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## Severe Economic Hardship

Revised: June 6, 2017

The severe economic hardship employment authorization benefit is intended to address situations where a financial need beyond your control arises, which was unforeseen at the time you applied to Carroll University and after all other potential employment opportunities have proven to be insufficient. Examples of unforeseen economic hardship 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."

### Eligibility

F-1 students who can document that one of the above situations is true may apply for off-campus work permission under the terms of this regulation. In order to be eligible, you must have **been in F-1 status for one full academic year (nine months)** and be in good academic standing.

*USCIS has specifically stated that applications based on the following reasons will be **denied**:*

1. Loss of scholarship when going beyond time for which scholarship was granted or exceeding program eligibility limit for funding.
  2. Failure to give evidence of the hardship; both pre-and post-event documentation is required.
  3. Internet articles of conditions in home country that don't demonstrate how the financial sponsor was individually affected.
  4. Parents retiring or other siblings going to school.
  5. Medical condition existent prior to the time the I-20 was issued.
  6. Increasing tuition (it is common knowledge that tuition is expected to increase each year).
- If the USCIS approves your application it will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), which includes your photograph. You may not begin employment until you have received the EAD. Authorization is granted in one year intervals or until the program end date – whichever is shorter. You must re-apply each year. The employment authorization is automatically terminated if you transfer or you fail to maintain status.

**A final note: The application for off-campus employment authorization is burdensome to compile, and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services requires about three months or more to process such applications. Students needing additional financial support are encouraged to consider on-campus employment options before proceeding with an application for Economic Hardship.**

### How to Apply:

1. Meet with the International Student Advisor. A new I-20, for the purpose of applying for Severe Economic Hardship, will be created for you.

Send all of the following materials to USCIS:

1. Complete form I-765. Enter (c)(3)(iii) at item 16 (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>).
2. A copy of the I-20 with the Designated School Official's (DSO) recommendation for economic hardship employment plus a signature on page 2



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2. Make copy of I-94, front and back.
3. A photocopy of your passport photo page
4. Documentation of the circumstances causing the economic need.
  - The student can write a statement describing the unforeseen hardship situation and, if possible, should attach supporting documentation; for example, a letter from home telling of a change in family circumstances or proof of a currency devaluation in the student's country.
5. A brief statement of why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient.
6. A personal check, money order or cashier's check made out to USCIS for \$380. You may apply for a fee waiver, using form I-912 (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-912>)
7. Two passport-style photos, 2" x 2", color, front view (taken no more than 30 days before filing). This should be the same type of photo as those taken for your U.S. visa application. Lightly print your name and your SEVIS number on the back of each photo with a pencil.
8. A letter from the Designated School Official summarizing and verifying your financial situation and supporting your application

### Where to mail the application:

#### For U.S. Postal Service (USPS) deliveries:

USCIS  
PO Box 21281  
Phoenix, AZ 85036

#### For express mail and courier deliveries:

USCIS  
Att: AOS  
1820 E. Skyharbor Circle S  
Suite 100  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

OIE strongly recommends that you **make a photocopy of your entire application** and that you send it through the U.S. Postal Service using certified mail with a return receipt requested. In the event that there is a delay in the processing of your application, OIE will not be able to help you if you do not have a photocopy of your application and a U.S. Postal Service return receipt.

### Processing Information:

When your application is accepted for processing, you will be sent a Form I-797 Notice of Action which you should keep, so you have a record of your application and its file number. The Notice of Action includes a telephone number which you can call for recorded information about the status of your application. You now also have the option of [checking online](https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do) at <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>. To do so you must have the LIN number from your Notice of Action. If you do not receive a Notice of Action within five weeks, please contact ISSS.

Normally if an EAD has been approved, it is mailed to the applicant within 90 days. If an EAD application has been pending for more than 90 days and no decision has been made, you can apply directly to a USCIS district office for a temporary EAD. If you do not receive your EAD card within 90 days of the date your Notice of Action gives as the "Received Date," contact OIE.