

# F-1 Severe Economic Hardship Request for Recommendation



WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

If paying for school becomes difficult, an F-1 student may request authorization from USCIS to work off campus due to economic hardship. This financial hardship must be due to unforeseen circumstances which are defined on the USCIS website as the following:

*“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.”* [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)

In order to request a DSO recommendation to work based on economic hardship, all the following must be true.

- ☐ You have been in F-1 status **for 1 academic year (at WUV or another college)**.  
For degree students, an academic year = 30 weeks. For ESL students, an academic year = 26 weeks.
- ☐ You are maintaining normal progress and taking a full course load.
- ☐ The hardship was due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control, and you have evidence to prove it.
- ☐ Your employment will not interfere with maintaining normal progress in a full course load.
- ☐ On-campus employment is not available or not sufficient.
- ☐ You are aware of the **\$410 USCIS application fee** and **up to 90-day wait time** to authorize a work permit.  
Note: You may be able to get a waiver for the fee. See the application instruction for more info.
- ☐ If your request is accepted, you will be charged **\$20 for an I-20 update** to use in your USCIS application.

## What you need to know about your employment:

- 1 Your employment will not allow you to be excused from class or drop below a normal course load.
2. The USCIS grants an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) in one-year increments only. You must reapply to the USCIS each year to renew the work authorization.
3. You cannot begin working until you receive the valid EAD. (Working before approval is cause to terminate your I-20.)
4. Employment does not need to be related to your studies and will not affect your eligibility for CPT/OPT.
5. Your employment is limited to up to 20 hours during the semester and up to 40 hours during breaks.
6. The employment authorization will **automatically** terminate if you graduate, transfer to another school, or fail to maintain your status.

Student's Full Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ WUV ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Date to Start Working \_\_\_\_\_ (this is the earliest date you wish to start working)

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

Please submit the completed form to the registrar office of WUV via email: [registrar@wuv.edu](mailto:registrar@wuv.edu)

# Process for Applying for a Work Permit through USCIS



WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

## STEP 1: Document the Circumstances Which Caused the Economic Hardship.

Write a letter describing the economic need and how this situation was unexpected and beyond your control. Attach documentation as evidence. (For example, change in family circumstances or proof of a currency devaluation) If you have a sponsor on your I-20, you can also include information about the economic hardship of your sponsor.

## STEP 2: Send your information to DSO@wuv.edu

In order for you to submit a request to WUV and the application to USCIS, you must first get a recommendation from a DSO at WUV. The DSO will review your information/documentation to determine if you have enough evidence for USCIS. If the DSO says you do, then you must request an updated I-20 for Economic Hardship.

## STEP 3: Send two (2) forms to registrar@wuv.edu and pay the \$20 fee through the MyWUV system.

- (1) the first page of this request form – filled out and signed at the bottom, and
- (2) the “I-20 Request Form” found on the MyWUV system. Check I-20, then Update. This I-20 also comes with a support letter that you need for the USCIS application.

## STEP 4: Prepare USCIS Application Materials and send them WITHIN 30 DAYS of your I-20 issue date (the date next to the DSO signature). Your application packet must contain the following materials:

- ☐ I-765 Application for Employment with your original signature in black ink. (See “Forms” @ [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))  
*Use Code (c) (3) (iii) on the application.*  
*Make sure your address on the form is valid for up to 3 months from the time you sent the application.*  
*The US Postal Service will NOT forward EADs.*
- ☐ Payment to “US Department of Homeland Security” for \$410.00 (Do not send cash.)
- ☐ Letter explaining the circumstances of the hardship with supporting documentation.
- ☐ List of your current assets, income and expenses. Include copies of recent bills, receipts and bank statements.
- ☐ Copies of the financial documentation for your I-20.  
*If you have a financial sponsor, include a statement from your sponsor explaining the unexpected events and evidence of the sponsor’s current financial status.*
- ☐ Outline of departures from and arrivals to the U.S. since your initial arrival (incl. dates and reasons for travel).
- ☐ **Letter from DSO explaining the work recommendation and insufficient on-campus employment.**
- ☐ **Copy of new I-20 with the recommendation from the DSO.**
- ☐ Copy of I-94, passport ID page, and most recent US visa stamp
- ☐ Two passport style photographs.

## STEP 5: Mail The Application Packet to USCIS.

Make copies of your completed packet of materials for your files.

To confirm the mailing address, go to [www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses](http://www.uscis.gov/i-765-addresses).

### If you send it via U.S. Postal Service (USPS):

USCIS  
PO Box 805373  
Chicago, IL 60680

It is recommended that you send the application by  
certified mail with a return receipt.

-OR-

### If you send it using FedEx, UPS, or DHL deliveries:

USCIS  
Attn: I-765 C03  
131 South Dearborn - 3rd Floor  
Chicago, IL 60603-5517

## STEP 6: Wait for your EAD.

You should receive a receipt notice from USCIS within one month of sending your application materials. Keep this receipt! You can check the status of your application at [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) with the case number on the receipt.

*Do not start working until you receive authorization.*

USCIS Unites States Citizenship and Immigration Services  
USCIS National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.  
DSO Designated School Officer  
EAD Employment Authorization Document