

FACT SHEET

FROM: D. Ashley Robinson, Associate General Counsel

DATE: April 8, 2020

RE: Federal Work-Study and COVID-19

Last Updated: April 8, 2020

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provided the institution is continuing to provide educational services and is paying its faculty and staff.⁴

B. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDANCE FOR PAYING FWS WAGES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE UNABLE TO WORK

If student workers are unable to work their scheduled hours because of Coronavirus-related disruptions (such as school closures; employer closures; student quarantines; school movement to online/distance education classes), an institution may pay the students for any scheduled hours or allow the students to work by another means—for example, completing work online or remotely, depending on the job.⁵

An institution may pay FWS wages to students unable to work their scheduled hours if the institution continues to provide educational services and pay its faculty and staff.

An institution may pay students enrolled at an eligible institution who:

- Received an FWS award for the award period during which a COVID-19 related interruption occurred on the campus;
- Earned FWS wages from the institution for that award period; and
- Were prevented from fulfilling their FWS obligation for all or part of the award period due to a COVID-19 related interruption.⁶

This flexibility applies only to students who began their FWS job prior to the declaration of the national emergency and may not exceed one academic year.⁷

Graduate students who are paid FWS wages on salary may continue to be paid for the remainder of the term if the institution is also paying its faculty and staff during that period.

Payments may be made in an amount equal to or less than the amount of FWS wages those students would have been paid had they been able to complete the work obligation necessary to receive FWS funds.⁸

C. FWS, COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND WAIVER

The FWS program encourages community service work, and institutions are required to allocate at least seven percent of the Work-Study allocation to supporting students working in community

⁴ See April 3, 2020 Updated Guidance available at <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/040320UPDATEDGuidanceInterruptStudyRelCOVID19>

⁵ See also COVID-19 FAQs and also “Student Questions” in Federal Student Aid’s Information - Coronavirus Info for Students, Borrowers, and Parents (March 13, 2020) available at <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>

⁶ See April 3, 2020 Updated Guidance available at <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/040320UPDATEDGuidanceInterruptStudyRelCOVID19>

⁷ The April 3, 2020 Updated Guidance explains that on March

service jobs. Additionally, institutions must ensure that they include at least one project for tutoring children in reading or one project for family literacy in providing community service.⁹
In meeting the seven percent community service expenditure requirement, students may be employed to perform civic education and participation ac