



Grant Terminated: Is Work-Study Working?

Judith Scott-Clayton, Teachers College at Columbia University

On March 7, at 9:49 a.m., I received an email with “GRANT AWARD TERMINATION” in all caps in the subject line. Attached to the email was a letter, addressed to me as project director and referring to **our Department of Education** grant by its award number. The letter was generic, virtually identical to three other termination letters received that day at the Community College Research Center at Columbia University’s Teachers College, where I am affiliated. It did not mention our project title nor provide any project-specific details to explain why our project, as the email states, “is now inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, the Department’s priorities.” A few hours later, I received a formal notification that the grant end date was that day: March 7, 2025.

The project—a collaboration with Adela Soliz of Vanderbilt University and Tom Brock of CCRC—was titled “Does Federal Work-Study Work for Students? Evidence From a Randomized Controlled Trial.” The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program was created in 1964 as part of the Economic Opportunity Act and covers up to 75 percent of the wages of college students working part-time in mostly on-campus jobs, with colleges paying the rest. In a typical year, the program provides more than \$1 billion in support to more than 450,000 college students with financial need at more than 3,000 institutions all across the country. Several states also have their own similar programs.