

WASHINGTON
**HIGHER
EDUCATION**
COORDINATING BOARD

Student Financial Assistance

Access.
Affordability.
Achievement.

“State Work Study provided me with a unique opportunity to experience what it’s like to put classroom learning to work in real life situations... I’ve developed a better work ethic, improved my interpersonal skills, and have a deeper understanding of what it takes to get things done in my field.”

SWS Student Teacher

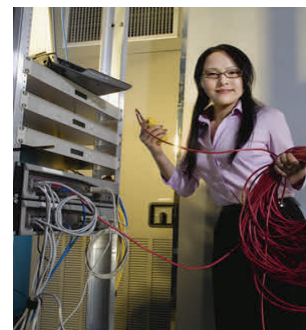
“Without State Work Study, our business would not have made nearly the progress, or been able to sustain the level of growth, especially in this difficult economic environment. Many of the students we’ve helped train over the years have been hired on as full time employees after graduation. SWS is a win-win for both employers and students.”

**SWS Employer,
web-hosting and design**



WASHINGTON
OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

Revised 3-29-2012



Washington State Work Study Program

Program Overview

The State Work Study (SWS) program helps students earn money for college while gaining valuable work experience, often in jobs related to their academic and career goals.

Partnering with nearly 2,000 Washington employers who match a portion of state funds, about 7,500 students earned more than \$20 million in 2010-11 SWS wages by working up to 19 hours per week. Employers contributed more than \$6 million to overall student earnings in 2010-11.

Program Purpose

- SWS provides low- and middle-income students the opportunity to help themselves pay for college while they are attending — rather than defer the cost in the form of added debt when they graduate.
- The program serves undergraduate and graduate students. Without SWS, many of these students might not be able to attend college at all.
- SWS students often gain experience in fields directly related to their studies. This results in improved persistence, higher on-time graduation rates, and better job opportunities upon graduation.
- Employers benefit by gaining access to a well-educated and highly motivated pool of workers. In a larger sense, they and the state also benefit from the collective workforce experience students gain — experience that will contribute to sustained future economic growth.

Benefits to Students

- Students who participate get the chance to apply the knowledge they gain in the classroom to practical workplace challenges, building skills valued by employers and increasing the likelihood they will gain employment upon graduation.
- SWS helps students hold down the level of debt they take on, which helps them become fully productive citizens faster when they graduate.
- Research has indicated that students who work between 10 and 19 hours per week tend to persist in their degree programs at higher rates than other financially needy students.

Washington State Work Study Program

Benefits to Washington

- Annual employer contributions help the state leverage its financial aid resources to cover a greater number of needy students. This in turn contributes to rising levels of educational attainment statewide.
- In 2010-11, more than \$6 million in additional student aid was generated through employer matching contributions — an approximately 43% return on investment for Washington taxpayers.
- Additional benefits to the state include:
 - ◆ SWS students enable businesses to operate more productively and profitably.
 - ◆ SWS students develop valuable career skills and connections.
 - ◆ Employers often hire former SWS students as full-time employees after graduation.

Program Results

- Student and employer demand for SWS outstrips program resources. This unmet demand has grown during the economic downturn. In addition, about:
 - ◆ 83% of students report that SWS has been critical to their ability to successfully pursue a degree.
 - ◆ 71% of students indicate that they would not be able to afford to stay in school without SWS.
 - ◆ 86% of students say that SWS has helped clarify their educational and career goals.
 - ◆ 94% of students believe that SWS work experiences make them more marketable for future employers.

“It’s really hard for new graduates to get jobs if they don’t have practical experience that sets them apart from all the other applicants vying for limited employment opportunities.

Through my State Work Study position in the information technology area, I am developing a range of skills while in school that I believe will give me a lot more choices in my career path once I’ve graduated.”

**SWS Student
Technology Assistant**

Funding Reduction Impact

- Total SWS program funding was reduced 66% for 2011-13. The current fiscal year appropriation is now \$7.8 million.
- About 3,500 students will earn SWS wages in 2011-12. This is 4,000 fewer than in 2010-11, and more than 5,000 fewer than in 2009-10.
- Lower employer reimbursement levels, fewer awarded students, and increased competition for students may negatively impact employer participation going forward.
- As directed by the Legislature, major policy changes eliminated non-resident eligibility and increased employer match rates in order to reduce the impact to needy resident students.
- Additional program changes made by the HECB to serve the maximum number of students have included suspension of full-time SWS opportunities during school breaks, elimination of targeted special projects funding, and revised institutional allocations.

More Information

- For more information on Washington SWS, contact Jeffrey Powell at jeffreyp@hecb.wa.gov or 360-704-4150.