Off-Campus Employment Due to Severe Economic Hardship
For Students in F-1 Status

General Requirements
F-1 students may be eligible for off-campus work authorization due to economic hardship if:

1. In the opinion of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the need to work is caused by unforeseen circumstances not within the student’s control such as
   • Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student;
   • Substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or in the exchange rate;
   • Unusually high medical bills;
   • Other substantial and unexpected expenses; AND

2. The student has been in lawful F-1 status for 9 months, is in good academic standing (2.0 GPA for undergraduates/3.0 GPA for graduates), and demonstrates that the employment will not interfere with his/her enrollment in a full course of study; AND

3. The student demonstrates that he/she has made a good faith effort to locate on-campus employment before applying for employment based on economic hardship.

Approval Process

1. Authorization by the Immigration Service. A student’s application for employment based upon economic hardship must be approved by USCIS before the student can begin the employment. If the USCIS determines that your case meets their criteria for employment based on economic hardship, the approval will be in the form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) issued by USCIS. The EAD will contain the student’s photograph and signature, and will also indicate the exact dates of the authorized employment.

2. The employment will be granted for a maximum of 12 months or up to your expected date of completion of your academic program, whichever is earlier. Students may re-apply for employment authorization before the 12 months expire. Employment based on economic hardship can be renewed only by USCIS and only if the student is maintaining full-time status and is in good standing.

3. Employment authorization is automatically terminated if a student fails to maintain full-time student status or is no longer in good academic standing.

4. Employment is authorized for 20 hours per week or less while school is in session; full-time while school is not in session or during an authorized vacation quarter.

How do I prepare my application?

• Gather all documentation that will demonstrate economic need for employment which is caused by a situation beyond your control. Include a detailed list of assets and expenses.

• Schedule an appointment with an international student advisor, and bring along with you your documentation, as well as your passport, I-94, and all I-20s.

• If the advisor supports your case, he/she will recommend employment based on economic hardship and provide you with an I-20 with a recommendation for economic hardship employment.

Mailing Your Application to USCIS

International Programs
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd, SF 102
Hayward, CA 94542
Phone: 510 885 2880   Fax 510 885 2787

Revised Jan 2018
Mail the following items to the USCIS:

- Form- I-765 available at www.uscis.gov (write (c)(3)(iii) in item 16)
- $410 fee (make your check or money order payable to The Department of Homeland Security)
- Photocopy of Form I-20, with the recommendation for economic hardship employment
- Photocopies of all previously issued I-20s
- Two passport style photos
- Photocopy of I-94 card (front and back) or a printout of electronic I-94
- A letter describing your financial difficulties and why on-campus employment opportunities are unavailable or insufficient; include supporting evidence.
- Photocopy of passport identification page
- Photocopy of visa page and entry stamp
- Photocopies of any previously-issued EAD cards
- Supporting materials related to your situation

Make a copy of your completed application for your records

Mail the original application to the USCIS Lockbox facility at one of the following addresses. After the Lockbox facility processes the check and mails you a receipt notice, the application will be forwarded to the appropriate USCIS Service Center for adjudication.

**By USPS Mail:**

USCIS  
PO Box 21281  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

**By Express Mail or Courier Service:**

USCIS  
Attn: AOS  
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S  
Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Then What?

Once USCIS receives the application, a receipt will be processed and sent to the address on the I-765 (this normally takes 3-5 weeks). The USCIS has, by law, ninety days to process your application and the “standard” length of time required for processing is subject to change. If you have not received your EAD a full 90 days after the date on your receipt from USCIS, please contact the Center for International Education for further guidance. Submission of an application for employment based on economic hardship does not guarantee approval. The USCIS has launched a system for checking the status of a case pending at a Service Center online: [https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard/CaseStatus.do](https://egov.uscis.gov/cris/Dashboard/CaseStatus.do)

Social Security and Other Taxes

In general, F-1 students who have been in the U.S. less than five years are exempt from Social Security (F.I.C.A.) taxes. Their earnings are subject to applicable federal, state and local taxes. Students must file a tax return on or before April 15 each year, which will determine if any of the withheld taxes can be refunded.

A Note of Caution

While USCIS regulations provide a variety of opportunities for F-1 students to be employed, working without authorization is a serious violation of F-1 status. Students should consult their International Student Advisor before beginning any employment. It is the student’s responsibility to comply with all immigration regulations which apply to F-1 students. If students fail to comply with their responsibilities, they may not be eligible for benefits normally granted to F-1 students. NOTE: Employment authorization granted under 8 CFR 214.2 (f) (9) is terminated when the student transfers from one school to another.
Passport Photo Requirements

Your photo is a vital part of your application. To learn more, review the information below on how to provide a suitable photo. We recommend you use a professional passport photo service to ensure your photo meets all the requirements.

All photos must be no more than 30 days old when an application is filed and must meet the specifications for full frontal/passport photos as stated on the US Department of State website:

- In color
- Printed on matte or glossy photo quality paper
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
- Sized such that the head is between 1 inch and 1 3/8 inches (between 25 and 35 mm) from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head.
- Taken in front of a plain white or off-white background
- Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
- With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open
- Taken in clothing that you normally wear on a daily basis:
  - Uniforms, clothing that looks like a uniform, and camouflage attire should not be worn in photos except in the case of religious attire that is worn daily.
  - You may only wear a hat or head covering if you wear it daily for religious purposes. Your full face must be visible and your head covering cannot obscure your hairline or cast shadows on your face.
  - Headphones, wireless hands-free devices or similar items are not acceptable in your photo.
  - If you normally wear prescription glasses, a hearing device or similar articles, they may be worn for your photo. Glare on glasses is not acceptable in your photo.
  - Dark glasses or non-prescription glasses with tinted lenses are not acceptable unless you need them for medical reasons (a medical certificate may be required).

For more information on photo standards visit the Department for State website at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotos/index.html).
Economic Hardship EAD Request Dates

I, ________________________________ would like to request the following dates for my Economic Hardship. I understand that these dates might be altered/changed by USCIS. I also understand that once my application is recommended in SEVIS by an international student advisor, it may be impossible to change or cancel.

Preferred Beginning Date: ________________

Ending Date: ________________

Student’s Name: ________________       Today’s Date: ________________

Signature: ________________       Net ID: ________________