

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Global Initiative Office, Room 248

Economic Hardship Work Authorization

Economic Hardship employment authorization is permission granted to F-1 students by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work off-campus due to specific economic hardship criteria.

What is Economic Hardship Employment Authorization?

It is permission granted to F-1 students by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work off-campus on the basis of “severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the student’s control” [8CFR 214.2(f)(9)(ii)(c)].

Who is eligible for Economic Hardship Employment Authorization?

To be eligible for Economic Hardship employment authorization, you must document that:

- You have been in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year (two semesters).
- You are experiencing economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances (see below) that arose after you obtained F-1 status.
- You are currently in good academic standing and are carrying a full course load.
 - Part-time Canadian border commuter students are not eligible for Economic Hardship work authorization.
- Employment opportunities on campus are unavailable or insufficient.
- Acceptance of employment will not interfere with your full-time study.

What are “unforeseen circumstances”?

- 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

How do I apply?

1. First, submit an Economic Hardship Request Form (***Last page of this document***) and supporting documents to the TC3 Global Initiatives Office. See below under ***What documents do I bring..***
2. When your application is complete, the TC3 Global Initiatives Office will enter your Economic Hardship application into the SEVIS system, and produce a new I-20 with the Economic Hardship recommendation.
3. Pick up your new I-20 from the TC3 Global Initiatives Office.
4. Submit the Economic Hardship application and supporting documents to the USCIS Service Center. If approved, you will receive an Employment Authorization Document (“EAD card”) from the USCIS Service Center.
5. Bring a copy of your EAD card to the TC3 Global Initiatives Office.

What documents do I bring to the TC3 Global Initiatives Office to request the Economic Hardship I-20?

- Economic Hardship Request Form filed out.
- A cover letter from you addressed to the USCIS.
 - your unforeseen economic hardship circumstances
 - your efforts to obtain on-campus employment
- Evidence / documentation of your economic hardship. Examples of such evidence include:
 - Copies of past and present currency exchange charts showing the devaluation of your country's currency
 - Proof (signed letters, affidavits, bank statements) of unexpected changes in the financial situation of your sponsor
 - Copies of medical bills or other substantial and unexpected expenses
 - A letter from your department verifying that your assistantship has been unexpectedly terminated
- Documentation of your current expenses. For example:
 - Proof of tuition bill payment
 - Apartment lease or cost of living on campus
 - Utility bills
 - Any other significant expenses (books, medical expenses, etc.)
- Completed [Form I-765](#) (*fillable online*)
- Completed [Form G-1145](#) (*E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance*)
- Requested employment start and end date. This information can be sent via e-mail to the DSO Advisor assisting you with your Economic Hardship application.

What do I send to the USCIS?

The TC3 Global Office recommends that you submit the following documents to the USCIS:

- Original Form I-765.
 - Don't forget to sign and include all seven pages!
- Form G-1145
- Application fee of \$410.
- This should be a check (from a U.S. bank) or a U.S. money order payable to the "U.S. Department of Homeland Security".
- Write the 11-digit number from your I-94 on your check or money order.
- Don't forget to sign and date the check.
- If you intend to file for a Fee Waiver ([Form I-912](#)), then we recommend that you carefully review the eligibility requirements found on the USCIS website. If you request a fee waiver and are denied, you will be required to submit a new application with the appropriate fee. This will add significant processing time to your application.
- Photocopy of pages 1 and 2 of your new Economic Hardship endorsement I-20
 - Don't forget to sign and date the Student Attestation section of your I-20. If you forget, USCIS will return your application to you.
- Photocopies of all previous I-20's. Do not send originals!
- Your cover letter explaining your situation (as described above).
- Letter of support from The Global Office. Your DSO advisor will provide this letter after you submit a complete application to The Global Office.
- Documentation of the unforeseen change in your financial circumstances.

- Two (2) identical natural color photographs of yourself, taken within 30 days of your application and not previously used for another purpose.
- Please review the [specifications for the photos](#).
- If your photos do not meet USCIS requirements exactly, your EAD card will not be issued.
- In pencil, write your name and I-94 number lightly on the back of each photo.
- Photos can be taken at most drug stores or at the post office.
- Photocopy of your current, valid passport (biographic and photo pages) and U.S. visa stamp in your passport.
- Canadian citizens do not have visa stamps.
- Photocopy of the front and back of your newest I-94 Card OR print-out of electronic I-94 (available on [CBP's website](#)).

Where do I send my Economic Hardship Request Form?

The address to use depends on the mailing address listed on your I-765. Please refer to the [USCIS website](#) for details. You should use a reliable, express delivery service (e.g. UPS, FedEx) to mail your application. Utilizing an express delivery service will enable you to track your application and its delivery. Please save your receipt.

How long will processing at the USCIS take?

[Processing time at the USCIS](#) is estimated to be 6-12 weeks. However, processing times vary widely, depending on the time of year and workload at the Service Center to which you send your application.

You cannot begin employment until you have received your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from the USCIS and the “start date” printed on the EAD card is effective.

Important Reminders

- Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session and 40 hours per week during school breaks.
- Economic Hardship employment authorization is normally issued for one year. You may submit a request to the USCIS for renewal of work authorization by following the same procedures outlined in this handout. The earliest you may request a renewal is 120 days before your current EAD expires. Please remember to send a copy of your current EAD along with the other documents listed above to the USCIS.
- Employment authorization is automatically terminated when you graduate, transfer to another university or violate your F-1 status in any way (e.g. not registering as a full-time student).

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OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____
DSO Processing: _____
Date Processed: _____
Notes: _____

Economic Hardship Request Form

Please make sure to read and understand the Economic Hardship Information. Before completing the request form, please set up an appointment with a DSO.

- Attach a copy of personal statement and any supporting documentation.
- Attach copies of your current and previous I-20s.
- Attach a copy of paper or print-out of electronic Form I-94.
- Attach a copy of your F-1 visa page (except Canadians) OR approval of change of status to F-1 (I-797) if applicable.

_____, _____
(Last/Family) (First/Given)

Date of Birth ____/____/____
MM DD YYYY

TC3 Student ID number _____

Telephone _____

Current Email: _____

SEVIS ID #: N000 _____

Current Phone: _____

Employment Dates (1 year maximum): Begin (mm/dd/yyyy) _____ end (mm/dd/yyyy) _____

I have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year: Yes No

Signature _____

Date _____