

Federal Work-Study Program

Student Guide

2023-2024



Financial Aid

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Room 3220 | www.essex.edu/fa

I. Introduction

This guide was developed to familiarize students with the various policies and procedures affecting the Federal Work-Study Program at Essex County College. It is advised that all participating Federal Work-Study students keep a copy of this guide for their reference and to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of the program.

II. About Federal Work-Study (FWS)

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program is a Title IV, HEA program that “provides part-time employment to students attending institutions of higher education who need the earnings to help meet their costs of postsecondary education and encourage students receiving FWS assistance to participate in community service activities”. [34 CFR 675.1(a)] Jobs are required “to the maximum extent possible” to “compliment and reinforce the educational program or vocational goals of the student”. [34 CFR 675.21(a)(2)(b)(2)(i)-(ii)].

Federal Work-Study is not a grant program and does not get applied against the student’s College billing. An eligible student must earn the funds while working in a FWS job. Earned funds are delivered to the student through the College’s payroll process.

Participating institutions award Federal Work-Study based on an annual appropriation received from the US Department of Education. Funds are limited. Every effort is made to spread the annual appropriation out so as to assist as many students as possible. Applications for Federal Work-Study are processed starting in April on a first-come, first served basis.

Essex County College Non-Discrimination Policy

Essex County College does not deny admission to any educational program or activity or deny employment on the basis of any legally protected status or discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin, citizenship, color, sex/gender, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, age, creed, religion, actual or perceived disability (including persons associated with such a person), arrest and/or conviction record, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender expression and/or identity, an individual’s genetic information, domestic violence victim status, familial status or marital status, or any other category protected by law. Essex County College is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.”

Contact information for the Section 504 Coordinator and Title IX Coordinator:

Section 504 Coordinator
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303 University Avenue, Newark NJ 07102
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Title IX Coordinator
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Associate Director of Human Resources
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III. Program Administration

Under the administrative capability requirements of Title IV regulations, administration of student financial assistance programs is divided so that no one office or individual controls a process in order to create a system of internal checks and balances. The administration of the Federal Work-Study program is coordinated by the Financial Aid Office and the Office of Student Development & Counseling (SDC).

Financial Aid Office

973-877-3097 or 973-877-3200

- General oversight for compliance with Federal Work-Study regulations per 34 CFR 675 and internal policies and procedures.
- Collection, processing and maintenance of all completed FWS applications.
- Evaluates applicants for eligibility and notifies students on eligibility through notices.
- Processing of all FWS awards.
- Retains application and eligibility information pertinent to the student.
- Collection of completed FWS assignment packets.
- Distribution, collection and maintenance of Federal Work-Study evaluations.
- Monitoring of earned hours of each FWS student to prevent overfunding.
- Processing of job referrals, and verification of FWS participation for outside agencies.
- Approval of job descriptions for FWS positions.
- Initiating dismissals of FWS as appropriate.
- Maintaining direct communication with the Payroll Department and SDC.

Payroll Department

Phone: 973-877-3045 or 973-877-3046

- Processes time reported by employing offices.
- Disburses FWS earnings based on verified time worked by the student

Office of Student Development & Counseling (SDC)

Phone: 973-877-3399 or 973-877-3350

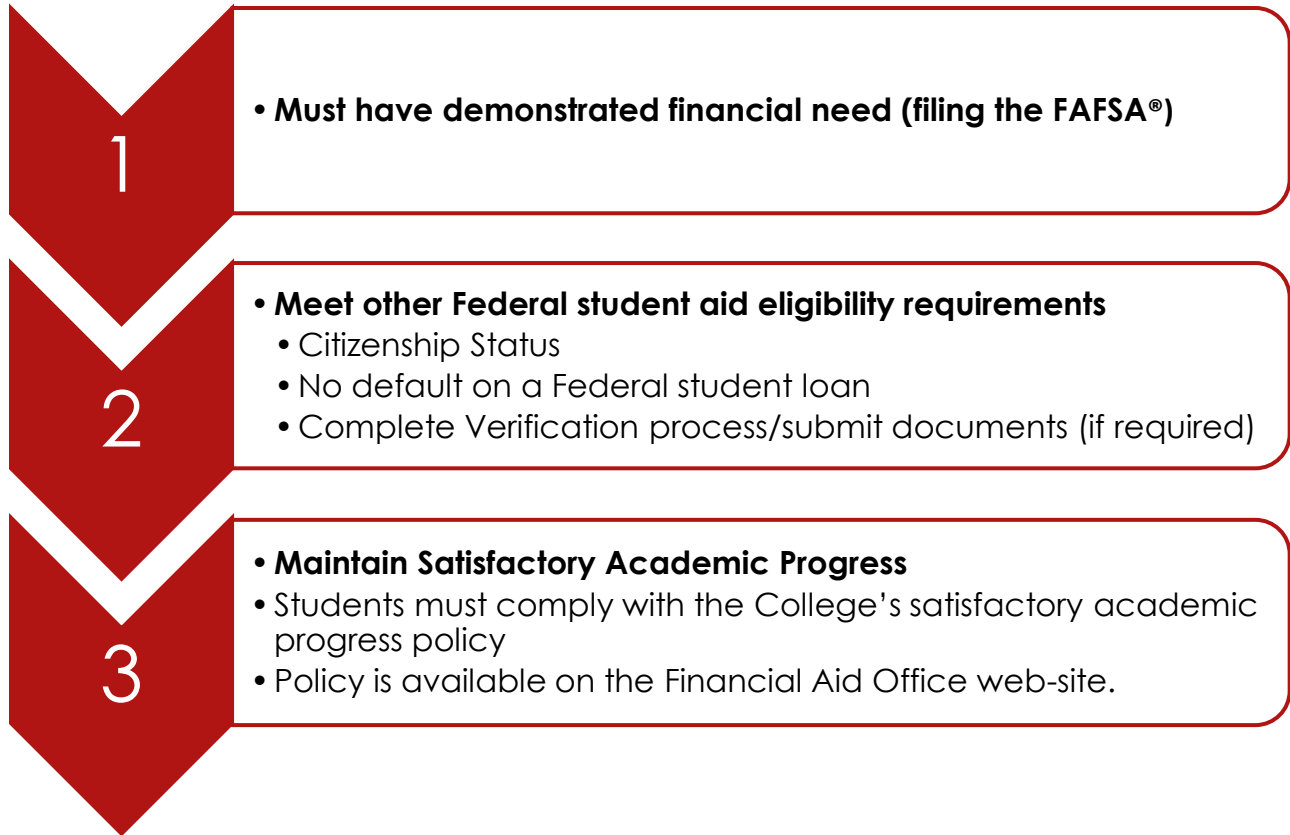
- Selects and assigns students who have accepted FWS awards to employing areas.
- Notifies students new to the FWS program to attend the mandatory orientation workshop.
- Creating and distributing FWS assignment packets for both new and returning students with FWS awards.
- Maintains copies of assignment sheets and applications within mandated records retention time frames.
- Maintaining direct communication with departmental supervisors and FWS participants and responding to their needs and concerns.
- Administration of the Kronos time keeping system for FWS administration including creation and maintenance of all such records in the system
- Initiating transfers or dismissals of FWS students as appropriate.

Employing Department

- Creation and submission of job descriptions for review and approval.
- Interviews all new FWS students assigned to their office.
- Verifies work hours as noted in the Kronos timekeeping system

IV. Eligibility

In order to become eligible for Federal Work-Study, a student must comply with certain policies and procedures as mandated by the federal government as well as Essex County College.



Applications for Federal Work-Study, like all Title IV, HEA programs, must be reviewed based on the creation of a Cost of Attendance (COA) budget, as mandated by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (Section 472).

A budget must be constructed by the Financial Aid Office that includes the following variables:

- tuition and fees
- room and board (or living expenses, in the case of students living at home or with parents)
- an estimate for books and supplies
- an estimate for transportation costs
- an estimate for miscellaneous expenses.

The Cost of Attendance budget for Federal Work-Study, per statute, is the following expression: COA Budget – all student financial aid = NEED

Example:

COA Budget of \$8000

Student has the following student aid awards:

\$3125 Pell Grant

\$200 SEOG Grant

\$1902 TAG Grant

\$750 EOF Grant

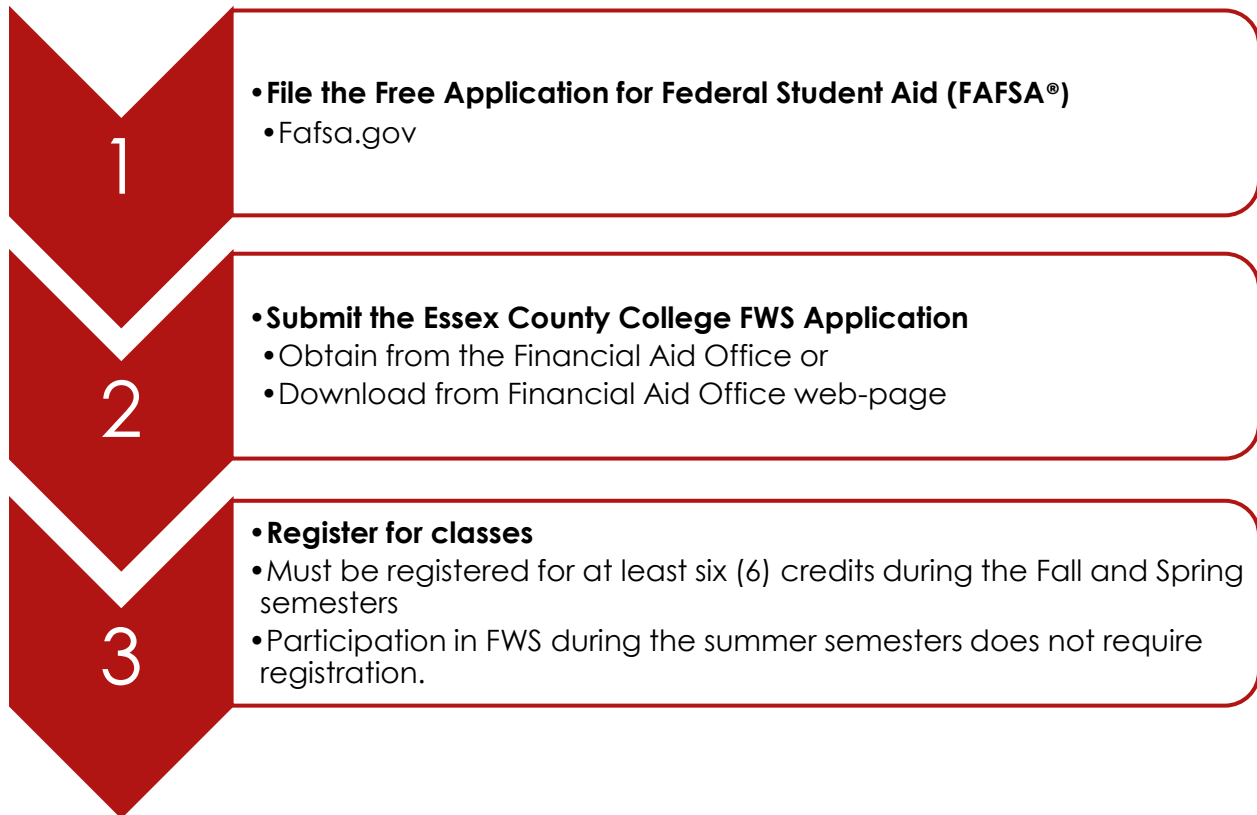
Total Aid = \$5977

COA (\$8000) minus all aid (\$5977) equals
\$2023 (unmet need)

\$2023 becomes the maximum amount for which the student can be offered to earn through employment in a FWS job.

***Note:** FWS is limited. A student who has remaining need in their budget is not necessarily entitled to participate in the program. The Financial Aid office determines how many students are eligible to work during each academic term based on FWS funds available. Eligible students are selected on a first come, first serve basis.

V. Application and Placement Process



Note: If you are unable to file the FAFSA® using the web application, you can download and submit the paper version. Processing of the paper version, however, is significantly longer than from submitting via the web or the mobile app.

For assistance on how to file the FAFSA®, see these resources:

- Filling out the FAFSA®: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>
- 8 Steps to Apply for Federal and State Aid: https://www.hesaa.org/Documents/8_steps_howToApply.pdf
- Resources: <https://studentaid.gov/resources>

Student must complete and submit the FWS Application to the Financial Aid Office.

- Applications will only be accepted if all other required documentation has been received by the Financial Aid Office.
- Applications will be made available from the third Monday in April to the third Thursday in August each academic year (unless otherwise specified by the Financial Aid Office).
- An email will be sent within two (2) weeks to confirm that the FWS application has been received.

Once received, the Financial Aid Office will review the FWS application for eligibility.

- Students who are on Financial Aid probation may participate, however their academic standing will be reviewed each semester to determine continued eligibility.
- If the student is determined to be eligible, FWS funds will be posted to their account. *Students must be hired by the second week of the Fall semester or their award will be cancelled.*
- If a student's file is under review, their application will remain on file in the Financial Aid Office until a determination is made and a notice will be sent.
- If a student is denied due to lack of funds, but is otherwise eligible, their application will remain active in the Financial Aid Office and a notice will be sent.
- If the student is determined to **not** be eligible, they will receive a notice.

For those who are determined eligible, their applications will be sent to the Office of Student Development and Counseling (SDC) who will review the applicants for potential job placement.

- Placement is determined by matching major, experience and skills against job descriptions.
- Students must have the skills and ability to meet the job requirements established by the department/office/agency to where the student is referred
- Some students may receive assignment in other areas if the preferred areas are unavailable
- Submission of an application for FWS does not guarantee placement

Students will be contacted by the SDC office to attend a mandatory orientation.

- During the orientation FWS staff will review the rules and regulations for maintaining eligibility in the FWS program

Upon completion of the Orientation, students will pick up assignment packets for their placement from the SDC office.

- New FWS students will be interviewed by their assigned department.
- Returning FWS students are normally reassigned to their same department unless otherwise noted.
- Students must ensure the assignment packet is completed in its entirety and all signatures are present.

Once completed, the student will bring the assignment packet to the Financial Aid Office.

- It will be reviewed for completeness and signatures.
- A start date, end date and the student's maximum FWS award and hours for the semester will be recorded on the assignment sheet.
- Forms will be separated and explained to the student how the forms should be utilized and who should receive the copies.

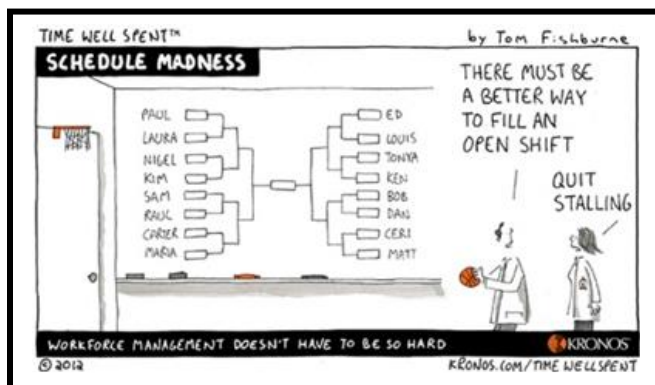
The student will then return to the SDC office to be enrolled/activated in Kronos.

- The student will not be compensated for hours worked prior to the start date indicated on the assignment sheet or as determined by SDC.

Important items to note:

- The FWS Application will only be accepted once all other Financial Aid documents have been received if required.
- If the student's file becomes incomplete after the FWS application has been submitted, the FWS Application will be returned to the student.
 - The student will need to return to the Financial Aid Office to submit all outstanding documents in addition to the FWS application.
- The FWS application will not be processed until the file has been reviewed and eligibility determined.
- The submission of a FWS application or determination of 'eligible' does not guarantee that a student will be placed in a FWS position.
- All notifications will be sent to the student via email.
- All FWS participants must maintain a code of conduct and decorum in their position as they would in any employment environment.

VI. Work Schedules



Students must meet with their supervisors no later than their first week of work to discuss their work schedule.

Guidelines:

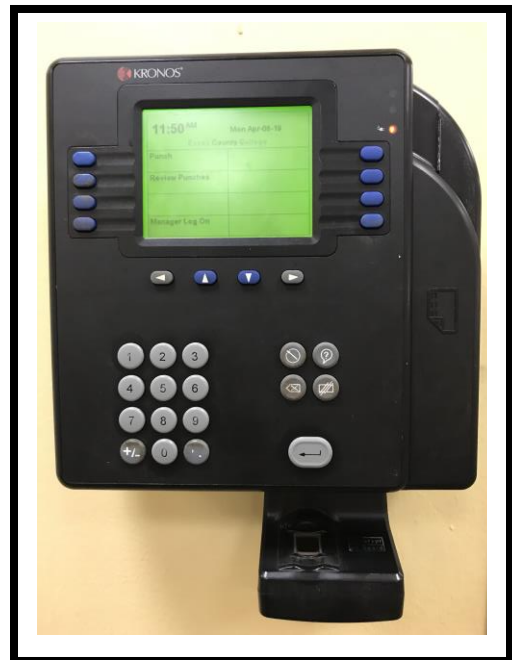
- Students are **not** allowed to work more than fifteen (15) hours per week unless otherwise specified by the Financial Aid Office.
- Students are **not** allowed to work during scheduled class hours **unless** the class(es) have been cancelled or rescheduled.
- Students are **not** allowed to work during official college closings or holidays.
- Students should **only** be allowed to work when their supervisor (or designated full-time staff member) is present and within the hours of operation for that department.
- Students may work on Saturdays provided the authorization to do so has been received from the supervisor AND that their supervisor (or designated full-time staff member) is present within the department during those hours.
- Students should contact their supervisor(s) to inform them of absences or if they anticipate arriving late to the work site.

VII. Time and Attendance

Kronos is a Touch ID biometrics time clock that is used to record time and attendance. Rather than use a key, code or chip to identify the user, it relies on a unique identifier of the user such as a hand print, finger print, finger vein, palm vein, etc. Our system requires a single finger scan to identify an individual.

Federal Work-Study personnel must first be enrolled in Kronos by the FWS coordinator in the SDC Office. Starting with the first day of their assignment, students are expected to sign in and sign out using the Kronos system via one of the Kronos keypads located throughout the College. When a student leaves the work site to attend class they should log out and log back upon returning to the work site.

Students will also be required to use internal sign-in/out sheets to further confirm the students work schedule and attendance. These sheets must be verified by their FWS supervisor, as to ensure compliance with the FWS policies and procedures and to ensure accuracy and appropriate internal controls as well.



VIII. Payment Process

The current pay rate for Federal Work-Study students is the prevailing minimum wage required in the State of New Jersey by statute (NJ Public Law 2019, c. 32):

Effective January 1st, 2023, the minimum wage required for pay is **\$14.13** per hour

Effective January 1st, 2024, the minimum wage required for pay is **\$15.00** per hour.

Taxes will not be withheld from a student's earnings if the student is registered for classes during a semester when he or she is participating in the FWS Program.

Students are paid bi-weekly. The Essex County College Payroll Department generates paychecks or electronic transfers (Direct Deposits) for each FWS participant from time recorded in Kronos.

To ensure accurate and timely pay, the student must:

- ✓ Report to work on time.
- ✓ Log into Kronos prior to arriving at the work site and log out of Kronos upon leaving the work site.
- ✓ Sign in and out accordingly, even when you leave for class and planning to return to the work site. Please note that all students must take at least a thirty (30) minute break if they anticipate working six (6) or more consecutive hours in one day. **The Payroll Department will automatically deduct thirty minutes from a student who worked six or more consecutive hours in one day even if the time sheet does not reflect a break period.**
- ✓ Not exceed the weekly maximum number of hours as established by the Financial Aid Office.
- ✓ Ensure that there are no conflicts between the time reported on the internal sign-in sheets and the time reported in Kronos.

Students will not be paid for breaks, time lost due to illness, extended absences for any reason, or college closings.

NOTE: If the college is closed on a scheduled pay day, FWS personnel who are paid by check will not be able to secure their check until the college reopens. We strongly recommend that FWS personnel sign up for direct deposit. Direct Deposit forms are available in SDC and the Payroll Office.

All FWS personnel will receive a Federal W-2 at the end of the year for tax filing purposes.

Remaining Hours

The completed assignment sheet reflects the total FWS award for each semester(s); that award is further divided into the maximum number of hours a student may work for those semesters. When time worked is submitted for payment, the hours (and dollars) are deducted from the initial FWS award.

IX. Warning Letter and Stop Letters

Warning letters are produced and sent to students when the hours remaining are equal to or less than the maximum number of hours a student is allowed to work within a pay period (two weeks).

For example, during the fall and spring semesters, a student may work a maximum of fifteen (15) hours per week – a grand total of thirty (30) hours for the pay period. A student would be sent a warning letter when remaining hours were equal to or less than thirty (30).

Stop letters are produced and sent to students for a variety of reasons (e.g. total withdrawals, no-shows, notification of loan default, etc.) for which the student will be notified. **The student must stop working immediately, the supervisor will be notified, and they will be deactivated in Kronos.**

X. Dismissals and Termination

Oftentimes a FWS participant's assignment may end prematurely due to **dismissal** or **termination** from an assignment. A **permanent** dismissal means that the student is prohibited from participating in the FWS Program while attending Essex County College. The SDC Office will collect the data concerning the incident and the Financial Aid Office will forward a letter of dismissal to the student.

Dismissal

Dismissals are permanent.

Reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Breach of the Privacy Certification.
- Falsifying/manipulating time worked either in Kronos or on the departmental sign-in sheet.
- Negative interactions with staff or students.
- Insubordination.
- Misconduct not in the interest of the FWS Program and Essex County College.

Causal Termination

Causal terminations are generally not permanent.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Exhausted FWS award.
- Financial Aid/Academic probation.
- Total withdrawal or total no-show from classes during work-study assignment.
- Failure to submit required documents for financial aid file.

Automatic Termination

Students may receive a verbal or written warning; however immediate termination may be required in certain circumstances.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to carry out required tasks reasonably.
- Unexcused absences from work (time and attendance).
- Inappropriate interactions with staff or students.

XI. Resignation

Situations arise where a student can no longer remain a participant of the FWS Program and has to end the assignment. If this is the case, it is recommended that the student submit a letter of resignation to the supervisor, with a copy to the Office of Student Development & Counseling (SDC) and the Financial Aid Office, **two weeks** prior to the effective date.

Situations also arise where a department wishes to transfer a FWS student to the college's part-time or permanent payroll. **FWS participants may not work under two payrolls simultaneously.** The student must formally resign from his or her FWS position prior to being hired part-time. The resignation must be typed or written and include an end date – the last day for work should be the end of a FWS payroll period. This document should be submitted to the student's supervisor, with a copy to SDC office, the Financial Aid Office, and Human Resources, prior to the student being placed on the college payroll.

XII. Transfers

Transfers from one department to another are conducted on occasion to accommodate the needs and desires of students and supervisors alike. Depending on the situation and the availability of FWS slots in other departments, the SDC office will try to place students in areas of interest or areas related to their major, upon request. Before starting their new assignment, the student must follow the same procedures outlined in the Application and Placement section of this guide: the student must receive a new assignment packet from the SDC office and report to the newly designated area to have all forms completed and signed. These forms must then be submitted to the Financial Aid Office for processing and returned to the SDC office.

NOTE: Neither supervisors nor students are to conduct transfers. If there is any scenario requiring a transfer, the SDC office must be notified.

XIII. Community Service

The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 mandated that a percentage of Federal Work-Study funds are to be allocated towards community service. Community service includes, but is not limited to the areas of welfare, social services, transportation, recreation, crime prevention and control, support services for students with disabilities, and mentoring activities.

Participation in community service agencies/organizations can be with a public non-profit or private for-profit institution, and is not limited to work on campus. Essex County College must establish an agreement with any eligible outside organization prior to any work-study providing services for that particular organization. Any student interested in participating in community service work-study must contact the SDC for details.

XIV. Summer Employment

Students are allowed to participate in the Federal Work-Study Program during the summer sessions. While the requirements for the summer sessions are basically the same as those for Fall and Spring (i.e., academic progress, remaining need, and satisfactory attendance), **there are additional items that students must be aware of:**

- Students do not have to register for classes to participate in the FWS program for summer semesters; however the student's wages will be taxed if they are not enrolled in classes.
- If the student registers for either Summer Session I or Summer Session II, tuition and fees for either semester must be paid in full.
- The number of participants and hours allotted during Summer I are contingent upon available funds.
- Students must certify their intent to register for the following semester (Fall) if they participate in the FWS program during the Summer II semester.
- The Summer II session is the beginning of a new academic and fiscal year. Students must complete their financial aid file for the new academic year and comply with all existing provisions before starting their assignments for Summer II.

XV. Evaluations

At the end of the Fall semester and Summer I semester, an evaluation form will be sent to each FWS supervisor to be completed for each student who participated in the Summer II/Fall or Spring/Summer I semester(s) respectively. These evaluations will be kept in each student's file and will be used to keep up to date with the student's work performance. These evaluations will also serve as reference material for inquiries and job references upon the student's request. They will also be considered in cases of transfers, dismissals and terminations. Students must (unless otherwise unable to) sign each evaluation form.

XVI. Site Visits

At any given point during a semester, the FWS coordinators may conduct site visits. The purpose of site visits is to ensure all policies and procedures are being implemented, as well as to keep the lines of communication open between the SDC office, Financial Aid Office and participating departments. Normally, supervisors are notified of upcoming visits, however this will not always be the case.