Employer Eligibility

Q: Is my business or organization eligible to be a PA State Work-Study Program (SWSP) employer?

A: Employers with locations in Pennsylvania* and fall into one of following types of employers may be eligible to participate:

- School or school district
- Nonprofit organizations
- Government agencies
- For-profit organizations

The following jobs or employers will not be approved:

- Jobs involving any political activity
- Businesses involved in lobbying
- Jobs involved in the construction or maintenance of any part of a building used for religious worship or sectarian instruction

* Employers with headquarters outside of Pennsylvania may still apply for participation as long as they have a physical location within the Commonwealth.

How to Become an Employer

Q: How does my organization become an eligible employer?

A: To participate in the SWSP, employers must complete the following:

- **New Employers**
  - SWSP Employer Application – This can be found on PHEAA.org/Employer.
  - Remote Access Agreement and Request for Authoritative Source – This form allows access to the necessary PHEAA systems.
  - Employer Agreement – This form will be emailed to the employer once PHEAA receives a student application.
  - Automated Clearing House Authorization Agreement (ACH) – This form provides authority to receive and send electronic funds transfers (EFTs). A request for a form can be made via email from fmeftadmin@pheaa.org; return the form via email or via fax to 717-720-7656.

- **Current Employers**
  - Program Year Work-Study Employer Renewal - This is found in your PageCenter Mailbox, usually generated in mid-March of each year.

Be sure to submit all forms in a timely manner, non-submission can result in jobs not being posted, students not being approved for work, and/or prevent reimbursement.
Q: Do I need to apply each year to participate?

A: Yes. If you are currently approved as an employer for SWSP, you will be required to submit a renewal form annually. After your initial year, a renewal form will be made available each March. If you have not participated in SWSP for longer than one calendar year, your organization will be required to go through the application process again.

Q: Who can be the Organization Official at my business or organization?

A: The Organization Official is the person identified and authorized by your organization to sign the necessary agreements with PHEAA. This person may be different from the students’ supervisor or SWSP coordinator.

**Recruiting and Hiring**

Q: How and when are students recruited?

A: In general, the best time to recruit students is at the start of each term when students are looking for part-time jobs. In the summer months, students may look for full-time work to earn money for college.

One way to jumpstart your recruitment efforts is to establish a relationship with local colleges and universities. Many colleges and universities will have a Student Employment Center or Career Services department that assists students with securing employment opportunities. If your local college or university does not have a Student Employment Center, consider reaching out to the Financial Aid Office.

When connecting with the college or university, questions that your organization may wish to ask include:

- If and how job opportunities could be advertised to their students.
- If they are planning job fairs for employers willing to hire student workers. Fairs or direct recruitment events on campus may save you time in finding the right students.
- If any programs of study require completion of an internship that aligns with your organization’s mission. Internships can often be combined with SWSP awards to allow the student to be paid for work and receive academic credit.
- Where you can locate an academic calendar, which includes breaks and vacations. Student availability may change during breaks.

An added benefit to becoming a PHEAA-approved employer is that we can list your SWSP job opportunities in our online job search. Through this online job search, SWSP-eligible students are able to search for approved employers in their area.

Q: What are the requirements for the student hiring process?

A: PHEAA requires an employer conduct interviews prior to hiring any student employee; the interview must be conducted by a permanent non-SWSP employee. The number of candidates interviewed for each position and the types of questions asked during this interview is up to your organization.

Q: Can I hire any student?

A: To qualify for reimbursement, you must hire a SWSP eligible student. Most students inquiring about a job with your organization should know if they are eligible. For your reference, the student eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Be a Pennsylvania resident
- Be enrolled at least half-time during the preceding or upcoming academic year in a PA State Grant-approved higher education institution
- Be enrolled in a program of study that is at least two (2) academic years in length
- Be an undergraduate student that is eligible for a PA State Grant or a graduate student that has unmet need (to be verified by the student’s Financial Aid Office)
Student Workers

Q: What kind of time commitment can I expect from a student worker?

A: Most students can work two to four hours a day during their academic year. Some students also will be available to work full time, especially during breaks and vacation. The students' work schedule should be flexible enough to accommodate studying and exams.

Q: What are my responsibilities once a SWSP student starts working?

A: As an employer, you are responsible for doing the following:

- Providing adequate and reasonable training and supervision for the student employee. SWSP students cannot be supervised by a relative
- Ensuring the student employee does not work more than 40 hours per week
- Notifying PHEAA of any changes in the student's employment, such as changes in wage rate, job title, promotion, or termination
- Notifying PHEAA for any changes to your business name, address, Employer Identification Number (EIN), or for-profit/nonprofit status
- Attest wages were paid to the student by submitting weekly time reports
- Following all local, state, and federal employment laws

Pay and Performance

Students must be paid on an hourly basis at a rate that is at or above the state minimum wage. We recommend the rate be comparable to what a non-SWSP participant would earn in the same position.

Employers must pay each student for their total earned compensation, less deductions. Deductions must include federal, state, and local taxes; other deductions can include health insurance or retirement contributions.

We recommend paying student workers via check or direct deposit for audit purposes. Regardless of the method in which the student workers are paid, your organization must ensure there is an itemized paystub to accompany the payment.

Q: Can I pay the student on a commission basis or provide room and board in lieu of wages?

A: No. Employers are required to set and pay an hourly rate for reimbursement. If your organization pays workers a commission, bonus, or other special compensation, in addition to an hourly wage, only the agreed upon percentage of the hourly wage is eligible for reimbursement.

Employers may not exchange room and board for hours worked, even if the employer is a postsecondary institution.

Q: What if the student worker is not performing satisfactorily?

A: As an employer, you should treat the student workers the same as your regular employees with regard to performance or termination. We recommend providing the student with constructive feedback and the opportunity to improve upon the desired problem. Holding periodic performance reviews with the student is a good way to communicate expectations and allow for growth of the student.

If your organization would decide to terminate a SWSP student, this information must be reported to PHEAA and submission of any future hours worked should be discontinued.
Reimbursement and Time Sheets

Q: How is my organization’s reimbursement calculated?

A: As the employer, you are required to pay 100% of the student’s gross earnings prior to reimbursement. To receive reimbursement, you must submit the student’s hours on a weekly basis. A percentage of the earnings is then reimbursed during the SWSP monthly disbursement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Type</th>
<th>Reimbursement Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For-profit, Public or Private Business</td>
<td>40% of every dollar earned up to the student’s award amount</td>
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<tr>
<td>For-profit, Postsecondary Institutions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit, Public or Private Organizations</td>
<td>50% of every dollar earned up to the student’s award amount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonprofit, Postsecondary Institutions</td>
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<td>School Districts</td>
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Q: How are hours reported?

A: PHEAA’s workweek runs from Sunday through Saturday. The employer must report a weekly summary of hours for each student.

Q: How do I submit the students’ hours for reimbursement?

A: PHEAA has three separate submission options to choose from:

- **Electronic Time Submission** – Hours are submitted via one of the **two electronic options below**, and automatically processed by the SWSP system.
  - **Electronic File Upload** (preferred method) – The employer uploads an excel file which is processed overnight by the PHEAA system and requires access to My File Gateway.
  - **Electronic Data Entry** – This requires the employer to enter the weekly hours into the PHEAA system, utilizing Rocket Terminal Emulator (Rocket TE).

- **Submission of weekly time sheets** – Hours are tracked manually and submitted to PHEAA staff for entry and approval into the PHEAA system. Forms can be submitted via email, fax, or mail and typically take ten (10) business days from date of submission for processing. Time reports can be obtained by visiting the SWSP page on [PHEAA.org/timereport](http://PHEAA.org/timereport).

For information on how to access and use these PHEAA systems, visit [PHEAA.org/SGSPResources](http://PHEAA.org/SGSPResources). Specific documents can be found by clicking State Grant and Special Program Resources then SGSP General Resource or PA State Work-Study Program (SWSP).

We recommend, no matter the method you choose, you submit hours on a weekly basis. However, hours can be submitted up to 60 days after the week ending date. After 60 days, an employer has to submit an appeal to request reimbursement.

Q: Which payments to the student are not reimbursable?

A: Employers may not claim reimbursement for the following:

- Wages earned or paid but not submitted within 60 days after the week ending date
- Hours worked over the student’s maximum weekly hours
- Overtime hours
- Deductions
- Commissions/Bonuses
- Holiday pay
- Travel reimbursement
Q: How are funds sent to employers?

A: We require all employers to complete an ACH form so we may transfer funds electronically. PHEAA will not mail reimbursement checks.

To set up or change your account information, contact PHEAA’s Financial Management team at fmeftadmin@pheaa.org.

Q: How long does it take to receive reimbursement?

A: PHEAA disburses funds once a month. Disbursements occur on the 15th of each month except Fridays, weekends, and holidays. In these instances, disbursement will run on the next available business day.

Once disbursement occurs, it takes approximately 21 business days for funds to reach your account via EFT.

Contacts and Questions

All questions regarding the PA State Work-Study Program should be directed to PHEAA at (800) 443-0646 Option 3, Option 2 or SWSP@pheaa.org. When calling or emailing, include or have available the following information:

- Federal OE Code (postsecondary schools) or Federal EIN (Non-institution employers)
- Student names and the last four digits of their SSNs

In addition to contacting PHEAA, you are encouraged to look at the information available on PHEAA.org/Employer. The website contains a number of resources to aid in the navigation of the systems used to administer the program.
Commonly Used Terms

**Authoritative Source** – Responsible for the access privileges of the users within their organization. The Authoritative Source may submit requests for a new profile and access privileges on behalf of a user who does not have access to the Business Partner Access Management System (BPAMS).

**Award** – The amount of PA State Work-Study Program (SWSP) funds a student can earn to help pay for college. Awards are determined by term and will not exceed $10,000 per academic year and $7,500 per summer term.

**Business Partner Access Management System (BPAMS)** – A web interface designed to manage requests for access to PHEAA systems. With this interface, business partners—as well as their users, requesters, and their Authoritative Sources—can submit requests for access to PHEAA systems.

**Disbursement** – The reimbursement of funds to the employer from the money appropriated by the PA General Assembly for SWSP.

**Eligible Employer** – An employer that meets all the conditions for participation in SWSP.

**Employer Identification Number (EIN)** – A nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) used for tax identification. SWSP uses the EIN as the primary identification number, and it must be included on all SWSP correspondence.

**Federal Withholding Tax** – An amount withheld from employee wages each pay period, according to the number of allowances claimed by the employee on the W-4 form.

**Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA)** – A tax imposed by the federal government on both employers and employees to fund Social Security and Medicare. The employer must follow FICA regulations on withholding and paying the employee's share of the tax. For more information, contact the U.S. IRS.

**Job Description** – A statement that describes the duties of the job, the minimum qualifications required to perform the job, and the pay rate.

**Job Fair** – An event designed to bring together students looking for employment and employers looking to hire; may be sponsored by a local school or organization.

**My File Gateway** – My File Gateway is an easy-to-use process requiring no advanced technical skill or knowledge and offering a secure web portal for employers to send and receive data.

**PageCenter** – PageCenter is a secure report repository. Each employer will have its own mailbox within PageCenter, through which all reports and listings will be delivered.

**Pay Rate** – An hourly wage, appropriate within the organization or field, for work performed. Employers must pay at least the minimum wage.

**Reimbursement Rate** – A percent of the gross wages an employer paid to the student employee and is based on the employer type.

**Rocket Terminal Emulator (Rocket TE)** – Web browser-based interface used to access the PHEAA mainframe. Rocket TE replaces OC/WebConnect.

**Roster** – Report provided with each disbursement to the employer's PageCenter mailbox. The roster is cumulative for the term and will act as receipt of the hours and wages the employer is being reimbursed for.