

SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

What is Severe Economic Hardship?

Severe Economic Hardship (SEH) is employment authorization granted by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to an F-1 visa holder who has suffered severe economic hardship due to unexpected economic problems.

Some facts about Severe Economic Hardship:

- You must have been in proper F-1 status for at least one full academic year.
- You may only work 20 hours per week during the school year (up to 40 hours per week during official breaks and summer.)
- Authorization is granted only in one year increments, although you may re-apply for another employment period.
- You must be considered a full time student to apply for/engage in employment.
- You do not need a job offer prior to applying for SEH assistance.
- Employment authorization does not affect eligibility for practical training.
- Employment authorized for SEH is not limited to your field of study. You may accept any kind of lawful employment once you have your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) card.
- If you transfer to another institution, or if you violate F-1 status, your employment authorization is automatically terminated.
- You need to have a Social Security number in order to work in the US. If you do not have one, you will need to apply for one as soon as you receive your EAD card. The Office of International Student Services will be happy to help you apply for a SSN, once you have received your employment authorization. It is not possible to apply for a SSN without the EAD card.

How do I choose the dates of employment?

Keep in mind that Immigration may take up to 3 months to issue a card. You should apply for SEH about 3 months before your desired start date. If granted, the employment period will last one year.

What do I need to apply for Severe Economic Hardship?

It is the responsibility of the student to prepare the following:

- Complete form I-765 **online** using the PDF version located at the following website <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-765.pdf> you will need Acrobat Reader to open the file. **Be sure to enter (c) (3) (iii) in step # 16 (See completed sample below). Print completed form I-765 and sign in BLUE INK.**
- Letter of explanation detailing need for employment authorization (see description below)
- Supporting evidence of economic need (newspaper articles documenting an incident in your home country, pictures, letters, medical bills, etc.)

- Two passport-type photographs – Each photo must be cut to 2 inches by 2 inches with your name and I-94 # printed lightly on the back in pencil. Place the photos and check/money order in an envelope. Write your name and I-94 # on the outside of the envelope as well.
- A check or money order for \$380.00 made out to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (no abbreviations) DO NOT WRITE ON THE BACK OF THE CHECK! Your name and address must be on the check. Write your I-94 # on the bottom left hand corner of the check (in the “memo” or “for” section.)
- Photocopies of passport, visa, all I-20s, and most recent I-94 card. If you have been issued an EAD card in the past, please provide this as well.
- If you wish to receive an E-notification that your application was received by USCIS you can print and complete form G-1145 and include it with this packet. <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf>

What is the letter of explanation?

The letter of explanation written to the Immigration Officer is perhaps the most crucial part of your application for economic hardship. This is your chance to explain *why* you need to work off campus, and *how* your financial situation has changed. You should explain why other employment options (working on campus, or engaging in CPT/Pre-Completion OPT) are unavailable or insufficient. Attach any supporting documents. This may include a letter from home telling of a change in circumstances, or proof of currency devaluation.

After I have gathered all of the above, what do I do?

Bring in all of the above documents to International Students Office. Together, we'll go over your application materials. I'll create a new I-20 for you reflecting this petition, and ask you to sign it. Once your packet is assembled, you will be directed to mail the packet to Immigration via certified return receipt mail. Address and other mailing information will be provided.

When will I get an answer from USCIS?

USCIS may take 3 months or more to make a final decision regarding your employment authorization. You may not work until you receive your card! When you receive your card, be sure to provide this office with a copy of it.

What if I get a “blue letter” from the USCIS?

A blue letter from USCIS is notification that something is missing or incorrect on your application, or that the Immigration Officer handling your case would like more information regarding your case.

As soon as you receive this letter, it is critical that you notify me so I can help you to remedy the problem. **Do not delay!**

If you have any questions at all, please make an appointment to speak with me.

Jan Hurndon, PDSO
336 Pansler
Southeastern University
1000 Longfellow Blvd.
Lakeland, FL 33801

tel: 863-667-5215
email: jphurndon@seu.edu
office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays
8:00 – 12:00, 3:00 – 5:00

Do not write in this block.

Remarks	Action Block	Fee Stamp
A# DO NOT WRITE IN THIS BOX !		
Applicant is filing under §274a.12 _____		
☐ Application Approved. Employment Authorized / Extended (Circle One) until _____ (Date). _____ (Date). Subject to the following conditions: _____ ☐ Application Denied. ☐ Failed to establish eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (a) or (c). ☐ Failed to establish economic necessity as required in 8 CFR 274a.12(c)(14), (18) and 8 CFR 214.2(f)		

I am applying for: ☒ Permission to accept employment.
☐ Replacement (of lost employment authorization document)
☐ Renewal of my permission to accept employment (attach previous employment authorization document).

1. Name (Family Name in CAPS) (First) (Middle) FAMILY NAME FIRST MIDDLE	11. Have you ever before applied for employment authorization from USCIS? ☐ Yes (If yes, complete below) ☐ No ← Which USCIS Office? _____ Date(s) _____ (DO NOT LIST ANY "CPT") Results (Granted or Denied - attach all documentation)
2. Other Names Used (Include Maiden Name) (Other names used)	12. Date of Last Entry into the U.S. (mm/dd/yyyy) MOST RECENT ENTRY DATE - MONTH / DAY / YEAR
3. Address in the United States (Number and Street) (Apt. Number) ADDRESS IN THE U.S. - THIS IS (Town or City) (State/Country) (ZIP Code) WHERE YOUR CARD WILL BE MAILED	13. Place of Last Entry into the U.S. MOST RECENT ENTRY PLACE
4. Country of Citizenship/Nationality NAME OF COUNTRY	14. Manner of Last Entry (Visitor, Student, etc.) F - 1 OR "STUDENT"
5. Place of Birth (Town or City) (State/Province) (Country) PLACE OF BIRTH / COUNTRY	15. Current Immigration Status (Visitor, Student, etc.) F - 1 OR "STUDENT"
6. Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) MONTH / DAY / YEAR → ☐ Male ☐ Female	16. Go to Part 2 of the Instructions, Eligibility Categories. In the space below, place the letter and number of the category you selected from the instructions (For example, (a)(8), (c)(17)(iii), etc.). DO NOT WRITE HERE Eligibility under 8 CFR 274a.12 (c) (3) (iii)
7. Gender	
8. Marital Status ☐ Married ☐ Single → ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced	
9. Social Security Number (Include all numbers you have ever used) (if any) ENTER SSN	
10. Alien Registration Number (A-Number) or I-94 Number (if any) I-94 # - MOST RECENT #	

Certification.

Your Certification: I certify, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America, that the foregoing is true and correct. Furthermore, I authorize the release of any information that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services needs to determine eligibility for the benefit I am seeking. I have read the Instructions in Part 2 and have identified the appropriate eligibility category in Block 16. **SIGN HERE**

Signature Telephone # TODAY'S DATE
Telephone Number Date

Signature of Person Preparing Form, If Other Than Above: I declare that this document was prepared by me at the request of the applicant and is based on all information of which I have any knowledge.

Print Name	Address	Signature	Date
DO NOT WRITE HERE			
Remarks	Initial Receipt	Resubmitted	Relocated
			Rec'd Sent Approved Denied Returned