

# F1 Students Severe Economic Hardship

## Off-Campus Employment Authorization Application Guide

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*Severe Economic Hardship work authorization is based on a sudden, significant, unforeseen financial problem that occurs to your sponsor outside of their control. Proof of the financial distress is required. Source: [8 C.F.R. 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(C)-(D) and (F)]*

### Employment Authorization Eligibility

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1. You must have completed one year of full-time enrollment at OCC under F-1 status
2. You must be in good academic standing and enrolled in a full course of study (exceptions may apply).
3. Employment will not interfere with your studies
4. You can demonstrate that employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen economic circumstances beyond your (or your sponsor's) control

### Definition of 'Unforeseen Circumstances'

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- 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

### Application Procedure

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1. Collect all items on the Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization checklist below
2. Submit Application documents online for review – <https://OCCSSSP.formstack.com/forms/finhardship>. Upload all documents in .pdf or .jpeg only. Allow 5-10 business days for processing.
3. Schedule an appointment to review your application with an adviser (OPTIONAL)
  - Sign new I-20 – Check your emails regularly for notification from an adviser with new I-20 and instructions to finalize your application. Print new I-20 and all application documents, sign I-20 and I-765 carefully with a black pen.
4. Submit your Employment Authorization application to USCIS by mail or online - USCIS must receive your application within 30 days from the time your new I-20 is created.
5. **If you delay, your application will be DENIED!**

### Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization Application Checklist

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Submit documents to the Global Engagement Center for review to receive your Employment Authorization I-20:

<https://OCCSSSP.formstack.com/forms/finhardship>

- Form I-765, typed or hand-written in black ink ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)) (see sample on pg. 3)
- G-1145 – Request for e-notifications ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))
- Personal letter explaining financial need and the circumstances beyond your (your sponsor's) control
- Copy of valid passport (bio page only), F-1 visa page (except Canadians), and most recent I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
- 2 color photos, 2" x 2", visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html> for requirements (if filed online, only need 1 photo)
- Proof of the change in your financial situation. Documentation may include newspaper clippings, bank records, letters from sponsor's employers, etc...
- Sample budget of monthly expenses showing the need for supplemental income
- \$520.00 check or money order, payable to "U.S. Department of Homeland Security" for paper filing/ or pay \$470.00 for online filing, or Form I-912 Fee Waiver Request ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))
- Signed Statement of Understanding (Page 3 of this packet)
- Copy of the Employment Authorization I-20 issued by the F-1 Advisor (do not forget to sign it).

## Submit your Application to USCIS by mail or online

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After submitting your application to the Global Engagement Center, you will receive your new I-20 by e-mail. Print your new I-20 and all application documents. Make sure your I-20 and I-765 are signed before submitting your application packet to USCIS IMMEDIATELY. If you delay, your application MAY BE DENIED.

### **USPS First Class or Priority Mail Express:**

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
P.O. Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

### **RECOMMENDED: Overnight/Courier Deliveries (FedEx or UPS)**

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)  
131 South Dearborn – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

## After Applying

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Once you have mailed your application to USCIS you should receive receipt notice within 2-3 weeks. This is just verification that your packet was received. It is not permission to begin working! Processing will take approximately 90-100 days.

If approved, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card. Once received, verify that all information on the card is correct, submit a copy of the front and back to the Global Engagement Center. Read all requirements and responsibilities carefully to ensure you maintain your status.

## Requirements and Responsibilities

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**Filing Application:** I-20 must be signed with a BLUE pen and I-765 must be signed with a BLACK pen *BEFORE* mailing to USCIS. Unsigned or electronically signed documents will be automatically denied. Additionally, your application must be received by USCIS BEFORE 30 days from the date the request was made in SEVIS by the F-1 adviser. Application received by USCIS more than 30 days from the date the I-20 was issued will be automatically denied.

**Work only during the authorized period:** Approval of Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is at the discretion of USCIS. You may not begin working until you have received your Employment Authorization Card (EAD) and you may only work during the dates authorized on the card. You may not begin working before the start date or continue working beyond the end date printed on your EAD card. You may only work up to 20 hours per week unless otherwise indicated by USCIS. The EAD card is valid for a maximum of one year and you may apply to extend if your I-20 is still valid.

**Enrollment Requirement:** Employment must not interfere with your studies and you must maintain a full course of study each fall/spring semester while on approved severe economic hardship employment authorization. You may work in any field, up to 20 hour per week. There are some exceptions granted by the Department of Homeland Security under Special Student Relief: [https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevp\\_specialstudentrelief\\_final.pdf](https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/assets/sevp_specialstudentrelief_final.pdf)

**Medical Insurance:** Maintain medical insurance coverage with OCC. You must pay for the new insurance plan within 30 days from the last day of coverage of the previous plan. If your employer provides full medical insurance coverage, insurance purchase through OCC may be waived. You will still be required to purchase the supplemental Evacuation/Repatriation coverage through JCB Insurance solutions. Complete the insurance waiver request form and email it to the GEC along with required documents.

**Reporting Requirements:** Provide a copy of your EAD card to the Global Engagement Center. Update your MyCoast account within 10 days if your US address, phone number, or email changes. File income tax return in a timely manner.

## F1 Students Severe Economic Hardship Statement of Understanding

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Dear Student:

Students who have applied for and have been approved for Severe Economic Hardship Off-Campus Employment Authorization must continue to comply with and maintain valid F-1 status. Applying for employment authorization does not change your visa classification; you will still be an F-1 student. Read your responsibilities carefully. By signing this statement of understanding, you verify that you understand and agree to follow these regulations:

- Filing Application:** Your I-20 and I-765 must be signed with a black pen BEFORE mailing to USCIS. Unsigned or electronically signed applications will be automatically denied. Additionally, your application must be received by USCIS BEFORE 30 days from the date the request was made in SEVIS by the F-1 adviser. Application received by USCIS more than 30 days from the date the I-20 was issued will be automatically denied.
- Work only during the authorized period:** Approval of Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is at the discretion of USCIS. You may not begin working until you have received your Employment Authorization Card (EAD) and you may only work during the dates authorized on the card. You may not begin working before the start date or continue working beyond the end date printed on your EAD card. You may only work up to 20 hours per week unless otherwise indicated by USCIS. The EAD card is valid for a maximum of one year and you may apply to extend if your I-20 is still valid.
- Enrollment Requirement:** Employment must not interfere with your studies and you must maintain a full course of study each fall/spring semester while on approved severe economic hardship employment authorization. You may work in any field, up to 20 hour per week. There are some exceptions granted by the [Department of Homeland Security under Special Student Relief](#).
- Medical Insurance:** Maintain medical insurance coverage with OCC. You must pay for the new insurance plan within 30 days from the last day of coverage of the previous plan. If your employer provides full medical insurance coverage, insurance purchase through OCC may be waived. You will still be required to purchase the supplemental Evacuation/Repatriation coverage through JCB Insurance solutions. Complete the insurance waiver request form and email it to the GEC along with required documents.
- Reporting Requirements:** Provide a copy of your EAD card to the Global Engagement Center. Update your MyCoast account within 10 days if your US address, phone number, or email changes. File income tax return in a timely manner.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student name

\_\_\_\_\_  
OCC Student ID (ex: C01234567)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

For GEC Office Use:

Expected Travel Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Adviser: \_\_\_\_\_

# Application Document Samples

Refer to the samples below for preparing documents for your application. These are only samples, and the details in your documents should be specific to your situation.

## Formatting Your Personal Letter of Explanation/Cover Letter:

October 12, 2022

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
P.O. Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680-5374

RE: SURNAME, Given Name  
SEVIS ID: N0012345678

Dear Adjudicator,

I am writing to request off-campus employment authorization based on severe economic hardship. My family has experienced unforeseen financial difficulties due to [explain your situation – i.e. *the military coup in Burma; the flooding and landslides in the east of India...*]. This has affected my family’s income in the following ways: [explain how your family’s employment or business has been affected.]

Included in this application, please find a detailed budget showing my expenses and financial need, several news articles explaining the current situation in my home country, [*the death certificate of my sponsor, financial statements for my family’s business, proof of currency devaluation, any other documentation*] that can support your request.

Sincerely,  
Your Full Name

*Please indicate if your budget shows your monthly expenses or semester expenses.*

<b>Sample Budget Table (Monthly Income/Expenses)</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Monthly Expenditure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>
Tuition & Fees	\$ 1,250	On-campus Employment	\$ 800
Medical Insurance	\$ 115	(Net)	\$ 800
Books/Supplies	\$ 30	Sponsorship	\$ 0
Housing	\$ 800	Scholarship	\$ 0
Utilities (electricity, water, etc.)	\$ 100	Other	
Food	\$ 100		
Phone	\$ 50		
Transportation	\$ 50		
Misc.	\$ 100		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,595</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,600</b>
		<b>Additional Needed Income to cover Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 995</b>

# I-765 Application for Employment Authorization filing tips

The following provides guidance for filling the I-765. Please read each question carefully and answer accurately and honestly.

## Page 1

- Part 1. Reason for Applying - Select 1.a. Initial Permission to accept employment box.
- Part 2. Information About You - Enter your name as it appears on your passport

## Page 2

- Part 2. Information About You (continued)
  - U.S. Mailing Address:
    - If you want the EAD card to be sent to **YOU**, enter 5.b. – 5.e. with YOUR mailing address.
    - If you want it to be sent to a friend, enter their information in 5.a. – 5.e. and mark “NO” on #6.
  - U.S. Physical Address: Enter your U.S. address that you actually reside in only if different from mailing address above
  - Other information
    - #12 mark YES if you have previously applied for work permit using the I-765
    - #13 provide your SSN if you have SSN already

## Page 3

- Part 2. Information About You (continued)
  - Information about your Last Arrival in the United States
    - Enter this section based on your I-94
    - #24 and #25: If you entered the US under a visa status other than F-1 and then applied for a change of status to F-1 student status while in the US, please answer #24 & #25 accurately.
  - Information about your Eligibility Category
    - **#27 – ( C ) (3)(iii) is the code for Severe Economic Hardship Employment Authorization. You can leave 28 – 31 blank.**

## Page 4

- Part 3. Applicant’s Statement, Contact Information, Declaration, Certification, and Signature
  - Applicant’s Statement
    - Check 1.a. to verify that “I can read and understand English, and I have read and understand every question and instruction on this application and my answer to every question.
  - Applicant’s Contact Information
    - #5 Updates will be sent to your @student.cccd.edu email address. Use YOUR unique OCC student email address
  - Applicant’s Signature
    - #7.a. and 7.b. Sign with black ink. The signature must fit INSIDE the box. It should NOT touch or cross the outlines of the box

## Page 5-6

- Part 4-5 should remain blank unless someone else is preparing this document for you.

## Page 7

- Part 6. Additional Information: USCIS requires you to report any past CPT, OPT, or any other offcampus employment authorizations here. Enter ALL periods of authorization. If you have done CPT, OPT, or any other type of off-campus employment under other SEVIS ID, be sure to include them as well.