

## **F-1 OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT DUE TO SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP**

### **What is Severe Economic Hardship employment authorization?**

It is permission granted to F-1 students by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work off-campus on the basis of "severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control" [8CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(c)].

### **Who is eligible for Severe Economic Hardship employment authorization?**

To be eligible for Severe Economic Hardship employment authorization, you must **document** that:

- You have been in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year (2 semesters for degree students)
- You are experiencing severe economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances (*see below*) that arose since your last I-20 was issued.
- Have a GPA of 2.0 or better for undergrads, 3.0 or better for grads
- Demonstrate that acceptance of employment will not interfere with carrying a full course load.
- Be currently registered full time (12 credits for undergraduates, 9 credits for graduates) during the required semesters or pre-registered (full time for the following term) during vacations.
- Employment opportunities on campus are unavailable or insufficient.

### **What are "unforeseen circumstances"?**

- Loss of financial aid or on-campus employment resulting from circumstances beyond the student's control
- Substantial fluctuations in the exchange rate or value of home country's currency
- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the student's financial sponsor
- Unexpected medical bills
- Other substantial and unexpected expenses

### **How do I apply?**

1. Submit a Severe Economic Hardship application and supporting documents to [iss@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:iss@brooklyn.cuny.edu).
2. If your application is approved, the DSO will enter your Severe Economic Hardship application into SEVIS and produce a new I-20 with the Severe Economic Hardship recommendation.
3. Pick up your endorsed documents from DSO.
4. Submit the Severe Economic Hardship application and supporting documents to the USCIS Service Center.
5. Receive an Employment Authorization Document ("EAD card") from the USCIS Service Center.
6. Bring a copy of your EAD card to DSO.

### **What do I send to the USCIS?**

Applicants for Severe Economic Hardship can send their application to USCIS by mail or submit online. We strongly suggest submitting the form online.

- Original form I-765 using the code (C)(3)(iii) in question 27. Do not date the form until you are ready to submit. If you are filing online, please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.
- Photocopy of your current I-20 (page 1 and 3 with Severe Economic Hardship endorsement from the DSO)
- Photocopies of all previous I-20s (front and back)
- Your cover letter explaining your situation (*as described above*)
- Documentation of the unforeseen change in your financial circumstances
  - I. A cover letter from you addressed to the USCIS (see address below)
    - explaining your unforeseen economic hardship circumstances **AND**
    - explaining your efforts to obtain on-campus employment
  - II. Evidence / documentation of your economic hardshipExamples of such evidence include:

- Copies of past and present currency exchange charts showing the devaluation of your country's currency
  - Proof (signed letters, affidavits, bank statements) of unexpected changes in the financial situation of your sponsor
  - Copies of medical bills or other substantial and unexpected expenses
  - A letter from your department verifying that your assistantship has been unexpectedly terminated
- Two (2) identical natural color photographs of yourself, taken within 30 days of this application
    - Lightly print your name on the back of each photo using a pencil. Put them in an envelope and attach them to the application. If you are filing online, you can upload the pictures.
  - Photocopies of the biographic / picture page and U.S. visa stamp in your passport (except Canadians) or I-797 (approval of change of status to F-1), if applicable
  - Photocopy of your I-94 Card
  - **Application fee.** This should be a check or money order payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.” You can also pay by credit card using **Form G-1450**. If you are filing online, you can pay your fee online. Please check to see the current fee for the I-765.
  - If you cannot pay the fee, please fill out the **Form I-912** for a fee waiver.
  - Unofficial copy of current transcript or letter from ALA stating you have been in good academic standing

**Where do I send my Severe Economic Hardship application?**

It is recommended for you to submit your application online for faster processing.

If you are planning on mailing in your application, please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses> to find your service center.

**Before mailing your application to the USCIS, be sure to photocopy your completed application for your personal records.**

**How should I mail my application?**

You should mail your complete application by a reliable, overnight mail delivery service (e.g. Federal Express, UPS). Utilizing an overnight mail service will enable you to track your application and its delivery. Please save your receipt.

**How long will processing at the USCIS take?**

As processing times fluctuate, it is not possible to predict the how long it will take you to receive your EAD card. For this reason, we urge you to apply as soon as possible if you are experiencing economic hardship and feel that you qualify for this type of employment authorization. If your application is approved, your EAD card will be mailed to you at the address you listed in item 5 of Form I-765.

**Please Note:**

- Employment may not begin until you receive the EAD card.
- Working without authorization is a serious violation of your status and is a deportable offense
- Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session and 40 hours per week during school breaks.
- Must be enrolled and attend school while school is in session
- Severe Economic Hardship employment authorization is normally issued for one year. You may submit a request to the USCIS for renewal of work authorization by following the same procedures outlined in this handout.
- Employment authorization is automatically terminated when you graduate, transfer to another university or violate your F-1 status in any way (e.g. not registering as a full-time student).
- If you change your address while your application is pending with immigration, within 10 days you must notify: USCIS by calling the phone number on your receipt notice



THIS IS MY REVISED AFFIDAVIT OF CASH SUPPORT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promised that I can and will give no less than  
U.S. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in cash (including annual cost of living increases) FOR EVERY YEAR of study  
to: \_\_\_\_\_.

My relationship to the student is \_\_\_\_\_.

Parent, Spouse, Brother/Sister, Friend

My address is

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email

The following persons are fully or partially dependent upon me for their support. (Do not include the student named above).

Name	Relationship to me	Age
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Name \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ employer  
Annual salary \_\_\_\_\_ (USD) Other Income \_\_\_\_\_ (USD)

My proof of income and bank statements are attached: Yes [ ] No [ ]

ATTACHMENT TO I-765

WHY I NEED OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION  
TO AVOID SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

Dear USCIS Officer:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am applying for off campus employment authorization because I have serious financial problems which are unexpected and beyond my control and could force me to abandon my education.

- 1) My current Form I-20 issued on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) estimated my annual average costs in item #7 to be \_\_\_\_\_. In item #8 my means of support came from \_\_\_\_\_ and totaled \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Now, my annual average costs are: \$\_\_\_\_\_. My means of support is from \_\_\_\_\_ and totals \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) My current support is short by \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) The reason(s) my financial situation has changed is because:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 5) I did not expect this to happen to me because:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

- 6) Documents that I have attached to prove my financial difficulty are:

---

---

---

---

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date