financial aid program, you must meet general eligibility criteria, including Satisfactory Academic Progress. If you fail to maintain SAP, your Federal Work-study award may be canceled.

How many hours may I work?
The amount of your Federal Work-study award, your hourly rate of pay, and the number of weeks you intend to work during the semester will be the primary determinants of the number of hours you may work each week. WMU policy also places limits on the number of hours that a student may work. For more information about the University’s limits please visit wmich.edu/career/campus.

How is a Federal Work-study position different from other student positions?
Federal Work-study positions differ from other student positions in the source of funds that pay the employee. You report to a job, and earn a paycheck in the same manner as other student positions. Additionally, wages earned through Federal Work-study are permitted a special exclusion in the earned income section of the student's following year’s FAFSA. (Contact a financial aid advisor for more information about this exclusion.)

What kinds of jobs are available in the Federal Work-study Program?
Most on campus student positions are available to students who wish to earn their Federal Work-study awards. WMU also offers off-campus opportunities with community service agencies and local schools. Some students choose jobs in fields related to their major course of study. Others choose positions of personal interest that complement their educational experience.

Where should I look for a job?
You may find a position by browsing handshake online. You may also find unique opportunities by talking with campus staff, instructors and other students. For personal assistance with your job search, please contact Career and Student Employment Services at (269) 387-2745.

I may not be enrolled for summer I or summer II classes, but I would like to continue working my Federal Work-study job. Is that possible?
No. WMU requires that a student maintain at least half-time enrollment during any term in which they are employed under the Federal Work-study program. Discuss your plans with your supervisor. They may offer other options that make it possible for you to continue working outside of the Federal Work-study program.

What if I don’t want to work?
If you do not wish to earn your Federal Work-study award, please cancel your award by completing the student financial aid adjustment form. Other students may be waiting for funds to be released, and they will benefit from your early response.