

## Work Authorization for Severe Economic Hardship

F-1 students are required to submit proof of ability to pay for school and living expenses before entering the United States, but off-campus employment may be authorized in cases of severe economic hardship or emergent circumstances. Students must first apply with the DSO and then to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for authorization, which includes a [filing fee](#).

- **What are the conditions to apply for work authorization for severe economic hardship?**
  - Must be enrolled in a full course of study, be in good academic standing, and have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year
  - Must demonstrate that employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship and will not affect your ability to enroll in a full course of studies
- **What qualifies as severe economic hardship?**
  - When other employment opportunities (such as on-campus employment) are unavailable or otherwise insufficient, and unforeseen circumstances beyond your control cause you to struggle financially
    - Examples of unforeseen circumstances beyond your control:
      - Loss of on-campus employment with no fault on your side
      - Substantial decrease in the relative value of the currency you depend upon to pay expenses
      - 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
  - Special Student Relief (SSR) due to emergent circumstances: when the Department of Homeland Security suspends certain regulatory requirements (e.g. duration of status, full course of study, employment eligibility) for specific F-1 students affected by emergent circumstances
    - Examples of emergent circumstances: world events that affect a specific group of F-1 students, such as natural disasters, wars and military conflicts, or national or international financial crises
    - Emergent circumstances are defined by Federal Register notice and can be found [here](#)
    - Must be a citizen of the affected country/region/group and have already been in the US when the Federal Register notice of emergent circumstances was published
    - Must be able to show severe economic hardship is a direct result of the emergent circumstances
- **What kind of work is allowed and how much can I work?**
  - Does not have to be related to major or program of study
  - Can work a maximum of 20 hours a week when school is in session and can be full-time (more than 20 hours per week) when school is not in session if currently enrolled and intend to register for next semester
  - Must have both new I-20 with DSO authorization and Employment Authorization Document (EAD)/Form I-766 from USCIS before starting work

- **How long is the authorization and can it be renewed?**
  - Authorization is for 1 year
  - Non-SSR authorization can be renewed in 1-year intervals if all conditions are met up until the program end date
  - Authorization is terminated when transferring to another school or if there is no longer a need for employment
    - For SSR authorization, authorization expires when the SSR notice expires or at the program end date
- **What if I cannot afford the filing fee?**
  - Can apply for a fee waiver – do not pay the filing fee when filing the application
  - Information about fee waivers:
    - <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-fees/additional-information-on-filing-a-fee-waiver>
    - <https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-1-part-b-chapter-4>
- **What if my application is denied?**
  - Cannot appeal the decision, but can file a motion by the deadline given in the denial letter to ask USCIS to re-examine or reconsider
    - Must state new facts and may need to submit affidavits or supporting documents
    - Must establish that the decision was based on an incorrect application of law/immigration policy with the evidence that was filed at the time of the initial decision

### Work Authorization for Severe Economic Hardship Application Process Overview



**Form 1-765 Filing:** <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765>

- Eligibility category: (c)(3)(iii)
- Cannot be filed online if applying for severe economic hardship and must be sent by mail
- Students are responsible for the filing and fee payment/waiver application but ISP can offer support
- Current filing fee: <https://www.uscis.gov/g-1055?form=i-765>

### Obtaining a Social Security Number

- Can apply for Social Security Number (SSN) and/or card as part of the I-765 application if you do not already have one

Work Authorization for Severe Economic Hardship Application		
<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Student ID Number:</b>
<b>Major:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Nationality:</b>
<b>Have you been authorized for employment before?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<b>Are you applying for Special Student Relief (SSR)?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, applying for: <input type="checkbox"/> Work authorization and reduced course load <input type="checkbox"/> Work authorization only		
<b>Please describe your current circumstances and why you are requesting work authorization:</b>          		
<b>By submitting this application for work authorization for severe economic hardship, I certify that:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I have been enrolled full-time at a SEVP-certified school for at least 1 full academic year</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am enrolled in a full course load and in good academic standing, and accepting employment will not interfere with my course of study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that I am responsible for filing Form I-765 with USCIS and paying the filing fee/applying for a waiver within 30 days of the DSO recommendation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that I cannot begin work until I have received both a new I-20 with authorization from the DSO and an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I have or will apply for a Social Security Number</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (If applicable) I meet the eligibility requirements for Special Student Relief and was already present in the US and maintaining F-1 status when the relevant Federal Register notice was published</li> </ul>		
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>

**Attachment(s):** (check all that apply)

- Detailed explanation of unforeseen circumstances leading to severe economic hardship
- Letter from home explaining change of circumstances
- Proof of currency devaluation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY	
Processed by: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved: recommended in SEVIS _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Needs SSN Letter