

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

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F-1 OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT Due to ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

What is Economic Hardship employment authorization?

Economic Hardship Authorization is permission granted to F-1 students by the 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 to apply for economic hardship, you must **document** that:

1. You have been in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year (9 months)
2. You are experiencing economic hardship based on unforeseen circumstances (see below) that arose since your last I-20 was issued
3. You are currently in good academic standing and are carrying a full course load
4. Employment opportunities on campus are unavailable or insufficient
5. Acceptance of employment will not interfere with your full-time study

What are "unforeseen circumstances"?

Unforeseen circumstances are usually beyond your control. Wanting to work off-campus just because it is not an "unforeseen circumstance." Good examples are:

- 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?

First, submit an Economic Hardship application and supporting documents (see below) to the OISS. When your application is complete, the OISS will enter your EH application into the SEVIS system, and will produce a new I-20 with the EH recommendation. Then, come to the OISS to sign your new I-20 and provide the OISS with all the necessary documentation to apply for Economic Hardship (see below) so that we can mail it for you.

What do I bring to the OISS?

1. The Economic Hardship application
2. A cover letter from you addressed to the USCIS
 - a. explaining your unforeseen economic hardship circumstances **AND**
 - b. explaining your efforts to obtain on-campus employment and/or letter from the Office of Human Resources at La Sierra University
3. Evidence / documentation of your economic hardship Examples of such evidence include:
 - a. Copies of past and present currency exchange charts showing the devaluation of your country's currency
 - b. Proof (signed letters, affidavits, bank statements) of unexpected changes in the financial situation of your sponsor
 - c. Copies of medical bills or other substantial and unexpected expenses
4. Current Form I-20
5. Completed Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization), using the code: "(c) (3) (iii)" for item #16 on the form (attached to EH application)

6. Check for \$340 made payable to the USCIS

The OISS will review your application and enter your information into the SEVIS system. A new SEVIS I-20 will be produced with a recommendation for economic hardship work permission on page 3. Processing time at the OISS is 3 – 5 business days.

How long will processing at the USCIS take?

EAD processing time at the USCIS California Service Center is estimated at 8-20 weeks. As processing times fluctuate, you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible if you are experiencing economic hardship and feel that you qualify for this type of employment authorization. You cannot begin employment until you have received your EAD.

If your application is approved, your EAD will be mailed to you at the address you listed in item 3 of Form I-765 (usually our office). Please report the outcome of your application to the Office of International Student Services if the application is addressed to a different address.

Please Note:

- Employment may not begin until you receive the EAD card
- Economic Hardship Employment Authorization is limited to 20 hours per week when school is in session and full-time (40 hours per week) during school breaks and vacation periods
- 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.
- Employment authorization is automatically terminated when you graduate, transfer universities, or if you violate your F-1 status in any way (e.g. not registering as a full-time student).