
Earn, Learn, and Serve

*Getting the Most from
Community Service
Federal Work-Study*

Edited by Erin Bowley



Campus Compact

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	A Brief History of the Federal Work-Study Program	4
3.	Principles of Good Practice in Community Service FWS	7
1.	Integrate community service Federal Work-Study	8
2.	Create program goals	10
3.	Formalize a structured institutional system	10
4.	Offer a range of community service positions	12
5.	Actively and effectively market community service opportunities	13
6.	Ensure that students receive a thorough orientation	14
7.	Contribute to student success	16
8.	Create partnerships	17
9.	Prepare community partner supervisors	18
10.	Adhere to the spirit and rules	19
4.	Developmental Matrix	19
	A tool to assist in planning for future development of FWS programs. <i>Erin Bowley</i>	
5.	Partnering with Financial Aid <i>Erin Bowley</i>	20
1.	Introduction and Approach	20
2.	Key Concepts	22
3.	Building a Successful Relationship	26
4.	Other Typical Questions and Areas of Concern	31
6.	Community Service Federal Work-Study: The Best-Kept Secret in Higher Education?	37
	A commentary that includes benefits, data, and trends in community service FWS, as well as common concerns and solutions. <i>Robert Davidson</i>	

Complete document can be found at:
<http://www.compact.org/initiatives/federal-work-study/>

Introduction

By Erin Bowley

A relatively obscure federal regulation made an unexpected appearance in the 2002 State of the Union Address when President George W. Bush recommended increasing the amount of Federal Work-Study (FWS) funds that colleges and universities are required to spend on community service positions from 7% to a whopping 50%. The 7% requirement didn't change that year or since, but the well-publicized suggestion by the president moved many people in higher education to reconsider policies and programs related to community service FWS.

This was the most public attention FWS had received since the mid-1990's, when President Clinton launched the "America Reads" program and encouraged colleges and universities to use a large increase in FWS funds to pay for tutors working with disadvantaged children. Since then, the percentage of FWS funds spent on community service has become a criterion in at least one version of the annual college rankings, and recently the Corporation for National and Community Service, supported by the White House, set a goal of seeing the national community service FWS rate increase to 20% by 2010.

Guidance, Models, and More

While many colleges and universities have voluntarily made advances and investments in community service-learning and civic engagement over the past 20 years, FWS positions that provide community services are the only federally mandated form of community service or campus-community partnerships to which all institutions must adhere. Given the ubiquity of FWS positions — which create community service opportunities on nearly every campus in the country — as well as the growth in public attention to this issue in the past 10 years, a publication featuring program models, best practices, and general guidance on community service FWS is both timely and needed.

Until now, the only widely available writing on this topic included individual articles assembled on Campus Compact's website, resources posted on individual college and university websites, and a handbook produced annually by the Department of Education for Student Aid professionals that updates and clarifies the federal regulations governing Federal Work-Study. This new online collection of resources provides a thorough overview of community service FWS, including:

- The basic expectations of the federal requirements;
- Principles of good practice;
- Profiles of 40 college and university programs;
- How and why some colleges and universities go above and beyond the 7% requirement; and

- How FWS is being leveraged to promote student leadership, service-learning, civic engagement, and campus-community partnerships at campuses nationwide.

Back to Basics

For those who are new to the idea that FWS jobs can be performed in, and for the benefit of, the community, three introductory articles provide basic background information:

1. “Partnering with Financial Aid” introduces the issues, using lay language and citing the most relevant federal regulations. It includes key questions and answers, a summary of who makes which decisions regarding FWS, and strategies for overcoming hurdles and creating effective partnerships.
2. “Community Service Federal Work-Study: The Best-Kept Secret in Higher Education?” was written by a former Director of Student Aid in the U.S. Department of Education and summarizes national trends in FWS funding and use, the benefits of community service positions, “myths,” and solutions to common challenges.
3. “Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Federal Work-Study” is a report that grew out of a 2002 research study involving focus groups and surveys of 52 institutions. Newly updated in 2007, the report offers 10 principles of good practice, each followed by short case studies that highlight innovative practices at diverse institutions. An accompanying Developmental Matrix is designed to help those leading community service FWS efforts plan for future development of their programs.

Going Above and Beyond

Many institutions choose to integrate community service FWS into overall institutional efforts related to service-learning, civic engagement, and campus-community partnerships. While these programs require administrative oversight and resources, they offer substantial potential for enhanced student and community development. Seventeen articles by experienced program leaders highlight innovative efforts at institutions across the country. The following diverse examples are among the programs highlighted in these articles:

- How the Community Work-Study program at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) is designed to promote student retention.
- How the administration at Azusa Pacific University supports community-based FWS positions as part of its historical commitment as an evangelical Christian institution to provide opportunities for students to “live a life of service to others.”
- How rural colleges and universities like Kirtland Community College in northern Michigan can overcome obstacles such as isolation and lack of resources and still provide meaningful community service FWS opportunities.
- How the University of South Florida partners with the Hillsborough Education Foundation to offer AmeriCorps Education Awards to its FWS reading tutors.

- How the Financial Aid Office at the University of Montana annually coordinates 250 students completing community service FWS, including summer placements for graduate school and law school students.
- How Miami Dade College built its service-learning program for faculty through the leadership of Student Ambassadors in the FWS program.
- How the Stride Rite program at Harvard College engages 35-40 students annually in a year-round scholarship program linked with FWS and student leadership development.

Voices from the Field

One of the greatest benefits of community service FWS is that it allows low-income and middle-income students who need to work while going to school to participate in community programs; many could not otherwise participate in civic engagement, leadership development, and meaningful career exploration activities. Stakeholders in FWS programs from six campuses in New Hampshire share perspectives like the one above in short profiles on the value of combining FWS and community service efforts. Excerpts from these profiles include:

“Students need to be making money, and I know other students who would love to do service and combine it with employment. I would have liked to just volunteer at the after school program, but I couldn’t because I had to have a job. I really feel like I’m accomplishing something now, and that is what students are looking for.”

Erica Martineau, Student, Keene State College

“It is easy to create work-study jobs on campus, but the opportunities off campus can be as meaningful or more meaningful. It has helped many of our students open up career pathways or change directions.”

Steve Caccia, Vice President of Student Affairs, New Hampshire Technical Institute

“Students appreciate being out in the community, and the partners think it is a tremendous opportunity because their budgets are restricted. Before we had a position to market these opportunities, students weren’t even interested. We were lucky to place one or two students in the community. Now, the connections made with partners and with students are strong.”

Diane Allen, Financial Aid Assistant, University of New Hampshire’“Manchester

“Stories about what our students are doing in the community are some of the best stories I get to tell.”

Paul LeBlanc, President, Southern New Hampshire University

“This experience gives the students something to be proud of.”

Don't Recreate the Wheel

Experienced FWS program coordinators have created numerous tools to help manage and add value to their efforts, such as handbooks for students and community partners, program evaluation surveys, application process forms, etc. These can be replicated and adapted by other institutions. The appendices of this publication offer a host of useful resources for practitioners, including a host of hands-on tools as well as additional reading and information.

A Brief History of the Federal Work-Study Program

1. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (August 20, 1964), whose goal was “to mobilize the human and financial resources of the Nation to combat poverty in the United States,” contained a section on a new program for Work-Study.

The declaration of purpose of the Act states that, “The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society. It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity.”

This Act created the Jobs Corps, whose purpose was to “prepare for the responsibility of citizenship and to increase the employability of young men and young women aged sixteen through twenty-one by providing them in rural and urban residential centers with education, vocational training, useful work experience, including work directed toward the conservation of natural resources, and other appropriate activities.”

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 also included a section on Work-Study programs, whose goal was to “stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education who are from low-income families and are in need of the earnings from such employment to pursue courses of study at such institutions.”

Conditions of agreement stated that the Work-Study program/grants shall, “(a) provide for the operation by the institution of a program for the part-time employment of its students in work:

1. for the institution itself, or
2. for a public or private nonprofit organization when this position is obtained through an arrangement between the institution itself and such an organization and:

1. the work is related to the student's educational objective, or
2. such work
 1. will be in the public interest and is work which would not otherwise be provided,
 2. will not result in the displacement of employed workers or impair existing contracts for services, and
 3. will be governed by such conditions of employment as will be appropriate and reasonable in light of such factors as the type of work performed, geographical region, and proficiency of the employee;

Provided, however, That no such work shall involve the construction, operation, or maintenance of so much of any facility used or to be used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious worship;"

2. The Higher Education Act of 1965 transferred the Work-Study program from the Department of Labor to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and its purpose was restated as "to stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students, particularly students from low-income families, in institutions of higher education who are in need of the earnings from such employment to pursue courses of study at such institutions."

The work was to be "for the institution itself or work in the public interest for a public or private nonprofit organization." The Act of 1965 also states that "in the selection of students for employment under such Work-Study program, preference shall be given to students from low-income families..." In a revision of the statement of purpose of the Work-Study program in 1972, the language was changed to "students with great financial need."

3. The revision in 1972 to the Higher Education Act of 1965 also included a new section entitled Work-Study for Community Service Learning Program. The purpose of this section was "to enable students in eligible institutions who are in need of additional financial support to attend institutions of higher education, with preference given to veterans who served in the Armed Forces in Indochina or Korea after August 5, 1964, to obtain earnings from employment which offers the maximum potential both for effective service to the community and for enhancement of the educational development of such students."

In this section, the Commissioner of Higher Education was authorized to "enter into agreements with public or private nonprofit agencies under which the Commissioner will make grants to such agencies to pay the compensation of students who are employed by such agencies in jobs providing needed community services and which are of educational value." Additionally, the agency projects should be "designed to improve community services or solve particular problems in the community," and the "agency, in cooperation with the institution of higher education which the student attends, will make an effort to

relate the projects performed by students to their general academic program and to a comprehensive program for college student services to the community.”

Community service was defined as including, but not limited to, “work in such fields as environmental quality, health care, education, welfare, public safety, crime prevention and control, transportation, recreation, housing and neighborhood improvement, rural development, conservation, beautification, and other fields of human betterment and community improvement.”

4. The Higher Education Amendments of 1992 made substantial changes to the work-study section of the Higher Education Act of 1965. A 5% mandate for community service work was instituted. Beginning in fiscal year 1994, institutions receiving federal Work-Study funds were required to use “at least 5% of the total amount of funds granted to such institution under this section in any fiscal year to compensate students employed in community service.”

Language was added to the statement of purpose of Work-Study: “to encourage students receiving Federal student financial assistance to participate in community service activities that will benefit the Nation and engender in the students a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the community.”

The definition of community service expanded to include “services which are identified by an institution of higher education, through formal or informal consultation with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations, as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs, including:

1. such fields as health care, child care, literacy training, education (including tutorial services), welfare, social services, transportation, housing and neighborhood improvement, public safety, crime prevention and control, recreation, rural development, and community improvement;
2. work in service opportunities or youth corps as defined in section 101 of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, and service in the agencies, institutions and activities designated in section 124a of the National and Community Service Act of 1990;
3. support services to students with disabilities; and
4. activities in which a student serves as a mentor for such purposes as
 1. tutoring;
 2. supporting educational and recreational activities; and
 3. conseling, including career counseling.”

In 1999 the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program required that participating schools devote 5% of their FWS funds to community service activities. Beginning in fiscal year 2000, the community service requirement increased to 7%. The FWS budget was \$1 billion, nearly a 100% over the previous four years. Because of this, there was a large increase in the total number of community service positions funded through FWS dollars.

In October 1998, President Clinton signed the Higher Education Act of 1965 reauthorization, which included the 7% mandate. The bill also required colleges receiving FWS funds to have a children's or family literacy project that employs Work-Study students as tutors. Another key change was that Work-Study students could now be compensated for the time they spend in training or traveling to their community service positions.

The Higher Education Act:

- Clarifies that part-time employment under Federal Work-Study may include internships.
- Allows campus jobs providing child care or services to students with disabilities to qualify under the community service requirement.
- Requires colleges receiving the funds to support at least one project that compensates FWS students who are employed as reading tutors for preschool and elementary school children or who work in a family literacy project as part of the community service requirement.
- Expands community service opportunities by allowing FWS funds to be used to compensate students employed in community service for time spent on traveling or in training directly related to the community service position.
- Eliminates a requirement that colleges award a specific proportion of FWS awards to part-time students and to students who are financially independent of their parents, indicating instead that administrators should provide "a reasonable share" of awards to those students.
- Allows the federal share of FWS awards to exceed 75%, but not 90%, for community service jobs at nonprofit organizations or government agencies. It makes clear, though, that no more than 10% of a college's FWS participants can be employed in positions for which the federal share exceeds 75%

Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Federal Work-Study

This document outlines best practices in combining college and university Federal Work-Study (FWS) experiences with community service and service-learning. The principles were created by *Erin Bowley* and *Marsha Adler* for Campus Compact after conducting focus groups with practitioners from 52 colleges and universities in the spring of 2002.

Following are ten principles for constructing an effective community service FWS program. Click on each principle for explanation, detail, and campus examples of how the principle can be implemented.

Representatives from the campuses used as examples are willing to provide those interested with further information; their names and titles appear at the end of each

section. Because contact information changes frequently, it is not included here; to reach any individual or position (e.g., service-learning coordinator), contact the campus.

10 Principles of Good Practice

- Integrate community service Federal Work-Study into the institution’s overall civic engagement mission and programs.
 - Create program goals for community service FWS and an evaluation plan to measure progress.
 - Formalize a structured institutional system to provide oversight, coordination, and optimal use of resources and capacity.
 - Offer a range of community service positions that are challenging and developmentally appropriate, and that contribute to the common good.
 - Actively and effectively market community service opportunities to students and community partners.
 - Ensure that students receive a thorough orientation, are properly trained for their positions, and have opportunities for reflection and connections to academic study.
 - Contribute to student success through effective monitoring, ongoing supervision, and recognition of student contributions.
 - Create partnerships with community organizations built on open communication, trusting relationships, joint design, and evaluation of program objectives.
 - Prepare community partner supervisors to be effective in their role through a clear orientation, training as needed, and recognition of their contributions.
 - Adhere to the spirit and rules of U.S. Department of Education Federal Work-Study legal requirements.
-

Integrate community service Federal Work-Study

Integrate community service work-study into the institution’s overall civic engagement mission and programs.

1. Establish community service work-study as an important component of campus community service programs and efforts.
2. Build connections between community service work-study and other community service initiatives.
3. Determine how the community service work-study students — who typically serve for more hours and longer periods of time — can support other campus service efforts (e.g., as site coordinators, volunteer coordinators, or assistants in service-learning courses).

Miami Dade College, Miami, Florida

Community service work-study students play an essential role in helping administer and lead Miami Dade College's Center for Community Involvement. These students help run four comprehensive campus centers that oversee all service learning and America Reads activities. Community service work-study students meet with faculty, visit classes to encourage students to get involved in service, counsel and place service-learning students with community agencies, provide service-learning training for agency partners, help recruit, hire, support, and monitor America Reads tutors, and assist with myriad other community engagement projects.

*Contact: Joshua Young
Director, Center for Community Involvement*

Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota

The Off-Campus Student Employment (OCSE) program (Macalester College's work-study program) is one of many programs administered by Macalester's Civic Engagement Center. Sophomore through senior students can work 8-10 hours each week at one of more than 30 approved sites. The program is designed to create institutional partnerships between Macalester and local community organizations, with students serving as a bridge between the organizations and the campus, enabling each to build on the varied resources of the other.

The OCSE program adheres to the same standards of good practice and follows the same guiding principles established for all of Macalester's civic engagement efforts. All students in the program are required to attend a monthly two-hour training workshop on nonprofit issues, models of social change, and skill-building techniques. Work-study students serve with many of the same core community partners as those involved in other campus-based civic engagement initiatives. As such, they may work with the same organization in a variety of capacities (volunteer, work-study student, intern, service-learning student, or as part of an honor's or research project).

*Contact: Ruth Janisch Lake
Assistant Director
Civic Engagement Center*

*Karin Trail-Johnson
Director
Civic Engagement Center*

Create program goals

Create program goals for community service work-study and an evaluation plan to measure progress.

Campus professionals, students, and community supervisors should contribute to the creation of goals for the community service work-study program.

Consider making a realistic number of short- and long-term goals that are measurable, such as the number of students to complete community service work-study positions each year and the degree of satisfaction of stakeholders with the program.

Create a plan to evaluate the goals through a regularly scheduled process.

Bentley College, Waltham, Massachusetts

At Bentley, community service work-study students serve as project managers and project directors of community service-learning initiatives. These students are responsible for working in collaboration with community partner organizations to recruit and manage other student volunteers. As part of their role, students are asked to complete a self-assessment and evaluate community sites and supervisors. Community supervisors also are asked to evaluate the students. These evaluations take place in the middle and at the end of each semester, and the results are used to make program and site changes, as needed, to improve the program.

Jeanette MacInnes
Assistant Director
Service-Learning Center

Formalize a structured institutional system

Formalize a structured institutional system to provide oversight, coordination, and optimal use of resources and capacity.

Clarify and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of various offices and departments on campus in managing the program.

Simplify complex processes by taking the time to put a centralized system in place for management and oversight of important program functions, including marketing, recruitment, communications, paperwork, reporting, orientation, and training, among others.

Leaders of the program should have expertise in financial aid regulations, student development, and community partnership-building.

Stanford University, Stanford, California

Community service work-study is administered cooperatively by Stanford's Haas Center for Public Service and the Financial Aid office. The Haas Center has responsibility for marketing, recruitment, and communications and conducts student orientation and training. The payroll process is also handled by the Haas Center. The Financial Aid Office keeps the Haas Center updated on federal student employment regulations and maintains fiscal oversight, determining which students are eligible for the program and each student's individual earning limits based on federal needs analysis. The Financial Aid Office monitors the payroll expenses and reports student earnings on the FISAP through its database. The two offices communicate regularly and meet periodically to ensure efficiency and quality in students' experiences and to support the community organizations' needs.

Mary Morrison
Director of Funds Management
Financial Aid Office

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Responsibilities for community service work-study placements are shared by the Office of Student Financial Assistance and the Career Development Center. Staff members from these offices and representatives from community service, service-learning, and academic programs meet with community agencies to update them about the range of opportunities available through the Federal Work-Study program. IU has developed a sophisticated information system for community service work-study through its website, with links to community service agencies that allow students to apply for positions. Additionally, programs built into the website have simplified the administrative operations for tracking student hours and reporting payroll information.

Jan Nickless
Career Development Center & Arts and Sciences Career Services

Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts

Tufts University has a unified structure for community service work-study that is coordinated by the Director of Student Employment. Recently the Director's office conducted a focus group of community service personnel, community organizations, and business representatives to determine community needs and campus resources in order to realign its processes. Using this information, the Director of Student Employment developed a system for recruiting and maintaining community contacts and a system for recruiting and placing students in those organizations. For reporting, community supervisors fax or email student employment data to the Director, and records are

produced monthly. These records are linked to the university's payroll system and students are paid by direct deposit.

Joanne Grande
Director of Student Employment
Student Financial Services

Offer a range of community service positions

Offer a range of community service positions that are challenging and developmentally appropriate, and that contribute to the common good.

Develop placement opportunities in a variety of community issue areas and organizations to engage students' interest and to provide for career exploration.

Carefully match students to positions through an interview or other process. Ensure that positions are developmentally appropriate for students' differing levels of experience in work settings, professional responsibility, and particular tasks.

Provide students with leadership development opportunities to deepen their commitment, develop new skills, and exercise their creativity.

Agree on a definition of appropriate community service work-study positions, including how "community service" will be defined and what types of placements will be acceptable.

Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Brown University works closely with students to create or find community service work-study positions that complement their academic and other experiences. Brown strives to provide students with experiences in the community that develop skills they could not gain through an on-campus work-study experience. To do this, the campus developed a set of criteria for appropriate community positions and instituted an application process for community organizations seeking to employ students. Strong community supervisors are especially important. Students are matched to developmentally appropriate positions where they are encouraged to build community relationships, reflect on their experiences, think critically about their service, and consider the larger community context of their work.

Claudia DeCesare
Coordinator of Off-Campus Work-Study
Swearer Center for Public Service

Columbus State Community College, Columbus, Ohio

Columbus State Community College strives to connect work-study eligible students in particular fields of study with community service positions that complement their academic interests. To do this, campus staff members review the interests and backgrounds of students who are work-study eligible but who have not yet located positions. Then, with community agencies, they develop positions that match students' particular interests. They send customized letters to students alerting them to positions available in their chosen field of study.

Monika Wright
Financial Aid Advisor

Actively and effectively market community service opportunities

Actively and effectively market the opportunities to students and community partners.

Inform students who are eligible for work-study about the opportunity to engage in community service and how to get involved. Use multiple means of communication.

Determine how community partners will be recruited and selected as appropriate locations for community service work-study positions.

Inform community partners about the availability of work-study students and the benefits the partners can gain by engaging these students in service through their organization.

Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pennsylvania

During student orientation each year, Cedar Crest students participate in a day of service. During the service day activities, students are given information about Federal Work-Study community service positions. The college offers students a choice of positions in nine fields of service: animals and environment, hunger and homelessness, health and wellness, children and youth, adult literacy, mentoring, elderly, arts and culture, and special events, and moves students through a track of increasing responsibility as they progress through their four years.

Tammy Bean
Director of Community Service Programs

Clarion University, Clarion, Pennsylvania

Clarion highlights community service work-study as one of several ways students can get involved in the community and gain career experience during their time at the university. University staff meet with students and their parents during summer orientation sessions;

advertise through a brochure, newsletter, website, and posters; conduct presentations to service-learning classes and student organizations; and participate in the Activities Day Fair. More students and community agencies are interested in community service work-study than can be accommodated each year.

Positions are designed to provide students with career experience relevant to their major course of study at Clarion. Information sessions for students explain the goals of the program, the selection process, criteria for employment, student assistant expectations, and the nature of the opportunity. Applications of eligible students are forwarded to agencies for selection. New site supervisors and student employees must participate in a university orientation prior to employment. A handbook accompanies the orientation. Each spring semester, supervisors and students are required to evaluate each other using a standard performance evaluation. Visit www.clarion.edu/career for forms and resources used by the program.

Diana Anderson Brush
Associate Director
Career Services Center

University of Montana—Missoula, Missoula, Montana

The University of Montana has engaged work-study students in community positions for several decades, and the campus president is very supportive of the program. Students are informed of the opportunity to do community service work-study at meetings held during orientation week. In addition, the Career Services website contains job information, including descriptions of all types of work-study positions. The Director of Financial Aid has long-standing relationships with many local organizations and individuals and invites them to post community positions online. As a result, one in five UM work-study students is engaged in community service.

Connie Bowman
Assistant Director

Ensure that students receive a thorough orientation

Ensure students receive a thorough orientation, are properly trained for their positions, and have opportunities for reflection and connections to academic study.

Provide a thorough orientation to the program, including expectations, paperwork issues, professional behavior, and an introduction to working in the community.

Students may require specific skills to be successful in their positions. Clarify with community partner supervisors exactly which skills are desired and who is responsible for providing the training students need.

Service experiences can be challenging, confusing, thought-provoking, and life-changing. To enhance the learning opportunity offered by service experiences, gather students regularly to reflect on their experiences.

Consider making connections between community service work-study and academic study. Develop courses around important training topics, engage work-study students in support of service-learning or action research courses, or encourage service-learning students to extend their service past the course through community service work-study.

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Augsburg College prepares work-study students for their AugsburgReads tutoring experience by collaborating with a major community neighborhood partner that provides tutoring and mentoring for students, most of whom are immigrants from East Africa (Somalia and Ethiopia). Augsburg students receive a site orientation that includes an overview of the community partner's mission and programs at the community partner's location. The site orientation includes a tour of the neighborhood to familiarize students with the area and training that includes cultural sensitivity and competencies and tutoring techniques. The training is done by Augsburg service-learning staff, the community partner site supervisor, and a Somali leader. AugsburgReads tutors attend scheduled reflection and ongoing training sessions developed to address issues and needs of the students as they arise.

Tim Dougherty
Center for Service, Work and Learning

Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, California

The Center for Academic Service Learning and Research at Azusa Pacific University employs community service work-study students as tutors and service learning program coordinators. The Center makes every effort to place students in positions that correlate with their academic field of study, encouraging a holistic approach to work and school. These programs have experienced success due in large part to the quality training, active supervision, and reflection activities provided to student employees. This offers students work experiences that develop skills in leadership and management. There is a deep commitment to balance challenge and support in an effort to create positive learning experiences while pursuing excellence in service to the community.

Kristin Gurrola
Associate Director
Center for Academic Service Learning and Research

California State University, Fresno, Fresno, California

All community service work-study students, regardless of the program they are involved in, are required to complete an orientation and training. The majority are involved in programs where they take part in regular in-service trainings (weekly or monthly) and

reflection activities, including journaling, group discussions, and essays. All students are evaluated by their supervisor each semester. Many have an opportunity to provide their own input on the program, which is shared with their site supervisor.

Chris Fiorentino
Director, Students for Community Service

Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, Michigan

Kirtland Community College uses multiple ways to engage work-study students in support of service-learning efforts. Work-study students conduct evaluations of current service-learning practice, measure satisfaction among community partners, and provide support for individual faculty members who integrate service-learning activities in their courses. In addition, work-study students lead student leadership workshops at other community colleges and participate in statewide service-learning student leadership committees. Finally, work-study students at Kirtland are encouraged to create a service project of their own. This project requires the student to obtain funding through grants, recruit volunteers, carry out the service and evaluate the entire project.

Nicholas Holton
Faculty Member/Service Learning Coordinator

Contribute to student success

Contribute to student success through effective monitoring, ongoing supervision, and recognition of student contributions.

Designate the students' official supervisor and clarify the goals of community service work-study with them. Inform students whom to approach with questions and concerns during their experience.

Recognize students' contributions in meaningful ways during and at the end of their experience.

Juniata College, Huntington, Pennsylvania

Juniata College works together with community partners to jointly design service programs for work-study students. In this process, community organizations are able to clearly communicate their objectives and determine how they can best utilize resources provided by the college. The coordinator of the community work study program at Juniata communicates regularly with community partners to ensure that student performance is aligned with their expectations and goals. The coordinator conducts evaluations periodically to assess program effectiveness and student outcomes.

Shauna Morin
Community Service/Service Learning Coordinator

University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

The community service work-study program at the University of Denver is distinguished by the attention given to students who serve in community agencies. During the initial training for student workers, campus leaders clearly establish the students' job duties and clarify their responsibilities in representing the university and the partner organization. In addition, each partner organization is responsible for on site training as it relates to their placement. Throughout the year, the staff from the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning works closely with the supervisors from each site to ensure a meaningful experience for the students and the community partner. Then a year-end celebration is held in a local neighborhood center, where students and community partners come together to reflect and receive recognition for their job well done.

Frank Coyne
Associate Director
Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning

Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana

Xavier University's Volunteer Service Office carefully developed a program to support student workers engaged in community service work-study. The office chose to work with ten schools and ten nonprofit agencies charged with providing students meaningful service positions outlined in a memorandum of agreement. The university provides students with an orientation and specific training in literacy and education, mentoring, and working with special populations. Students attend regular meetings that include speakers from nonprofit organizations, AmeriCorps, and other service organizations, as well as job training and reflection. Throughout the year, students are recognized for their work during dinners and other gatherings and receive greeting cards and other small tokens on birthdays and holidays. A university van also is available to take them to and from their placements.

Donielle Smith Flynn
Assistant Director for Service-Learning/American Humanics

Create partnerships

Create partnerships with community organizations built on open communication, trusting relationships, and joint design and evaluation of program objectives.

Community partners — the people and organizations with whom students serve and work — are a key part of the community service work-study equation. Taking the time to develop strong partnerships will have multiple benefits for all involved.

Set a tone of respect and openness with community partners through regular, effective communication.

Strive to know key partners individually. Understand the mission of their organization, their needs, and their assets.

Include partners in helping design the goals for the program and assisting in evaluating its effectiveness.

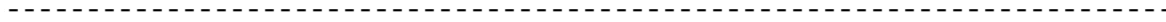
Consider positioning the campus as the official “employer” of students to lessen paperwork burdens experienced by community partner organizations.

Ohio Dominican University, Columbus, Ohio

Ohio Dominican University began its outreach to community partners in the year 2000, and continues to develop strong relationships and partnerships with local civic associations, churches, schools, organizations, and individuals. The Ohio Dominican Center for Leadership and Community Service works mainly with community partners in the university’s zip code area. The Center works closely with faculty to establish and maintain service-learning components in appropriate courses. The Center is also working closely with all student organizations to engage student leaders in community and school related service projects. A faculty steering committee and community council help guide and direct the Center in its organization and outreach to the community and university.

Bob Franz

Director of the Center for Leadership and Community Service



Prepare community partner supervisors

Prepare community partner supervisors to be effective in their role through a clear orientation, training as needed, and recognition of their contributions.

Provide an orientation for community partner supervisors in person and through written materials.

Recognize that community partners are often extremely busy and are serving as co-educators of the students. Communicate appreciation of these efforts, including a formal recognition or show of thanks at the end of the year.

University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado

The Office of Financial Aid works closely with eleven community organizations to help meet the needs of the community and its student population. Agencies are chosen to help students complement their academic experiences. The Student Employment Office holds a Job Fair every year where the off campus agencies are invited to attend and the agencies tend to hire most of their work-study students during the Fair. A training for the agency staff is held every year to go over expectations, roles, and responsibilities for all involved.

Chris Peterson
Assistant Director, Office of Financial Aid

Adhere to the spirit and rules

Adhere to the spirit and rules of U.S. Department of Education Federal Work-Study legal requirements.

Establish systems that facilitate accurate and clear tracking and reporting.

University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado

In order to effectively track information on large numbers of students participating in various community service work-study programs, the University of Colorado designed ways within its existing financial aid software to track information on students in programs such as America Reads, America Counts, etc. This includes a process that allows community agencies to enter students' timecard data directly into the university's electronic time collection system. In addition to providing valuable tracking information, this system ensures that students are paid in a more accurate and timely manner.

Gwen Eberhard
Director of Financial Aid

See the U. S. Department of Education's *Federal Work-Study Handbook for Financial Aid Professionals* for additional information.

Developmental Matrix for Community Service Federal Work-Study

The purpose of the Development Matrix is to assist the leaders of community service Federal Work-Study (FWS) efforts in planning for future development of their programs.

Users of this document should begin by identifying the level (1 – 4) that best describes each element of their current community service FWS efforts. Different program elements may fit in different levels. Leaders are then encouraged to work with colleagues on campus, students, and partners in the community to establish specific goals for development in some or all program element areas (for example, striving to move up by one level in Program Element areas 1, 5, and 8 within 18 months).

Note that these levels do not represent chronological stages of development in all cases. In addition, institutions may find that elements of their current program fall into more than one level; users should strive to identify the level that most represents current realities. The descriptions may need to be reworded for some institutions. Program elements that appear in Levels 1 or 2 should not necessarily be considered “wrong” or “weak.” They may be important steps in laying a foundation for a more fully developed program in the future.

Based on observation, Level 1 represents the majority of U.S. institutions of higher education today (with the exception of Program Element #10, since the vast majority of institutions do meet the 7% mandate). Level 2 represents good efforts to strengthen elements of the community service FWS program. Level 3 represents elements of a very solid program. Level 4 represents an exceptionally high-quality program. (Few institutions currently achieve this level.)

Based on “Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Work-Study” by Erin Bowley and Marsha Adler (Campus Compact, 2002).

Partnering with Financial Aid: Introduction and Approach

The guidance offered here is directed primarily at those campus professionals who serve as coordinators of community service, service-learning, volunteerism, or other campus-community partnership efforts.

By federal mandate, 7% of the federal funds that your institution receives for the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program must be used for community service positions. The federal government requires higher education institutions to develop and market community service positions to the students who are eligible for FWS.

Forming a partnership with the financial aid professionals who control and manage FWS funds can give you greater access to and control of the FWS positions on your campus. The resulting benefits can include increasing the staff capacity of your programs, offering meaningful leadership positions to students, and increasing the number of students serving the community.

This document provides a basic orientation to the federal regulations governing the use of FWS for community service positions and offers strategies for forming or strengthening a partnership with Financial Aid.

Partnering with Financial Aid: Approach

In approaching the Financial Aid office on your campus, the best way to ensure success is to build a relationship built on mutual understanding and trust. Following are several tips for forming the type of relationship with Financial Aid that will allow you to have a bigger role in the decisions regarding FWS positions in the community.

1. Build a personal relationship or partnership.

It is beneficial to think about your involvement in FWS as a *partnership* between your office and the people at your institution who currently manage FWS. In a partnership, combining the assets of both sides allows for a better outcome than working in isolation. You should not approach this as an opportunity to take over the way your institution manages FWS in the community. Instead, you are offering your expertise, abilities, and networks for the benefit of strengthening the program for all involved. You should see this as an opportunity to listen to and learn from the expertise of the professionals at your institution who manage FWS.

2. Educate yourself as much as possible about FWS facts.

There are many unfamiliar terms and processes associated with FWS. Many of them are defined in this document or in helpful websites listed elsewhere in this publication. It is in your best interest to learn the basic facts about FWS in the community before launching into a conversation with others at your institution who know much more about the program. The way FWS is managed differs from one institution to the next because the federal regulations governing the program provide for flexibility. It is important to understand what is *required* by the federal government versus what your institution has decided to do with the program. This is especially true if you are hoping to change the way that the FWS program currently operates.

3. Be flexible: understand that different people use different language or use different approaches.

This document uses the terminology most common in the fields of FWS and campus-community initiatives. You may use different terminology (e.g., community *based* FWS instead of community *service*). Language choices in this document are not meant as value judgments. If you have strong feelings about the right way to talk about campus involvement in the community, you should understand that others at your institution may have different views. You can also use language to your advantage; simply because the federal regulations refer repeatedly to *work-study* or *community service*, perhaps different language will

work better for your institution (e.g. Community Scholars or Off-Campus Student Employment).

4. Understand that changing FWS practice at your institution will take time.

Human beings can be amazingly creative, flexible, and intelligent, but they can also be averse to change. Given limited time, the professionals who manage FWS at your institution may have established routines and systems that work for them and that they do not want to alter. They probably do not *need* to involve you in their work, so it may take time for you to build a trusting relationship that will ultimately result in your increased involvement. You will be more satisfied and experience more success if you take a long-term approach to building a partnership that increases your involvement in FWS over time.

Key Concepts

Before rushing in to change anything about the way your institution manages FWS, take the time to educate yourself about both the federal regulations governing the program and determine a few things about how FWS operates at your institution.

Who Controls or Manages FWS at Your Institution?

Institutions of higher education can be structured very differently from one campus to the next, but in almost all cases, the office that manages FWS is called either Financial Aid or Student Employment (or some variation on one of these). In many instances, the Student Employment area is located *within* the larger umbrella of Financial Aid.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid (sometimes called Student Aid or Financial Affairs) helps students afford to attend school, and nearly all Financial Aid professionals think of their primary objective as providing access to education. Financial Aid professionals counsel students on the various options students have for how they will pay for their tuition and related expenses.

Students (and/or their families) complete a federal form called the Federal Student Financial Aid Application (FAFSA) to help the institution determine whether students are eligible — based on their income and assets — to receive any help in paying for their education. Based on the FAFSA, the Financial Aid office puts together each student's financial aid package.

Elements of the financial aid package generally include *loans* (which students start paying back to the government, institution, or private lender when they are no longer in school); *grants* or *scholarships* (funds from the government or institution that students do

not have to pay back); and *work-study awards* (a contract with the institution that allows students to be employed in certain positions to earn money while in school). Professionals in Financial Aid offices are generally well trained in interpreting financial options for students, counseling students about paying for their education, and completing the paperwork that accompanies those processes.

Student Employment

Student Employment (sometimes called Campus Employment) refers to the group that helps link students with employers both during school and after graduation. Student Employment specifically manages work programs such as Federal Work-Study. At a small institution, Student Employment may be one or two people who work within the Financial Aid office. At other institutions, Student Employment may be a stand-alone office that also coordinates opportunities such as internships and co-operative education. Sometimes Student Employment is located in the institution's Human Resources department.

A review of your institution's website, phone directory, or catalogue will probably clarify who manages FWS. You can also call your Financial Aid office to ask to find out with whom you need to meet to learn more about your institution's systems and processes for managing the *community service* element of FWS.

In this document, references to "Financial Aid" are meant to include whomever at your institution manages FWS. If your institution uses a different name, simply substitute that where this term appears.

What Is Work-Study?

This document will focus on *Federal Work-Study*, but be aware that many institutions also participate in State Work-Study programs or offer work-study jobs paid entirely by the institution (Institutional Work-Study). State and Institutional Work-Study programs generally do not have the same regulations for community service, so ask how those programs work at your institution, if they exist.

Federal Work-Study Background

The FWS program, regulated by the U.S. Department of Education, was created by the federal government in 1964 as a part-time employment program for low-income students. Its most important purpose was and is to increase access to higher education by providing work opportunities for students who need wages in order to attend college or university. FWS is generally just one part of a student's overall financial aid package. Most FWS students at colleges and universities work on campus in various positions within academic departments, the cafeteria, the library, or other areas.

Community Service and Federal Work-Study

Revised language in the Higher Education Act in 1965 clarified that work performed by FWS students was to be “for the institution itself or work in the public interest for a public or private nonprofit organization.” So from the early days of the program, community service has been part of its purpose. In 1994, a new mandate required 5% of the total FWS funds received by an institution be used for community service positions. In 2000, the mandate was increased to 7% and a new provision required the institution to employ at least one student in a tutoring or family literacy program.

Understanding the “7% Mandate”

The current 7% mandate refers to the percentage of the *total amount of FWS funds* received by the institution that must be used to pay wages to students in community service positions. It does *not* mean that 7% of the number of students must be in community positions. Depending on the total amount of FWS received by your institution, 7% may result in only a few community service positions, or it may mean hundreds.

Federal Regulations

The following text offers portions of the actual federal regulations governing FWS that relate to its purpose and definitions. To simplify things, this edited version includes only language that directly relates to the community service portion of FWS.

Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education

Part 675 - Federal Work-Study Programs

§ 675.1 Purpose

(a) The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program provides part-time employment to students attending institutions of higher education who need the earnings to help meet their costs of postsecondary education and encourages students receiving FWS assistance to participate in community service activities.

§ 675.2 Definitions

Community services: Services which are identified by an institution of higher education, through formal or informal consultation with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations, as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs...

§ 675.18 Use of funds

(g) *Community service.* (1) For the 2000-2001 award year and subsequent award years, an institution must use at least seven percent of the sum of its initial and supplemental FWS allocations for an award year to compensate students employed in community service activities. In meeting this community service requirement, an institution must include at least one –

(i) Reading tutoring project that employs one or more FWS students as reading tutors for children who are preschool age or are in elementary school; or

(ii) Family literacy project that employs one or more FWS students in family literacy activities.

§ 675.8 Program participation agreement

To participate in the FWS, an institution of higher education shall enter into a participation agreement with the Secretary. The agreement provides that, among other things, the institution shall –

...(d) Award FWS employment, to the maximum extent practicable, that will complement and reinforce each recipients' educational program or career goals;

...(f) Inform all eligible students of the opportunity to perform community services and consult with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations to identify those opportunities.

These portions of the regulations clearly show that community service positions are important to the program. Additional portions of the regulations found in Part 675 that relate to community service FWS are found later in this document.

The “Spirit” of the Regulations vs. Common Interpretations

One of the greatest challenges in working effectively with others at your institution on FWS is the different ways people interpret portions of the regulations related to community service. A good way to determine whether a FWS position meets the community service requirement is to consider who is most affected by the work of the position — the community at large or the campus community? The *Federal Student Aid Handbook* (updated each school year) notes that positions may be on or off campus but specifies that “on-campus jobs can meet the definition of community services, provided that the services are open and accessible to the community... A service is considered open to the community if the service is publicized to the community and members of the community use the service.”

Despite this requirement, some institutions count on-campus positions that do not substantially serve the community at large in calculating the percentage of FWS funds allocated to community service. They may rationalize that these positions are located

somewhere on campus that has community contact, such as the library, gymnasium, or theater box office. Generally, however, these sorts of positions do not reflect the *spirit* of the 7% mandate. It is critical that you have a dialogue with colleagues in the Financial Aid office and other offices on campus to formalize the criteria you will use to define appropriate community service positions.

Enforcement

The 7% mandate is a federal regulation, not a law, but it is enforceable. Institutions that do not follow the regulation run the risk of being penalized by the Department of Education — for example, by losing a portion of FWS in the following year. In the past few campuses have been held to account, but in May 2007, the Department of Education sent a formal letter to financial aid professionals spelling out the regulation’s requirements and clarifying avenues for enforcement:

“An institution that participates in the FWS Program that fails to meet one or both of the FWS community service requirements for the 2007-2008 Award Year, or in subsequent award years, will be required to return FWS Federal funds in an amount that represents the difference between the amount that the institution should have spent for community service and the amount that it actually spent.” Further, an institution that is out of compliance with the FWS community service requirements may be subject to a Limitation, Suspension, and Termination (L, S, & T) proceeding, where the institution could be denied future participation in the FWS Program, and possibly other Title IV, HEA programs, and/or subject to a substantial fine.”

In addition, an institution’s own external auditors may also examine whether the institution’s FWS program is in compliance, including whether the community service positions appear to comply with federal regulations and definitions.

Building a Successful Partnership

Following are some questions to ask as you move through the process of partnering with colleagues in Financial Aid. First determine what you want from the relationship so you know where to begin. Equally important, be prepared to articulate how Financial Aid personnel and the institution can benefit from your involvement. Finally, this section offers suggestions for overcoming resistance to the idea of sharing control over community service FWS.

What Are You Asking for From Financial Aid?

Before meeting with Financial Aid personnel, it is important to clarify what you are really asking for. Even if your first meeting is meant only to better educate yourself about the FWS program at your own institution (a good first approach), you should think through your vision for your increased involvement in the program. Knowing what you

want will help you ask better questions. Being clear about your self-interest is not bad; you will more likely to create a partnership that serves your needs and interests long-term. Following are some possible goals for increased involvement in community service FWS.

A Few Students to Build the Program Capacity

FWS students might help add capacity for your community service or service-learning efforts. For example, you may wish to employ a small number of students in your office to support your work. These students may serve as “student coordinators,” “issue area coordinators,” “partner liaisons,” etc. If the students have a role interfacing with your community partners (such as when you choose one FWS student to be the primary liaison with one or more key partner organizations), they can qualify as community service FWS. If the students in your office or program are doing strictly administrative work in the office with no community interaction, they probably don’t qualify.

A Large Number of Students for Direct Service or Program Coordination

You may wish to have a large number of FWS students (perhaps all of your institution’s community service FWS positions) allocated to your office so that you can, in turn, involve them in direct service positions with community organizations and/or leadership roles.

A Role in Managing Community Partners

You are likely to have some idea of which community organizations work well with your students through past volunteer or service-learning interaction. You may have a system that identifies key community partners. Without managing the entire community FWS program, you could tell the Financial Aid office which organizations you recommend or with whom you have a pre-existing working relationship.

A Role in Promoting the Program

You may want to increase visibility of community service FWS opportunities among students and/or community organizations. Your office might offer to help market the opportunities through existing or new systems.

A Role in Supporting Students in the Community

If you have a well established community service or service-learning effort at your institution, you are aware of the importance of properly preparing students for community-based experiences and offering them structured ways to discuss and learn from the challenges and opportunities they face during those experiences. You might offer to help the Financial Aid office prepare community service FWS students, engage them in structured reflection or education opportunities, and/or develop student leadership through your office.

A Role in Connecting Community Service FWS with Academic Study

Federal regulations discussed in this document show a desired link between students' area of study or career plans and their FWS experience. Your office might be able to help form these kinds of connections — for example, offering FWS positions to students who want to continue their service after completing a service-learning experience, helping develop and market community service FWS positions that relate to typical areas of study, or creating FWS student assistant positions to support faculty who do service-learning (e.g., communicating with partners, observing students in the community, arranging transportation options, facilitating reflection).

Full Control of the Institution's Community Service FWS Program

You may be willing to take on nearly all the tasks involved in managing your institution's community service FWS program. These include the items listed above, plus preparing and executing required written agreements with each organization where FWS students work, tracking timecards and wage payments, managing invoicing of community organizations for their portion of the wage match (if applicable), and monitoring through site visits, among others. The Financial Aid Office will, however, always be involved in reporting your institution's use of community FWS to the federal government and approving aspects of the program.

Why Should Financial Aid Collaborate with You?

In addition to thinking through why you want more involvement in the community service FWS program, you can help educate Financial Aid colleagues about why working with you will serve their interests. *Understanding and helping meet the Financial Aid office's needs is the best way to form a partnership with them.*

What Challenges Do Financial Aid Professionals Face?

Managing the community service aspect of FWS was probably added on to the Financial Aid professionals' jobs at your institution, and those people are probably still responsible for everything were doing before. Relatively little administrative money accompanies the FWS program, so the 7% mandate and other program requirements simply add responsibilities for the people who manage the programs. It is unlikely that Financial Aid personnel think of community FWS as an established program rather than as a requirement that they meet. In addition, professionals in Financial Aid do not usually have any training in working effectively with community organizations, finding community partners, building campus-community partnerships, or working with students who are dealing with (potentially challenging) community experiences. You can bring a wealth of experience in these areas to your partnership with Financial Aid.

What Motivates Financial Aid?

As noted earlier, Financial Aid professionals primarily see their job as promoting access to higher education. Professionals who focus specifically on Student Employment want to

provide work opportunities that help students hone in on a career path and build their skills and experience. Second only to earning money for education, Financial Aid and Student Employment professionals will share the following major desired outcome for your institution's FWS program:

Provide an excellent work experience for students that offers developmentally appropriate tasks, teaches useful skills, is well supervised, and can be used to show work experience on a student's resume.

The benefits that high-quality community service FWS positions may offer over most traditional, on-campus FWS positions include:

- Balancing an interest in service to the community with a need to work
- The “legitimacy” that an off-campus position may provide when listed on a resume
- More responsibility
- Opportunities to take on a leadership role
- Links between community work and academic interests
- Varied opportunities to gain career experience
- Strengthening campus-community partnerships
- Good public relations for the institution

If you think you can help create FWS positions that will accomplish the above benefits, make sure to articulate those to your Financial Aid colleagues.

Additional Ways to Serve Financial Aid's Interests

Relieving some of the work burden. Developing community service FWS positions can be much more labor intensive than creating traditional on-campus positions. Your office may have an existing infrastructure for service or service-learning that could take on some program management elements without much financial outlay. Offer to help with some of the work, such as identifying community partner organizations that work well with your students, orienting students to community experiences, making site visits to community organizations for monitoring purposes, executing written site agreements, interviewing students to find good matches in the community, marketing the program to students and organizations, evaluating the program, and tracking timesheets.

Providing structure to improve quality. As stated above, your institution may not think of community FWS as a “program” with goals, staff, evaluation results, criteria for appropriate community positions, etc. If you can offer the opportunity to create such a program by relying on some of your existing infrastructure and capacity, the experience for all stakeholders will be improved.

Generating supplemental funding. Some institutions do not use all of the FWS funds they receive and they return these “deobligated” funds to the Department of Education. Other institutions that do use all of their funds and would like to receive more are eligible to apply for “reallocated” funds if 5% is already being spent on community tutoring/literacy

programs and the institution has a “fair-share shortfall” (your Financial Aid office can clarify this). *Reallocated funds can be used as wages only for community service jobs.* So, if your institution would like to increase the amount of FWS funds it receives, strengthening the community portion of the FWS program is important. With a supplemental increase in the overall amount of FWS funding your institution receives and uses comes a modest increase in the Administrative Cost Allowance funds (for staff and other administrative costs).

Assist with future FWS rule changes. As FWS program requirements change (e.g., increases or changes to the mandate for community service), your institution will be in a better position to react to those changes if you are in partnership with Financial Aid and have a coordinated program.

How Can You Overcome Resistance?

You may take the time to become well versed in the community FWS program, to understand the challenges facing the Financial Aid professionals at your institution and the ways you can help alleviate some of the burdens, and how program quality will improve through your involvement, and your Financial Aid colleagues may still not be interested in working with you. Below are some common responses you might get and some thoughts on how to deal with them.

Control Issues

“We’re unwilling to give up control of the program.”

Stress that you are not looking for total control of the community FWS program, but instead are hoping to help make it stronger. Listen and understand which portions of the program the Financial Aid staff feel are vital to keep in their office and suggest ways that you can relieve the burden in other ways.

Interpretation of Regulations

“It doesn’t matter what we do, because there’s no enforcement.”

“We think that ‘community service’ means serving our campus community.”

You may need to remind your colleagues that the regulation is clear: community service positions should serve the community at large and not the campus community. Administrators should generally not side with a campus department that gets around a federal regulation by interpreting the language they way they want to. Even if the federal government does not examine the program closely — which cannot be counted on, especially given the signal given by the Department of Education’s recent letter about enforcement to financial aid professionals (see the section in this document on Enforcement) — your institution’s external auditors should be comparing the federal regulations with the position descriptions on file to ensure compliance.

General Resistance

“I don’t make the decisions...”

“There’s no extra money to increase the number of community positions...”

“Other departments really need the student workers...”

The people in Financial Aid to whom you have access may not make (or want to make) certain decisions regarding allocation of budgets and management practices. You may also hear that your Financial Aid colleagues have no interest in changing current policies, including the amount of funds allocated for community FWS positions. Either way, you may need to go higher up in the administration to have your ideas considered.

1. Once you have tried your best to have productive conversations around these issues but have not made progress, you may need to take your concerns to another audience. Before doing so, make sure you understand the climate in the Financial Aid office correctly and that you know how to articulate the benefits of changing or strengthening the community service portion of FWS. You may need to get access to someone higher up in the chain of command in Financial Aid or at the institution. If you do not personally have the access it requires to be heard at that level, enlist an ally who does (i.e., someone with power or connections who believes in your work).
2. Look at the mission statement of your institution, its strategic plan, and recent statements from the president’s office (or those of other top administrators) for examples of ways the institution might be trying to strengthen its commitment to civic or community engagement. Talk about how community service FWS is one piece of a larger commitment that your institution can make to your local community and to increasing civic engagement among your students.
3. Find examples of strong community service FWS efforts at peer institutions. Talk with your Campus Compact office for suggestions or review “Principles of Good Practice in Community Service Federal Work-Study” for strong program model examples from diverse institutions.
4. Remind your colleagues that while the required minimum for community service is 7% of FWS funds, the national average is about 15%.
5. Be persistent, keep listening to (rather than talking at) the Financial Aid personnel, and talk with a variety of people at the institution about the benefits of having a strong community service FWS program.

Other Questions and Areas of Concern

Federal Work-Study is full of complicated regulations and program interpretations, especially for those people who don’t work with it on a regular basis. Following is some additional information that will help increase your understanding.

How Does the Money Work?

There are several potentially confusing issues to understand regarding how FWS funds flow.

From the Department of Education to Your Institution

Your institution applies each year to receive FWS funds using the “FISAP” (Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate). Most of the FWS funds the institution receives will go to student wages, while a small amount is provided for administrative costs (this is called the Administrative Cost Allowance). A calculation called “fairshare” determines which institutions in the nation receive more or less of the total amount available for FWS. In general, institutions that have participated in the FWS program for a longer amount of time receive more of the funds. Your Financial Aid office can tell you more about how the fairshare calculation affects your institution.

From the Institution to the Students

Of the wages paid to a FWS student in a traditional on-campus position, 75% come from the federal government (through the FWS program) and 25% come from the institution’s budget. Often, when a student serves in the community, the community site is asked to pay the 25% that would otherwise be paid by the institution. However, the institution may ask the community site to pay more or less than 25%. (See the following sections on wages and waivers.)

Students are given a FWS contract as part of their financial aid package. The contract lists the total maximum amount they can earn through FWS for the year. Students need to pay attention to their contract maximum, the amount they are earning per hour, and the number of hours they are working so that they use up their contract at the rate they and their supervisor intend. Some students have the FWS wages applied directly to the cost of their education, while others choose to receive a check. In a small number of cases, the community organization is responsible for putting students on their payroll and paying them directly. (In these cases, the organization bills the college or university for the federal portion of the wage.) More often, the institution pays the students and bills the community organization for any portion of the wages it owes.

Wages

The wage that FWS students earn is determined by your institution, not by the federal government. It must be at least the federal minimum wage. Wages should be commensurate with students’ responsibility as outlined in their position description. At some institutions, all FWS students earn the same wage. At others, the wage varies depending on what the students are doing.

Many institutions have established a wage incentive for students doing community service FWS, such as offering a higher starting wage for community positions or offering a higher possible wage if students stay in their position. In some cases, community

organizations will offer a wage supplement (over and above the amount they are required to contribute) to attract students with a higher total wage.

Waivers

There are a number “waivers,” or exceptions to wage or other rules, that you might hear about in connection with community service FWS.

America Reads. The most common waiver is the America Reads waiver. Under this regulation, if the student is a tutor in a community literacy or math program, the institution may pay the student using 100% federal funds rather than 75%.

Minority-serving institutions. Some minority-serving institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities) may use 100% federal funds to pay all FWS students.

Under-resourced organizations. A lesser known waiver allows community organizations that cannot afford to pay 25% of the students’ wage to request that they only pay 10%, with the other 90% coming from federal sources. The federal share may be up to 90% if the student is employed at a nonprofit organization or public agency that “would not otherwise be able to afford the costs of this employment.” The organization must write a letter to the institution requesting this waiver; the institution reviews these requests on a case-by-case basis. No more than 10% of students participating in FWS may work under this sort of waiver.

Institutional waiver. In a very small number of cases, institutions will request a waiver of exemption from the 7% mandate. They do not need to report any community service FWS positions at all. This is a difficult waiver to get, and few institutions have one.

Complicating Factors

Managing FWS funds can be very complicated, even for experienced Financial Aid administrators. It is helpful to understand some of the reasons that it might be difficult for your Financial Aid office to determine exactly how much funding will be available during any given year or term for community service FWS positions:

- Not all students offered FWS in their financial aid package enroll in the institution.
- Not all students who accepts a FWS offer find employment.
- Not all students who work use up all of their award.
- Some students work more than their award allows.
- Students earn at different rates (of time and money).

Who Decides What?

There are some clear areas where the federal government determines regulations for FWS programs, and there are instances where the federal government is flexible and institutions create their own policies. You could work to convince your institution to

change its approach to the areas listed on the right side of the table below; however, it is worth having a conversation to determine how set some of the institutional policies are, why they exist as they do, and where changes are possible.

Decision-Making for Community Service FWS

FWS Program Element	Federal Regulations	Institutional Policy
Wage for students	At least minimum wage.	The institution determines the range of wages.
Match required of community sites	No maximum or minimum. Organizations can request to pay only 10% due to financial hardship. Federal funds can be used to pay 100% of literacy/math tutoring wages.	Institution determines community site share of student wages (0-50%).
Eligibility for FWS	Students meet basic income limits on the FAFSA.	Institution determines how many and which students will receive FWS as part of their financial aid package.
How much FWS funding is dedicated to community service positions	At least 7%.	Institution determines if it will allocate more than 7%.
Whether work on campus can be counted as meeting the 7% community service mandate	<i>Community services</i> are defined as “designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals.”	Institutions may believe that services provided on campus (e.g. staffing the campus library) meet the definition, but this does not generally fit the “spirit” of the regulation.
Whether students can work for religious organizations	Students may tutor in a parochial school but may not engage in religious education activities.	The institution may establish its own priorities for where students can serve that may or may not allow for serving with religious organizations.
Whether students can work for political organizations	With a very small number of exceptions, students working for partisan or nonpartisan political organizations do not qualify as meeting the 7% community service FWS mandate.	
Whether students can replace regular	Students may not displace workers or replace striking	

FWS Program Element	Federal Regulations	Institutional Policy
workers	workers.	

Do Students Get Paid for Training and Transportation?

Students in some community service FWS positions may require significant training in order to be adequately prepared for their community experience. This is especially true when working with vulnerable populations and/or in literacy programs. Students may be paid wages for the time they spend in training. They may also be paid wages for the time they spend getting to and from their community site, although the federal governmental does not provide any extra funds for mileage reimbursement or public transportation costs.

675.18 Use of funds.

(h) *Payment for time spent in training and travel.* (1) For any award year, an institution may pay students for reasonable amount of time spent for training that is directly related to FWS employment.

(2) Beginning with the 1999-2000 award year, an institution may pay students for a reasonable amount of time spent for travel that is directly related to employment in community service activities (including tutoring in reading and family literacy activities).

FWS and Academic Credit

Students *may* earn FWS wages for the same hours they spend completing an internship, a practicum, a research project (in some cases), or an assistantship. Students may *not* earn work-study wages for the time they would normally spend in a classroom or lab as part of a course. If students are engaged in service-learning activities outside of the classroom, it is possible for them to earn FWS wages. You should discuss these options with your institution's Financial Aid professionals.

675.20 Eligible employers and general conditions and limitation on employment.

...(d) *Academic credit and work-study.* (1) A student may be employed under the FWS program and also receive academic credit for the work performed. Those jobs include, but are not limited to, work performed when the student is –

- (i) Enrolled in an internship;
- (ii) Enrolled in a practicum; or
- (iii) Employed in a research, teaching, or other assistantship.

(2) A student employed in an FWS job and receiving academic credit for that job may not be –

- (i) Paid less than he or she would be if no academic credit were received;
- (ii) Paid for receiving instruction in a classroom, laboratory, or other academic setting.

Work for Religious or Political Organizations

Generally, students can work in programs sponsored by a religious organization as long as the activities serve the community at large, do not involve religious education, and are open to individuals outside the religious organization's own members. Generally, students may not serve partisan or nonpartisan political organizations or campaigns. Institutions may have differing interpretations of these regulations, so it is best to have a conversation with your Financial Aid professionals to determine if your institution has determined its own criteria.

675.22 Employment provided by a Federal, State, or local public agency, or a private nonprofit organization.

(a) If a student is employed by a Federal, State, or local public agency, or a private nonprofit organization, the work that the student performs must be in the public interest.

(b) *FWS employment in the public interest.* The Secretary considers work in the public interest to be work performed for the national or community welfare rather than work performed to the benefit of particular interest or group. Work is not in the public interest if –

- (1) It primarily benefits the members of a limited membership organization such as a credit union, a fraternal or religious order, or a cooperative;
- (2) It is for an elected official who is not responsible for the regular administration of Federal, State, or local government;
- (3) It is work as a political aide for any elected official;
- (4) A student's political support or party affiliation is taken into account in hiring him or her;
- (5) It involves any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or is associated with a faction in an election for public or party office; or
- (6) It involves lobbying on the Federal, State, or local level.

Other Issues

Required Written Agreement or Contract

You must have a written agreement with the off-campus agency or organization where students serve. The template for your agreement should be approved by your institution's

attorney, although you may use a similar agreement with all off-campus organizations. A sample agreement is found in the *Federal Student Aid Handbook*

7% Is the Requirement — 15% is the Average

While the 7% mandate gets most of the attention, the national average for use of FWS funds for community service is actually 15% (in 2005). It is not clear, however, whether all of the wages included in this average were used in positions that meet the spirit of the mandate or what the quality of the programs are. However, when discussing your institution's plan for community service FWS, make sure that your colleagues know that 15%, not 7%, is the national average.

Serving Students with Disabilities

A special regulation allows FWS students who serve other students on campus with disabilities to be counted as part of the 7% for community service, even though these students are serving other college students.

Community Service Federal Work-Study: The Best-Kept Secret in Higher Education?

*By Robert Davidson,
Corporation for National and Community Service*

At its best, the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program is much more than a form of financial aid; it's a powerful educational, career-preparation, and community service internship program. For many colleges and universities, however, the FWS program remains an unrecognized and virtually untapped resource for support of the institution's academic and civic engagement goals.

The FWS program has not received a significant appropriations increase in many years, and its image is often quite negative among the public as well as among participating students. For example, because FWS salaries are generally 75% funded by federal taxpayers — whether the jobs provide services to the community or to the campus — the program has often been criticized on grounds that it provides hidden (and unnecessary) subsidies to college operational budgets. This negative impression can change, however — if the program's community service and academic missions are better known and are taken more seriously by the higher education community.

In January 2007, Veronika Gilliland, a California State University student, addressed the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service. She described her FWS job at the university's MOSAIC mentoring and tutoring program not only as important in helping at-risk teenagers, but also as life-changing and critical to her own success in college and plans for the future: "I went from almost not graduating high

school to feeling like a champion for the community on campus. My work-study position improved my entire educational experience, including my grades.... It was more fulfilling and met my needs more than I could ever have dreamed and has provided me with a multitude of tools and opportunities.” [1](#)

Unfortunately, Gilliland’s FWS experience is not the norm. The large majority of FWS positions continue to be on-campus jobs that have little or no relationship to the program’s community service or academic purposes.

An undergraduate attending a recent New Mexico workshop stated that in his experience and that of other students, work-study jobs are usually unrewarding, unchallenging, and boring, and sometimes amount to little more than “make-work.” To shake off that image he recommended that newly created community service FWS programs establish their own names and identities, separate from a college’s on-campus work-study program. (New Mexico has challenged all colleges and universities in the state to allocate at least 50% of their FWS funds to community service.)

In recent years there’s been impressive growth in college student volunteering and in college commitments to community service and civic engagement. Yet the percentage of FWS funds used for community service, 14.83% in 2005-06 (the most recent data), has declined for each of the last two years. Some colleges devote very high percentages of their FWS allocations to community service, while others don’t even meet the 7% minimum statutory requirement.

As a national nonprofit agency executive remarked, it seems that the FWS program’s community service and academic support purposes are “the best-kept secret in higher education.” Can higher education professionals dedicated to student service and civic engagement do more to help unveil the secret?

Program Purposes and Potential

Statutory Requirements

Some community service professionals are still surprised to learn that one of the statutory purposes of the Federal Work-Study program is “...to encourage students receiving Federal student financial assistance to participate in community service activities that will benefit the Nation and engender in the students a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the community.” [2](#)

By law, all participating institutions are required to spend at least 7% of their annual FWS allocation on community service jobs. These jobs must be identified through consultation with local nonprofit, governmental, and community-based organizations, and they must be designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals. Further, the normal 25% institutional matching amount is waived for FWS students who serve as reading or math tutors of elementary students. [2](#)

In addition, by law, colleges must agree to place FWS students in jobs that “...to the maximum extent practicable, complement and reinforce the educational program or vocational goals of each student....” ² In other words, colleges are expected to make maximum effort in placing FWS students in jobs that directly support the students’ academic programs or career objectives.

The Largest College Community Service Program?

With an annual appropriation of slightly less than a billion dollars, Federal Work-Study is a relatively small federal student aid program. But in the world of federally supported community service, it’s a giant. In fiscal year 2006, the program supported the community service work of some 128,000 college students. This compares with an estimated 15,000 college students who were AmeriCorps members. Community service FWS programs exist on more than 3,300 college campuses — far more colleges than are reached by AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and other programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Moreover, the opportunity for expansion of community service FWS is enormous on most campuses.

Benefits for Students and Colleges

Work-Study community service provides students with rich opportunities to:

- Apply academic learning to real-world problems.
- Explore and develop their interest in public and community service.
- Develop interpersonal, teamwork, and leadership skills, as well as a sense of “self-efficacy” — the recognition that one’s efforts can be effective in improving the community and helping others.
- Experience working with individuals from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.
- Learn new, career-related skills.
- Explore potential career paths and develop career-supporting references.

Perhaps most important for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, community service FWS helps “level the playing field” in two ways: 1) by allowing pursuit of all these benefits while earning funds for college costs; and 2) by providing access to the kind of career-fostering “internships” that are often more readily available to students from affluent families.

For colleges and universities, a strong FWS community service program can:

- Strengthen campus-community relations.
- Provide opportunities for positive media coverage.
- Support academic service-learning and community-based research programs.
- Help recruit and retain students from low-income families, particularly those whose attraction to community service makes them likely to be successful students and alumni.

Trends in College Commitment and Student Service

The fact that U.S. colleges and universities are increasingly embracing student community service as a basic institutional mission is evidenced by significant growth in the number of Campus Compact member institutions — from 512 colleges in 1996 to more than 1,000 in 2007.³ This trend is further highlighted by the Carnegie Foundation's new higher education classification, "Community Engagement," which encompasses curricular engagement and outreach and partnerships.

In addition, the national media are beginning to recognize national and community service contributions in their rankings of colleges (e.g., *Washington Monthly's* annual ranking of colleges based on national service, and the recent Campus Compact/Princeton Review book, *Colleges with a Conscience*[The Princeton Review, 2005]).

Meanwhile, incoming college students increasingly have participated in community service in secondary school and expect to continue service activities during college. A 2006 report by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) found that the current rate of volunteering among older teenagers, 28.4%, is more than double the 1989 figure of 13.4%. Another CNCS study found that approximately 3.3 million college students volunteered in 2005 — an increase of approximately 600,000, or 20%, since 2002. This is more than double the 9% volunteering growth rate among all adult volunteers.⁴

National Community Service FWS Data

Missing, Meeting, or Exceeding the 7% Requirement

Given the clear benefits of community service FWS for students and colleges, the program's statutory purposes, and the recent national trends in institutional commitment and college student volunteering, it's surprising — and disturbing — that the national percentage of FWS funds being used for community service jobs has stopped growing and actually begun to decline. The FWS community service rate more than doubled between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s — from 7.2% in 1994-95 (when the Department of Education began collecting these data) to 15.91% in 2003-04. It then dropped to 15.75% in 2004-05, and to 14.83% in 2005-06.⁵

The most recent (2005-06) data from the Department of Education show a dramatic range in institutional commitment to community service FWS:⁶

- Some 11% of institutions receiving FWS funds, or 369 schools (about the same proportion as in earlier years), failed to meet the 7% requirement or obtain a Secretarial waiver exempting them from the requirement.
- Meanwhile, 1,079 schools, or 32% of participating institutions, spent 20% or more of their FWS funds on community service (an increase from 846 schools and 25.4% the previous year).

- About 4%, or 141 schools, achieved community service rates of 40% or higher. This includes 9 schools that spent 100% of their FWS funds on community service.

Again, one must ask — why are some schools doing so much while others are doing so little?

Department of Education Study

The Department of Education’s 2000 study of the Federal Work-Study program’s campus operations (the only such study ever conducted) provides several relevant findings. [7](#) For example, of all FWS jobs, 43% were clerical, 10% were library support, 5% were computer support, and 19% were “other” — including maintenance and food service jobs. While some of these jobs may have been interesting or convenient for students, they were probably not often jobs that complemented the individual’s academic program or enhanced his or her sense of social responsibility.

Among FWS students employed in community service:

- 88% said they would take such jobs in the future;
- 62% said their jobs supported their academic or career goals;
- 68% said their jobs had positive effects on their academic performance; and
- 81% said their experiences would result in personal community service activities in the future.

FWS students not engaged in community service said they were not able to participate in community service jobs because:

- Course schedules did not allow time for community service jobs (42%);
- Community service jobs were not conveniently located (17%);
- They were never made aware that they had a community service option under the FWS program (14%); or
- They had sought but were unable to locate FWS community service jobs (11%).

Considering those last findings, one must ask: Can colleges do more to allow flexibility in course scheduling or to combine course work with community service? Are community service jobs really so unavailable to students? Finally, can colleges do more both to recruit community agency partners and to provide information to students about available community service FWS opportunities?

Common Concerns and Possible Solutions

Financial Aid professionals identify a variety of reasons for the lack of growth in community service FWS. Several are provided below, along with responses and possible solutions.

“It’s Too Much Work”

Some Financial Aid administrators complain that community service FWS simply adds to their workload, including work required to establish and maintain relationships with off-campus community service organizations.

- As many Financial Aid administrators have found, schools may use the FWS program’s Job Location and Development allowance to support community service coordination positions.
- FWS students themselves may be used to handle community service coordination functions.
- Financial Aid offices often can find partner organizations (e.g., on-campus student service coordination offices and off-campus community agencies) that are willing to take on some of the chores.

“We’re Too Far from Communities with Problems”

Some Financial Aid administrators at rural or suburban campuses point to their distance from urban areas as a hurdle, saying that they are not near communities with serious problems that students can help address.

- Nonprofit organizations, schools, and government agencies in rural and suburban areas know that serious community issues are not confined to cities. They welcome energetic college students who can help with education, health care, environmental, and other other issues.
- Many colleges in rural areas have relatively high FWS community service rates. For example, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, in rural upstate New York, has a community service rate of 30.68%.

“Transportation Is Too Difficult”

Some schools find that off-campus community service activities involve transportation-related costs that are difficult to meet. This is a real issue for many institutions, but it need not be a show-stopper.

- Some colleges have obtained transportation support from local transportation agencies or businesses.
- Institution-owned vehicles can sometimes double as community service shuttles, and FWS students can serve as drivers.
- Colleges receiving grants under the Higher Education Act’s Title III Institutional Aid programs may use those funds to subsidize student travel to community service jobs.
- The time students spend in transit to community service jobs may be covered by their FWS salaries.

“On-Campus Jobs Fit Better with Class Schedules”

Some Financial Aid administrators explain that it’s hard to interest students in off-campus community service jobs when interesting on-campus work-study jobs are closer to classes and more likely to work with their course schedules. They may also say that on-campus jobs support students’ educational goals.

- Many colleges and community agencies are successful in scheduling off-campus service opportunities around class schedules. Making community agencies aware of scheduling issues such as exam periods and vacations is key.
- Community service jobs need not be located off-campus. Many involve the coordination of student volunteers or service-learning programs, and are primarily located on campus.
- Of course, meaningful on-campus FWS jobs that truly support the student’s academic goals should be encouraged. Schools believing that academically supportive on-campus FWS jobs are keeping their community service percentages low can verify that by surveying all of their FWS students.

“Community Service Gives Away Our Subsidy”

As mentioned above, in general, the federal government pays 75% of a FWS student’s salary. Some college administrators candidly acknowledge that they resist expanding community service FWS programs because the federal subsidy is a needed source of financial support for their dining halls, libraries, and other campus operating budgets. This attitude may be more pervasive than many colleges would like to admit.

- True or not, the impression given by a low community service FWS rate is that the college is more interested in continuing a federal subsidy for its operating budget than in more fully honoring the community service purposes of the program or its own civic engagement mission.
- As more colleges and universities make community service and/or civic engagement part of their mission (as do 89% of Campus Compact’s member institutions), community service FWS should be seen as an opportunity both to support the institution’s mission and to demonstrate that support publicly.

“Federal Policies Limit Community Service”

Myths and misperceptions about federal policies governing FWS community service abound. Some of these misperceptions may be hampering program growth. For instance:

- It’s not true that community service FWS positions must be with an off-campus agency; jobs can be located on campus, and the college can be the employer.
- It’s not true that FWS salaries can’t exceed the federal minimum wage; the college sets the wages, not the government.
- It’s not true that FWS students must use their awards during academic terms. Some schools have strong “alternative spring break” and other non-academic period programs that use FWS.

- It's not true that FWS students can't participate in service-learning or other academic internship programs carrying academic credit. FWS salaries can't cover in-class time, but they can pay for course-related community service time.
- It's not true that FWS students can't earn AmeriCorps education awards for the same hours they serve as FWS participants. In fact, hundreds of FWS students do exactly that as part of JumpStart and many Campus Compact programs.

(For more information on FWS regulations, see [Partnering with Financial Aid.](#))

“Federal Work-Study Appropriations Aren't Growing”

Some blame low community service rates on flat federal appropriations for the overall FWS program. It's certainly easier to add new community service jobs when FWS allocations are increasing than it is to shift jobs from the campus to the community within a “zero-sum” budget environment. It can be done, however — and doing so may help provide a rationale for increasing appropriations in the future.

- Even during times of limited appropriations growth, most colleges have significant room to expand their community service FWS programs. A school with a 15% community service rate, for example, can still look closely at the 85% of its FWS salaries that are not community service-related.
- The greatest increases in FWS appropriations came in the years immediately after President Clinton and the Congress dramatically emphasized the community service power of FWS by waiving the institutional match for students serving as elementary reading and math tutors (in what became known as the America Reads and America Counts programs). Political support for increasing the FWS program's appropriation can be revived if the community service and academic support aspects of the program are better publicized and more strongly supported by college leaders.

How to Leverage the Work-Study Resource

What steps can higher education professionals take to expand and improve community service FWS programs? Following are five suggestions to help get this important work done as efficiently and effectively as possible:

1. Promote greater awareness of the benefits of community service FWS among students, administrators, faculty, and community agencies — through local media, campus newsletters, and websites. Highlight stories about community impact and individual student achievements.
2. Develop cross-campus partnerships. The value of collaboration among campus offices (e.g., financial aid, student affairs, service-learning, student service offices, and academic departments) may seem obvious, but it's not happening as widely as it might. Joint projects in the recruitment and screening of students and of community agencies can produce cost efficiencies and synergies. Academic departments and pre-professional programs that require or promote the use of community-based internships (e.g., medicine, nursing, social work, teaching, law,

- engineering) are natural FWS partners. In particular, given the academic support mission of the FWS program, there's a natural fit between a college's service-learning and work-study programs. [8](#)
3. Inventory your campus's FWS position descriptions and survey your FWS students to ensure that jobs are meaningful — not “make-work” — and that they support individual students' academic or career goals. Results from such inventories and surveys can be used developing programs and recruiting new students.
 4. Identify and examine your institution's policies and procedures regarding the allocation of Federal Work-Study jobs. This subject appears to be an accidental or intentional mystery on many campuses. Evaluate whether the existing allocation system fully supports your institution's civic engagement and educational missions. Consider creating an advisory committee on this issue composed of students, faculty, and officials from Student Affairs, Financial Aid, and Community Service.
 5. Use the [national institution-by-institution FWS community service data](#) to identify peer institutions and other colleges and universities that have achieved exceptional FWS community service records, and seek their advice on successful practices.

Finally, higher education professionals interested in expanding community service FWS and improving the educational relevance of FWS jobs should not be shy about seeking the ear of college presidents, Student Affairs deans, and chief academic officers. These officials are in the best position to appreciate the program's potential for supporting the institution's missions, to provide leadership in redirecting FWS subsidies, and to reveal publicly “the best-kept secret in higher education.”

Notes:

1. MOSAIC (Mentoring to Overcome Struggles and Inspire Courage) is a gang-prevention partnership between California State University, Northridge and ten community programs run by police officers, schools, and community-based organizations in the San Fernando Valley. It involves Federal Work-Study and service-learning students, professors who teach evidence-based theory, and community experts acting as co-educators who instruct them in how to apply theory in practical ways to connect with youth from disadvantaged circumstances. Veronika Gilliland is currently pursuing a master's degree in social work at the University of Southern California.
2. See sections 441(c) and 443(b) of Title IV of the Higher Education Act. See section 443(b)(7) of the Higher Education Act.
3. Source: Campus Compact.
4. These studies are available from the Corporation for National Community Service.
5. Source: U.S. Department of Education.
6. The latest community service rates for all participating postsecondary institutions.
7. The full report of the National Study of the Operation of the Federal Work-Study Program, 2000.

8. Examples of successful FWS community service/service-learning collaborations are available on the California Campus Compact website.
-