



Expand State Work Study

Give students valuable education and employment experience

2017-19 Strategic Action Plan Recommendation

Expand State Work Study

Expand work-based learning by increasing funding for State Work Study by \$5 million in each year of the biennium to serve an additional 3,000 students. This additional funding would also allow colleges to create new mentoring partnerships with K-12. These programs can qualify for special employer match rates, making it easier for colleges to create or expand programs that match college students with at-risk secondary school students.

The Imperative

State Work Study provides valuable education and employment experience

State Work Study's blend of work and aid provides unique benefits. In addition to receiving state aid, students gain knowledge and skills from their employment. Work study contributes to economic growth by creating jobs and adding experienced, high-skill college graduates to the state's workforce. In recent years, student and employer demand for work study has exceeded program resources. When fully funded, the program can help schools create innovative and successful mentoring and outreach programs.

Context

Students and employers benefit

Washington partners with nearly 1,000 employers to offer eligible students work study experience. In 2014-15, employers contributed approximately \$5 million in student wages. Nearly 4,500 students earned about \$12.5 million in work study wages by working up to 19 hours a week. In a 2016 survey, over 90 percent of State Work Study student respondents said that they learned work skills that will translate to their future career. Meanwhile, about 95 percent of employer respondents said that State Work Study students made their organization more productive, and two-thirds said they sometimes or often hire State Work Study students upon graduation. Several Washington colleges have created K-12 mentorship programs designed to increase college attendance rates throughout the state. Fully funding State Work Study will enable these efforts to expand.

Outcomes and Measures

Lower student debt and better employment outcomes

Fully funding the program will result in lower student debt levels at graduation and better post-graduation employment outcomes. Because state investment works with employers to pay State Work Study wages, \$5 million in state funding leverages an additional \$3.3 million in employer contributions to student wages.

Quick Facts:

Funding to State Work Study has been cut by nearly two-thirds since 2009.

The number of participating employers is down by nearly 60 percent since 2009.

Over 94 percent of Work Study students said they learned important work skills that will transfer to their future careers.

A student perspective:

"It's really hard for new graduates to get jobs if they don't have practical experience that sets them apart from all other applicants vying for limited employment opportunities. Through my State Work Study position in the information technology area, I am developing a range of skills while in school that I believe will give me a lot more choices in my career path once I've graduated."

Employers' perspective:

"I have hired several State Work Study students following graduation and have never been disappointed."

"State Work Study employees are essential to our operations. We could not accomplish what we do without their help."