

Career-Connected Learning

Real-world work experience in high-demand fields

FY 2019

**\$10 million
to offer work
experience for
4,700 more
students**

Businesses in high-demand fields struggle to find entry-level workers with the required skills, while students often struggle to gain real-world work experience.

Through the State Work Study program, students get experience that builds their resumes, and employers benefit from the skills and talents of student employees.

State Work Study (SWS) provides valuable work experiences

to students in jobs that are connected to their academic area of interest. The program offers career-connected learning opportunities for eligible students, including graduate students. It is one of the few financial aid options for graduate students. Students must demonstrate financial need and be Washington residents attending one of 55 institutions. With no income cutoff, the program serves more middle-income families on average than other state grant programs. Students can use their wages to cover educational expenses and reduce their student loan debt.

**State Work Study
builds students'
skills, increases
earnings, and
reduces debt.**

Employers and student participants find tremendous value in the work study program. Students can use wages to reduce debt and gain valuable skills, experience, and connections. Employers receive a wage subsidy to pay students, and they often note that work study employees increase efficiency and production.

WSAC proposes increasing the state share of wages for positions in high-demand fields, like STEM. This incentive would attract more STEM and high-demand employers to participate. Because state investment works with employers to pay these wages, \$5 million in state funding produces \$8.3 million in total wages to students. State funding of \$10 million per year will subsidize work experiences for about 4,700 more students and provide 100 percent state-match slots for targeted programs.

This public-private partnership can help fill jobs in high-demand industries through career-connected learning. State Work Study can be an important part of an overall strategy to ensure our graduates have the skills and experience businesses need today. Enhanced investments in State Work Study will support the state's effort to increase educational attainment.



Contact Information

Maddy Thompson, Director of Policy & Government Relations
360-753-7635 | maddyt@wsac.wa.gov