



ECONOMIC HARDSHIP WORK AUTHORIZATION

As an F-1 student, you may be eligible to apply to the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) for off-campus employment based on **severe economic hardship**. This program allows you to work in any kind of off-campus part-time employment while school is in session and full-time during school breaks.

You must also maintain a full course of study during the fall and spring semesters.

Eligibility Requirements:

- (1) You must have **maintained legal status for at least one academic year** (nine consecutive months),
- (2) You **must be in current legal status** for at least one academic year (nine consecutive months),
- (3) You must have made a **good faith effort** to find employment on-campus.
- (4) You must **demonstrate unforeseen severe economic hardship** and explain why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient.

A **Severe Economic Hardship** is an 'event' that occurred after your coming to the United States and that was beyond your control as an F-1 student. Examples of such an 'event' could be "loss of financial aid or on-campus employment without fault on the part of the student, 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 the student's source of support, medical bills, or other substantial and unexpected expenses." Another example would be death of the student's sponsor. *Please note: If you are a transfer student from another U.S. school where you had an Economic Hardship EAD card, you will lose that Economic Hardship EAD card upon transferring to Southern Methodist University or to any other school.*

To apply for Severe Economic Hardship, please collect the following documents and then call ISSS.

- A letter from you requesting work authorization and explaining the unforeseen 'event' that has occurred since your arrival to the U.S. that requires you to seek employment authorization and that other employment options are unavailable or insufficient (original and 2 copies).
- A notarized letter from your sponsor, explaining the reasons he/she cannot fully support you at this time and why the situation was unforeseen, if applicable. In the case of death of a sponsor, a letter from another family member or friend explaining this situation must be supplied (original and 2 copies).
- Any other documentation, which supports your case proving that the 'event' happened, when it happened, and that it was beyond your control (original and 2 copies).
- Two passport pictures
- 3 copies of most recent I20 document, valid passport (including name, picture, and expiration date), visa, and I-94 card (front and back).
- Cashier's check or money order made out to 'USCIS' (Check the amount here: <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>).
 - 3 copies of any previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) cards, if applicable.

Make an appointment with an International Services Specialist.

Any work without authorization is a serious violation of immigration law.