

**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**

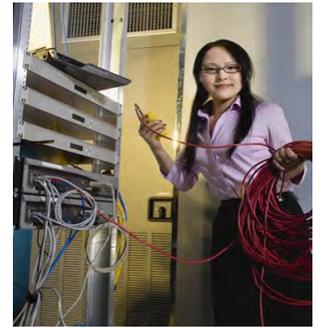
“Without State Work Study, our business would not have made nearly the progress, or been able to sustain the level of growth, especially in this difficult economic environment. Many of the students we’ve helped train over the years have been hired on as full time employees after graduation. SWS is a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

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



**WASHINGTON  
OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS**

Revised 12-17-2010



## Washington State Work Study Program

### Program Overview

For the past 37 years, the State Work Study (SWS) program has helped students earn money for college, while gaining valuable work experience, often in jobs related to their academic and career goals.

In 2010-11, an estimated 7,800 students earned about \$22 million—roughly \$15 million from the state, and \$7 million leveraged through matching dollars from participating employers. SWS students typically earn an average of about \$3,000 annually by working up to 19 hours per week.

### Program Purpose

- SWS provides low- and middle-income students with an opportunity to help themselves pay for college now, through leveraged earnings, instead of postponing those costs through increased loan burdens.
- Participating students gain employment experience in fields directly related to their studies, resulting in improvements to persistence, degree completion, and future job market competitiveness.
- SWS employers benefit from increased business productivity, preview potential new employees, and play a crucial role in developing the work force skills that will position Washington’s economy for sustained future growth.
- Both undergraduate and graduate level students who demonstrate financial need are eligible.

### Benefits to Students

The work study experience tests academic learning, builds workplace skills valued by employers, and differentiates future graduates in an increasingly competitive job market. SWS provides an alternative to high levels of student borrowing, reducing debt burdens for future taxpayers.

State Work Study improves persistence among financially needy students. Research indicates that students who work between 10 and 19 hours per week are more likely to persist than non-working students. When the work experiences are related to their academic program or vocational area, students are even more likely to stay in school.

# Washington State Work Study Program

## Benefits to Washington

Because the state and employers share the cost of student wages, the state can leverage its financial aid resources to provide additional aid to needy students, thereby increasing access and affordability for more Washington citizens.

In 2010-11, an estimated \$7 million in additional student aid was generated through employer matching contributions, or an estimated 34% return on investment for Washington taxpayers.

Additional benefits include:

- SWS employers in Washington save money on wages and increase business productivity.
- SWS helps students prepare for careers and find jobs after graduation.
- Employers often hire former SWS students as employees.

## Program Results

- Interest from nearly 2,000 employers, and thousands of graduate and undergraduate students typically outstrips program resources.
- 83% of participating students reported that SWS has been critical to their ability to successfully pursue a degree.
- 71% of participating students indicated that they would not be able to afford to stay in school without SWS.
- 86% of participating students said that SWS helped clarify their educational and career goals.
- 94% of participating students believe that SWS work experiences have made 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**

## Emerging Issues

- 2011-13 biennial SWS program funding was reduced by nearly 66 percent, (\$30 million) as a result of continuing state revenue shortfalls. The 2011-12 SWS appropriation is now \$7.8 million.
- Major policy changes eliminating non-resident eligibility and increasing employer match rates also were directed by the Legislature as a means of reducing the impact to needy resident students.
  - An estimated 2,500 students will earn SWS dollars in 2011-12, an anticipated reduction of over 5,000 students from 2010-11 levels.
  - Employer participation levels may be negatively impacted based on lower reimbursements, reduced numbers of awarded students, lower award levels, and increased competition for student hires.

## More Information

For more information on the Washington State Work Study Program, please contact Jeffrey Powell at [jeffreyp@hecb.wa.gov](mailto:jeffreyp@hecb.wa.gov) or 360-704-4150.

WASHINGTON  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
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