

Severe Economic Hardship

Overview:

Severe Economic Hardship (SEH) employment authorization is available to F-1 students who have been in status for at least one academic year and are experiencing unforeseen financial difficulties beyond their control. Authorization is granted by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and allows off-campus employment in any field. You must receive an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS before beginning work.

Eligibility Requirements:

- You must have been in valid F-1 status for at least one academic year.
- You must be in good academic standing.
- You must demonstrate that the need for employment is due to unforeseen economic hardship that arose after obtaining F-1 status (e.g., currency devaluation, sponsor death, medical bills, etc.).
- Retirement of your sponsor is not considered a valid basis for SEH.

Before You Apply:

Students are encouraged to file Form I-765 online at <https://www.uscis.gov/i-765> for faster processing. Please consult with the Designated School Official (DSO) before beginning your application and if you need assistance.

Application Checklist:

Bring the following documents to your appointment with the Office of Culture & Belonging:

- Completed Form I-765 (latest version from the USCIS website)
- Copies of your current and all previous Form I-20s
- Two recent passport-style photos (taken within the last 30 days)
- Printout of your I-94 (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
- Copy of your passport ID page and F-1 visa (if applicable)
- \$470 USCIS application fee (check or money order payable to 'U.S. Department of Homeland Security') or apply online
- Optional: Form I-912 for fee waiver request (if applicable)
- Letter from your sponsor (if applicable) explaining the loss of financial support
- Letter from you explaining the hardship and including documentation (e.g., death certificate, currency exchange records)
- Completed budget form comparing income vs. expenses (provided in this packet)
- Copies of any previous EAD cards (if applicable)

Filing Instructions:

The Office of Culture & Belonging can assist you in preparing and mailing your application or support you in applying online. If mailing, your application will be sent using the university's return address. Any special mailing services (e.g., FedEx, certified mail) must be paid for by the student.

Processing Time:

Processing by USCIS typically takes a minimum of 100 days and may take longer. The Office of Culture & Belonging will notify you once your receipt notice or EAD card is received.



Instructions for Form I-765

- Check: "Permission to accept employment"
- Use the following address for your local mailing address to ensure delivery:
Walsh University, 2020 East Maple Street, North Canton, OH 44720
- Phone: (330) 490-7155 | Email: CultureAndBelonging@walsh.edu
- Use your Social Security Number if you have one. Do NOT use your I-94 or student ID.
- Use your I-94 number from your most recent entry (<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>)
- If you previously received USCIS employment authorization (e.g., OPT), check 'Yes' and consult the DSO.
- For eligibility category, enter (c)(3)(iii).