

Severe Economic Hardship

DISCLAIMER: GCC ISO provides this guide for general information only. Information in this document does not constitute legal advice. Because immigration rules and interpretations can change, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Department of State (DOS) may modify eligibility requirements or interpretations at any time.

Who can apply for economic hardship?

You may apply for economic hardship if you have been in F-1 status for at least 9 months (1 academic year), have lost your original source of funding due to unforeseen circumstances, and are unable to support your studies on your own. It is not recommended that you apply for economic hardship if you have lost your original source of funding due to your own actions (i.e. you lost your academic scholarship because you did not attend class and were placed on academic probation).

According to regulations at 8 CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(C) "If other employment opportunities are not available or are otherwise insufficient, an eligible F-1 student may request off-campus employment work authorization based upon severe economic hardship caused by **unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control**. These circumstances may include 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." **It is important to understand that normal costs of living increases (for example, normal, expected yearly rises in tuition and rent of about 4-6%) do not rise to the level of severe economic hardship.** There must be a substantial rise, and the rise cannot be by your own action (for example, choosing to move to a more expensive apartment or choosing to live by yourself when you can live with a roommate).

Economic hardship can be authorized up to one year at a time, but cannot be authorized past the end date of your I-20. The application takes several months to be approved, and may not be a good option if you are finishing your program soon. You can check processing times for I-765 applications at the Potomac Service Center at egov.uscis.gov/processing-times (this category is under "Based on a request by a qualified F-1 academic student [(c)(3)]"). If you have less than one year left to complete your program, please make a general immigration appointment with our international student advisor to discuss whether or not this application is appropriate for you.

What happens after I apply for economic hardship?

If approved, you will be given a work authorization permit (EAD card). This will allow you to work off-campus up to 20 hours a week, in addition to any on-campus job you have. Remember that you must always maintain your status (be enrolled in a full course of study and make satisfactory progress towards the completion of your program). Your work authorization will be revoked if you do not maintain your status.

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I am not eligible for economic hardship. What can I do?

International students in F-1 status are eligible to work on-campus up to 20 hours a week without permission. You can check for on-campus positions that do not require federal workstudy awards. As an international student, you do not qualify for the federal workstudy program. You can also check with food services on campus as well as the library. You may also want to look for ways to cut personal spending (i.e. share a room, take the bus, etc). Remember that you must always maintain your status (be enrolled full time and make satisfactory academic progress) even while working.

I am eligible to apply for economic hardship. How do I apply?

To apply for economic hardship, you will need to make an appointment with the Senior Coordinator, and bring the following documents:

- Check for \$520* or completed [G-1450](#) to pay by US-issued credit or debit card. Please see the [Filing Fees](#) page for guidance on “How to Write Your Check.” **Applications for this application type may not be filed online at this time.**
- Completed [Form I-765](#). Fill out as much of the form as you can. If you are unsure of an answer, leave it blank, and you will complete it at your appointment. In Number 16, use code: (C)(3)(iii). Do not date the form until we meet.
- A personal statement describing the loss of your original source of funding. This letter is very important. Provide as much detail as possible.
- Supporting documentation (i.e. proof from a funding source indicating they can no longer fund you).
- Copies of your personal bank statements. You should provide statements for at least the last 5 months.
- Copies of all I-20s issued to you.
- A print-out of your [Form I-94](#)
- A copy of your F-1 visa page and your passport page
- 2 passport style photos
- Copy of transcripts/progress reports from all schools attended

When you have gathered all materials, email your **draft I-765 and personal statement** to gcciso@glendale.edu to be cleared to make an appointment. After being cleared for an appointment, you will meet with the immigration advisor to complete the process. At the appointment, you will be given a new I-20 and support letter. A copy of these documents must be sent with the application materials listed above to USCIS.

*Fee waiver applications are also available but will delay your application by 1-2 months. Please discuss this option with our immigration advisor if you are in need. You can also visit <https://www.uscis.gov/i-912> to learn about the process.