

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BILLINGS
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS
Questions and Answers - College Workstudy Programs

Your offer of financial aid may include a workstudy award. The following "frequently asked questions" will help you understand the workstudy award, how to find a job, wages, employment requirements, etc.

"What is college workstudy?"

College workstudy is a student assistance program, which provides part-time employment for students. The earnings can be used to help pay educational expenses. Both on campus and off campus positions are available. Off campus positions are in areas of community service and that includes the "America Reads" program which is a reading tutoring position in the local elementary schools.

"How do I apply?"

To be considered for workstudy, a student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the current award year. On the FAFSA, you should answer "YES" to the question asking if you are interested in Workstudy. The information submitted on this application is analyzed to determine whether you are eligible for financial aid such as grants, loans, and workstudy.

Once the information you submitted has been evaluated by our office and eligibility determined, an award letter listing your eligibility for financial aid will be sent to you. If you are not awarded workstudy, there could be several reasons: a) You did not request workstudy on the FAFSA; b) You are ineligible for workstudy funds; or c) We have exhausted our workstudy funds and have no more money to award to students. In this case, you may ask to be put on a waiting list in case more funds become available. Earliest applicants are considered first, so, if you are eligible, filing your FAFSA early each year offers you the best opportunity for this award.

"How do I find a job?"

You can access the MSU-Billings website at www.msubillings.edu/workstudy. Available jobs are listed with pertinent information such as job description, wage, contact person, etc. You may contact the employer if you are interested in an interview for a particular job.

"I've been hired! Now what do I do?"

First of all, *congratulations!* Now you need to:

- Get an authorization form from the Financial Aid Office - First Floor of McMullen Hall.
- If you were hired for an off-campus COMMUNITY SERVICE JOB, contact Lisa Wallace in Career Services (Library Building Room 100, Phone 657-1618.) Off campus jobs require an employer contract.
- Have your new supervisor complete the bottom portion of your Workstudy Authorization; return the form to the Financial Aid office.
- Go to Room 310 in McMullen Hall (Human Resources Office) to fill out necessary paperwork. Be sure to bring with you:
 - a. A driver's license or picture I.D.
 - b. Your original Social Security Card.
 - c. If you do not have one or both of these items, ask the Human Resources Office personnel for information on other acceptable forms of identification.

"How much does a workstudy job pay?"

Most workstudy jobs pay about \$7.00/hour; however, pay depends on duties, level of responsibility, etc. Pay ranges from \$6.90 (minimum wage) to about \$10.00 per hour.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"How do I get paid?"

In order to get paid, you must fill out a timesheet and turn it in every two weeks. The Payroll Schedule may be found at: <http://www.msubillings.edu/staff>. You will be paid every two weeks (on a Friday) provided you have:

- Worked during the two week pay period for which paychecks are issued;
- Turned in a completed authorization form to the Financial Aid Office;
- Completed all necessary paperwork in the Human Resources Office (McMullen Hall Room 310);
- Turned in a completed, signed, timesheet. Timesheets must be in the Payroll office by 5:00 PM on the Monday following the Friday payday. Off-campus COMMUNITY SERVICE timesheets must be turned in to the Financial Aid office instead of Payroll.

"Does 'workstudy' mean I get to go to work and get paid to study?"

No, "workstudy" means you have an opportunity to work to help with your school expenses.

"Can I work more than one workstudy job?"

You can work as many jobs as you want provided you have a new Authorization form for each job turned into the Financial Aid Office.

"Can I quit my workstudy job?"

Yes. Please notify your supervisor so he/she can find a replacement.

"Can I LOSE my workstudy eligibility?" Yes. Please read the Financial Aid & Scholarships website regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements. Failure to meet these requirements will result in the loss of financial aid eligibility. It is ***YOUR*** responsibility to notify your supervisor that you are ineligible for workstudy. You *can* appeal for reinstatement; see the Financial Aid & Scholarships website for appeal information.

"If I earn all of the workstudy I was awarded, can I request more?"

Yes, and we will be happy to award you additional funds to earn, provided that: a) we have funds available to give you; and b) you are eligible for additional funds.

"Why **CAN'T** you guarantee me a job - after all, you awarded me workstudy?"

We award you the *opportunity* to work. Finding a job is up to you. It's a great experience for the "real world." You may check on available jobs at: <http://www.msubillings.edu/workstudy>

"How many hours a week can I work?"

You may work up to 20 hours per week as long as it doesn't interfere with your classes and study time. Remember, your first priority is your schoolwork. You ***cannot*** be paid over-time for workstudy hours.

"What are the advantages of having a workstudy job?"

- Workstudy jobs give you experience and references, which you can list on your resume. Also, it provides valuable professional contacts and networking opportunities in your chosen field.
- If you file a tax return and claim your workstudy wages, the amount you earn can be deducted from the earnings you are required to claim on your financial aid form next year!
- Departments like to hire workstudy students because the workstudy program is paying the majority of your wage for the department - which means less money coming out of the department's budget for the same amount of labor!

Please contact the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships at (406) 657-2188 if you have any additional questions.