

# 2020-21 State Work Study (SWS) Program Update

State Financial Aid Workshop  
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# Agenda

SWS Operational Updates

COVID-19 Emergency



# SWS Operational Updates



# 2020-21 SWS Operational Updates

## **As a result of the 2020 Legislative Session:**

- SWS Appropriation remains at \$7.8 million.
- No changes to legislatively-directed employer matching requirements or SWS reimbursement rates.
- Continued focus on improving alignment between SWS and federal assistance programs, like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, as administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).



# 2020-21 SWS Operational Updates

## **DSHS rules govern SWS eligibility for TANF:**

- Students with SWS awards anticipating or already participating automatically qualify (identical to FWS).
- SWS exempt from DSHS 20 hour/week work requirement (identical to FWS).
- SWS earnings are not counted as income by DSHS for TANF cash assistance purposes (identical to FWS).
- Unfortunately, current DSHS rules do count SWS earnings as income for TANF food assistance purposes (opposite of FWS).



# 2020-21 SWS Operational Updates

**As of 7/1/20, religiously-affiliated institutions may employ SWS students on-campus.**

- As with any SWS job at any SWS employer, position duties must not involve religious worship, exercise, or instruction.

*What does my institution need to do to implement this change?*

- Complete and submit [20-21 SWS Contract & Business Profile](#)
- If necessary, acquire an institutional [Statewide Vendor #](#)
- Complete and submit [20-21 SWS Job Descriptions](#) for on-campus positions
- Submit electronic or paper [timesheets](#) to WSAC for reimbursement



# 2020-21 SWS Operational Updates

- Institutional SWS allocations likely to shrink in 2020-21, due to:
  - Robust 2019-20 expenditures.
  - Reduced ability to overcommit program funds in 2020-21.
  - Combined effect could result in up to \$1 million less for 2020-21 allocations, as a best case, and up to \$2 million less as a worst case.
- Initial 75% SWS allocations no later than early June.
- Final SWS allocations in August, once 2019-20 activity is complete.
- Please note that WSAC does not anticipate significant opportunities to redistribute SWS funding between participating institutions in 2020-21.



# 2019-20 SWS Expenditures

- Current 2019-20 SWS expenditures are above pace and likely to close out the year strongly.
- Final Survey Round of 2019-20 was emailed by Debbie Jackson on May 4, with responses due May 20, 2020.
- Please note that at this time, SWS does not anticipate being able to fill supplemental funding requests for the remainder of 2019-20.





# 2018-19 SWS Expenditure Profile

- Over \$12.1 million in gross earnings; nearly \$4.8 million in employer match.
- 3,960 students earned an average of \$3,060 in SWS dollars.
  - 31% earned by students attending public 4-years
  - 24% earned by students attending private 4-years
  - 45% earned by students attending public 2-years
- 82% of gross SWS earnings earned on-campus, 18% earned off-campus.
- 88% earned by undergraduate students, 12% by graduates.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency





# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **Fundamental WSAC/SWS goals during the crisis:**

- Ensure the state's commitment to deliver awarded 2019-20 financial aid to participating student employees affected by the pandemic to the maximum degree possible within available funds.
- To the largest degree possible, within program rules and funding constraints, maximize institutional flexibility to utilize available 2019-20 SWS funds to accomplish the goal above as best meets the needs of their particular students.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## March 2020 Emergency SWS Rule:

[WAC 250-40-080](#) - Declared state of emergency.

When the governor or state legislature has declared a state of emergency and students have difficulty staying employed in their state work study position, the office may allow an eligible institution of postsecondary education to request that its work study allocations be used to provide eligible students general need based financial aid awards in furtherance of the primary purpose of the State Work Study program (RCW [28B.12.020](#)).

Student recipients must have documented program earnings in same academic year and continue to meet all eligibility requirements throughout the period of the emergency.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **2019-20 Emergency SWS Program Guidance:**

For SWS employees who are unable to perform regularly scheduled work hours or tasks as a result of an employer's COVID-19 suspension or significant alteration of normal business operations:

### ➤ **Option 1:**

- Normal SWS reimbursement if employer continues to match.
- Hours eligible for SWS reimbursement under this option include, but are not limited to:
  - Performing typical job tasks;
  - Remote work, including project-based assignments; or
  - Not working because of COVID-19 limitations.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## ➤ **Option 2**

- Reclassify 2019-20 SWS awards as general financial aid up to the maximum of a student's remaining SWS award.
- Students must have prior 2019-20 SWS earnings and continue to be SWS eligible.
- No employer matching requirement associated with funding or award amount.
- Remaining institutional SWS allocations, and whether the institution can match any of these dollars, will determine how much emergency SWS funding can be awarded to individual students.
- Equity across eligible students to the greatest degree possible.
- May be used alternatively or in addition to Option 1.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **Operational Details:**

Public institutions will submit cash requests for any amount of remaining 2019-20 SWS funds for use under Option 1 and/or Option 2.

Private institutions will:

- Submit timesheets for employer reimbursement under Option 1.
- Temporarily submit cash requests for use under Option 2.
- Distribute Option 2 funds per current WCG Student Directives as applicable, but students must be notified of the opportunity to change their existing selection.
- Allow students without Student Directives to select how they wish to receive Option 2 funds. Institutions can indicate a default option as long as it is clear how a student can change it, ideally through an electronic Student Directive.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **Operational Details:**

Documentation must be consistent with state financial aid requirements, including tracking the eligible students served, distribution amounts, and the date of the emergency distribution for audit and Unit Record Reporting (URR) purposes.

- Reported as traditional SWS earnings on the 2019-20 URR.
- Institutions have complete flexibility on the necessary internal coding, including assigning distinct award codes for each Option, however institutions must be able to combine all 2019-20 SWS activity for URR reporting purposes.
- URR trainings in August 2020 will cover COVID-19-related reporting requirements for state financial aid programs.





# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **Operational Details:**

SWS emergency guidance authorizing the use of Option 1 and/or Option 2 is applicable to 2019-20 Academic Year SWS activity utilizing 2019-20 SWS funds.

SWS Option 2 emergency grants can be utilized for the remainder of the institution's 2019-20 Academic Year, assuming the student is eligible, meaning the student:

- Has prior documented 2019-20 Academic Year SWS earnings; and
- Remains eligible for SWS in the current or upcoming 2019-20 period of enrollment.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

**FAQ: Can a student awarded an Option 2 SWS emergency grant for a future term earn additional Option 1 SWS wages if they are able to return to work during the same term?**

**A:** If a student has already been paid out Option 2 emergency grant funds at the beginning of a term, the student would not be able to earn additional Option 1 SWS wages in that term, unless the student has additional capacity to earn SWS funds through work when that is possible either on- or off-campus.

- For example, additional SWS capacity could result if either the Option 2 emergency grant did not cover the student's full SWS award amount for the term or the student has additional unmet need in the term that could allow additional SWS Option 1 funds to be awarded, assuming the institution has enough SWS funds to award and the associated employer can cover the required match.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

## **FAQ: Do SWS employees qualify for unemployment benefits?**

**A:** Under normal conditions it is unlikely, but possible:

- Eligibility for unemployment compensation can only be determined by the Employment Security Department.
- As a general rule, SWS students may be eligible for unemployment benefits if a sufficient number of hours have been worked in the "base year".
- An individual must have worked 680 hours in the last four quarters to be considered eligible for unemployment benefits.
- These hours may be from any job(s) without regard to SWS eligibility.



# SWS & COVID-19 Emergency

The **Federal CARES Act** provides funding for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits for many people *who usually don't qualify*, including:

- ❑ Part-time workers and others who have lost work due to COVID-19.
- ❑ Workers with less than 680 hours in their base year.
- ❑ Parents who have lost childcare due to COVID-19.
- ❑ People at high risk of contracting, sick, or caring for someone with COVID-19.
- ❑ People who are unemployed due to COVID-19 and are not eligible for or have run out of regular unemployment benefits.
- ❑ The amount of financial help varies. Approved applicants receive a calculated benefit plus an additional \$600 weekly through July.

For more information:

<https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment/cares-act>

<https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19-employer-information>



# Looking Ahead

Many uncertainties for SWS in 2020-21 as a result of:

- Anticipated reductions in institutional allocations (will depend on final 2019-20 expenditures).
- Possibility of reduced ability to provide supplemental funding during the year.
- Ongoing COVID-19 impact on employers, economy and student employees.



# THANK YOU!

...for all your work on behalf of SWS and its students! And especially during these extremely challenging times.



Questions or comments?