

**Summary: U.S. Department of Education Webinar
Federal Work-Study (FWS) Experiment
July 11, 2019**

Background

The Secretary of Education (Secretary) invites institutions of higher education (institutions) that participate in the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program authorized under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), to apply to participate in a new institutional experiment under the Experimental Sites Initiative (ESI). The U.S. Department of Education (ED) hosted a webinar on July 11, 2019 to provide more details about the FWS experiment's purpose, waivers, application and selection process, and answer questions from potential applicants. The summary below is based on ED's webinar, which will be posted online.ⁱ

FWS Experiment Objectives

ED intends the FWS experiment to: increase partnerships between institutions and industry; improve student retention and completion; reduce student debt levels; and yield strong post-graduation employment outcomes.

ED also intends to evaluate the following four changes to the FWS program:

- (1) remove limits on FWS funds for private-sector employment;
- (2) increase hours worked for work-based learning programs;
- (3) reduce the institutional share or match of wages for private-sector employment; and
- (4) **pay low-income students for work experiences required by their program such as student teaching and clinical rotations.**

In addition, ED is interested in using the FWS experiment to:

- stimulate, create, and strengthen employer-institution partnerships in private sector employment;
- engage employers in curriculum development and program evaluation;
- expand the number and kinds of off-campus job opportunities; and
- increase the number of formal work-based learning opportunities (such as apprenticeships).

ED also intends to use the FWS experiment to understand how FWS employment opportunities align with the academic program or career goals of the student participants, including among students in liberal arts or humanitarian programs that may use FWS to explore potential career options.

Waivers

Current Rules	Experiment
Restricts students in FWS programs to part-time employment	<u>Enables full-time employment opportunities related to student's academic program (apprenticeships, clinical rotations or student teaching)</u>
Limits the amount of an institution's FWS allocation and reallocation for an award year to pay the compensation of FWS students employed by a private for-profit organization to 25 percent	Allows schools to use 100 percent of FWS allocation and reallocation for employment in private for-profit organizations
Limits the Federal share of the compensation to a student employed by a private for-profit organization to 25 percent	<u>Increases the Federal share of compensation for employment in private for-profit organizations to 75 percent (same as non-profit or community service employment)</u>
Caps the amount of an institution's FWS allocation to support a JLD Program at the lesser of \$75,000 or 10 percent	Allows total FWS allocation to support JLD program
Seven percent Community Service requirement	<u>Waives the seven percent Community Service requirement</u>
Permits the Secretary to allocate to eligible institutions up to 10 percent of the amount appropriated for FWS in excess of 700 million in any fiscal year	<u>Permits additional FWS funding allocation to institutions participating in the experiment</u>

Application Requirements

Applications are due by **September 23, 2019**. Interested institutions should submit applications via e-mail to experimentalsites@ed.gov with the subject line **ESI 2019 – Federal Work-Study Experiment**.

Applications should include the name and address of the institution and be submitted in the form of a pdf file on institutional letterhead signed by the president or chancellor in accordance with the instructions in the [Federal Register Notice](#) dated May 23, 2019.

The application should also include the following: the institution's OPE ID number, the name of a contact person for the experiment, with a mailing address, email address, and telephone number; a list of the offices or departments that will participate in the experiment; and the role each office or department will play.

Selection Process

In selecting institutions to participate, the Secretary will consider the following:
(1) evidence that demonstrates a strong record in HEA Title IV administration;

- (2) evidence that demonstrates strong standards of financial responsibility;
- (3) the percentage of students enrolled at the institution who are Pell eligible or FWS eligible; and
- (4) the types of private-sector job opportunities, work-and-learn programs, or required externships or student teaching experiences.

Items (3) and (4) should be included in the applicant's letter of interest as well as:

- how the paid training experiences being targeted will be incorporated into the academic programs of study;
- the extent to which the experience is well structured and academically relevant to the student's program of study; and
- the institution's commitment to target opportunities for students in high-need employment areas.

ED encourages institutions to target Bright Outlook occupations, which are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years or will have large numbers of job openings.

Teachers are included on the list and this should be flagged in the application

(www.onetonline.org/help/bright)

Additional Information

- The Department's contact person is: Warren Farr, U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid, Telephone: (202) 377-4380, Warren.Farr@ed.gov.
- A link to the original Federal Register notice may be found here: <https://ifap.ed.gov/fregisters/FR052319ESI.html>.
- Additional questions can be submitted to ExperimentalSites@ed.gov.

Key Points from the Question & Answer (Q & A) Section

- ED said numerous times in answering questions that they will be flexible in considering partnerships. This includes being flexible in the type of partnerships and number of partnerships.
- **A consortium of schools or a system can apply for the FWS waivers. However, the individual OPE ID of each school in the consortium should be provided as well as the other individual campus information.**
- When applying, applicants should coordinate with outside employers or partners and work with other offices on campus, such as student employment, financial aid, and human resources to describe how the FWS experiment will be implemented. The outside employers or partners do not have to be identified, but it would be helpful to mention them in the application.
- Administrative capability requirements must be followed. Invited institutions must carefully document the program's administration to ensure they are in compliance. Administration of the experiment is an institutional responsibility, not just a financial aid responsibility.
- All full-time employment opportunities must be in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

- Institutions invited to participate will get an extra FWS allocation but may still have to use some existing FWS dollars for this experiment.
- ED is still working on evaluation metrics with regards to the treatment group. They are still working on what will be reported based on this experiment and also what institutions will report. To what extent did the student persist, continue, withdrawal etc. might be part of those metrics.
- ED also encouraged interested institutions to submit additional questions to ExperimentalSites@ed.gov.

Endnotes

ⁱ Abernathy, T., Cagle, M., & Farr, W. (July, 11 2019). Webinar: The Department of Education's Experimental Sites Initiative - Federal Work-Study (FWS) Experiment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.