Severe Economic Hardship: F-1 Work Authorization

F-1 students who have been enrolled full-time, are in good academic standing, and holding F-1 status for a minimum of one academic year are eligible to apply for employment authorization due to economic hardship. Employment may be authorized for up to a maximum of one year and is limited to 20 hours per week during academic semesters (full-time during vacation periods).

To qualify under this provision you must demonstrate that the employment is necessary to avoid severe economic hardship due to unforeseen circumstances beyond your control and that on-campus employment opportunities are unavailable or insufficient to meet your needs.

To apply for employment authorization, please bring the following documents to the Office of International Studies (Fell 308):

- Letter explaining severe economic hardship. In this letter, you should discuss the hardship situation, your effort to find on-campus employment, and include a list of all income, assets, and expenses.

- Evidence supporting your circumstances (medical records, exchange rates, news articles)

- Original Form I-20, Passport, Visa, Form I-94 and copies of any previous EADs (work cards)

- Current I-20

- Completed Form I-765

- Two recent, passport-style photos on white background. The photos must be 2 x 2 inches; the images must be 1 inch from the hair to the chin and 1 1/4 inch from eye height to the bottom of the photo. Print your name and I-94 number on the back of the photos. For an example photo see http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/get/get_874.html.

- Check or money order for $380 made payable to: Department of Homeland Security

An Immigration Advisor will review your documentation of economic hardship and if appropriate, will recommend authorization for a period of up to one year. The Office of International Studies will return your application to you to be mailed to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration and Services for processing.

It will take USCIS approximately 90 days to process an application for work authorization based on economic hardship.