

## Severe Economic Hardship Work Authorization

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:** This program provides off-campus employment authorization for F-1 students who face severe economic hardship due to changes in their financial support that could not be controlled or predicted. During the fall and spring semesters, you are limited to part-time employment (a maximum of 20 hours per week) and must maintain a full course of study. You can work full-time during the summer or officially recognized school breaks.

**ELIGIBILITY:** You must have completed two main semesters (fall and spring; an academic year) to be eligible to apply for this program. You must also document and prove that your financial need could not have been predicted and that it was not under your control. This may include a loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on your part (e.g. due to loss of funding), substantial fluctuations in the value of currency or exchange rate, inordinate increases in tuition and/or living costs, unexpected changes in the financial condition of your source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses."

### PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Obtain a letter with a notarized signature from your financial sponsor explaining the circumstances that were beyond your ability to control or predict that justify why he/she can no longer fully support you.
- Write a letter explaining your financial need and how the economic hardship you are experiencing is due to circumstances that were beyond your ability to control or predict.
- Gather supporting documentation (e.g. newspaper articles about the financial problems in your home country, proof of changes in the currency exchange rate, articles about natural disasters, medical bills, evidence of illness or death of sponsor, etc.). **Note:** Proving circumstances beyond your ability to predict or control is the key to being approved your Severe Economic Hardship application with USCIS.
- Complete the I-765 application form. *Question 27 should be coded (c) (3) (iii).* This form can be downloaded at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>.
- Complete form I-912 for waiving your filing fee (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-912>)
- Obtain two "passport-type" photographs (e.g. Head and shoulders looking straight ahead). *The Creation Station in the University Center Underground will do the photos correctly for ~\$10.*

### APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

*You will bring or email the following to the counselor:*

- Current I-20, passport, VISA, and I-94.
- Letter from sponsor regarding the financial situation with notarized signature.
- Personal letter of financial need.
- Any supporting documentation you gathered to prove your financial hardship.
- Completed forms I-765 and I-912.

*ISSSO does the following:*

- Reviews your application and supporting documentation.
- Issues a new I-20 with a recommendation for severe economic hardship work permission.
- Provides a written letter explaining the lack of availability or sufficiency of on campus employment.
- Supplies the mailing address.

### MAILING CHECKLIST

- Completed form I-765 and I-912. Make sure you complete *Question 27 on the I-765 with the code (c) (3) (iii).*
  - Letters from you and your sponsor and any supporting documents.
  - Copy of new I-20 with the recommendation for off-campus work on page 2.
  - Copy of passport biographical page and expiration date, visa page, and I-94.
  - 2 color "passport" photos placed in an envelope or holder and stapled to the I-765.
  - A personal check or money order for **\$410** made payable to U.S. Department of Homeland Security, stapled to the I-765.
  - Send to USCIS using Priority Mail with Delivery Confirmation (enables you to confirm delivery at USPS website: [www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov)).
- Once your application is posted as delivered, print this page for your own records.

**AUTHORIZATION:** Do not work until you have received an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** and the start date is effective. Do not work beyond the expiration date. Apply for a renewal of your authorization 90 days before the expiration date so there will be no gap in your employment. Severe Economic Hardship EAD cards are only valid for one year at a time. Transferring out or completing your degree program will end your work eligibility.