

## Economic Hardship Request Form for F-1 Students

F-1 students who experience severe economic hardship because of unforeseen circumstances beyond their control have the option of [applying to USCIS for employment authorization to work off-campus](#). Examples of unforeseen circumstances include (but are not limited to):

- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment (through no fault of your own)
- Substantial fluctuations in currency value or exchange rate
- Inordinate increases in tuition or living costs
- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of your source of support
- Medical bills
- Other substantial and unexpected expenses

### Eligibility Requirements

In order to apply for severe economic hardship work authorization, all of the following must be true:

1. You have been in F-1 status for one full academic year (fall and spring semesters)
2. You are in good standing as a student
3. You are carrying a full course of study
4. Acceptance of employment will not interfere with your carrying a full course of study
5. The employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control
6. On-campus employment is unavailable or is not sufficient to meet the needs that have arisen due to the unforeseen circumstances

### Application Considerations

Applying for severe economic hardship work authorization is a long process and may not make sense for every student, even if you do meet the eligibility criteria.

- **Processing Time.** It may take several months to hear back from USCIS about your application. You can view current USCIS processing times for the Form I-765 on the [USCIS website](#).
- **Application Fee:** There is a \$410 application fee for severe economic hardship work authorization. It is possible to submit your application with a [fee waiver](#) instead of the filing fee, but historically the fee waiver has generally not been accepted.
- **Employment Limitations:** Severe economic hardship work authorization is limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session. Students may work more than 20 hours per week during official school breaks.
- **Adequate Documentation of Economic Situation:** You should collect as much documentation about your current financial situation as possible in order to make a compelling case that you qualify for the authorization. The more documentation, the better.

### Applying for Severe Economic Hardship

1. Prepare documents you will need

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**Letter of Explanation:** Write a letter describing the unforeseen hardship and explaining your resulting financial need. Outline how you have been supporting yourself financially and how your financial circumstances have changed (since obtaining F-1 status) due to an unforeseen circumstance. Include why on-campus work is not sufficient to cover your expenses.

**Other Documentation:** Provide documentation of the unforeseen financial hardship (e.g., proof of currency devaluation, impact of COVID-19 pandemic, etc.)

2. Submit the Severe Economic Hardship Request Form below to the ISS office.

*ISS will review the request and, if appropriate, the DSO will send your request to SEVIS electronically, and generate a new SEVIS I-20. The recommendation will be written on page 2 of the new I-20.*

*ISS will email these documents to you when they are ready.*

3. Assemble all of your USCIS application materials and mail a complete application to USCIS.

*Once you have requested a Severe Economic Hardship Employment recommendation and received your new I-20 from the ISS office, you will need to prepare and submit the following list of items to USCIS:*

- A copy of the new I-20 with employment recommendation
- Copies of your previous I-20(s)
- Copy of paper or print-out of electronic [Form I-94](#)
- Copy of your passport page showing your biographical information and the expiration date
- Copy of your F-1 visa page (except Canadians) or I-797 (approval of change of status to F-1), if applicable
- Form I-765 and the [base fee](#)
- Two full-face passport style photos. The photos must be identical and in color with a plain background. They must be no more than 30 days old when the I-765 is filed to USCIS. Put photos in an envelope. You should attach the fee and the photo envelope on top of the entire application (on the upper left-hand corner). Please do not staple the fee and the photos.
- The personal statement along with any other supporting documents, if available.

### **Mailing to USCIS**

#### **U.S. Postal Service (USPS):**

USCIS  
PO Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680

#### **FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:**

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

### **Employment Authorization Card (EAD)**

If the application is approved, USCIS will issue an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) to you. If the application is denied, you will be notified by USCIS in writing. You may not begin employment until you have received the EAD and the dates are valid. **Authorization is granted in one-year intervals up to the expected date of completion of studies. You may work part time while school is in session and full time during official university holidays and breaks.**

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## Economic Hardship Request Form

Please make sure you have read the requirements and procedures above before filling out the form

- Attach a copy of your personal statement and any other documentation
- Attach copies of your current and previous I-20s
- Attach a copy of your paper or electronic Form I-94
- Attach a copy of your F-1 visa page in your passport OR approval of change of status to F-1

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SEVIS ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Valley ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ KVCC Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of F2 Dependents (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Employment Dates (1 year maximum): begin \_\_\_\_\_ end \_\_\_\_\_

I have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year:  Yes  No

- I certify that I have read the form instructions and information entirely.
- I certify the information I have provided is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate.
- I understand I (and any F-2 dependents) must have approved health insurance while I am in F-1 status
- I understand I must report any changes in information (address, name, or any contact information) to the ISS office within 10 days of the change.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_