

# Employment Due to Severe Economic Hardship

This F-1 benefit is for students who have severe financial need due to circumstances that are beyond their control. The financial need must have been unforeseen at the time the student applied for admission, and all other possible employment opportunities must have been explored and proven insufficient. This work authorization is granted in one-year intervals, up to the date of completion of studies. With this authorization, a student can work off-campus in any job 20 hours week while school is in session and full time (40 hours week) during school vacations. If a student transfers schools, the work authorization is terminated and the student will need to re-apply.

## Eligibility

You are eligible to file for “Economic Hardship” work permission if you meet the following conditions:

- You have experienced unforeseen economic need. According to the U.S. Immigration Service (USCIS), the following circumstances qualify for unforeseen economic need:
  - loss of financial aid, scholarship, or fellowship
  - large increase in tuition or living expenses
  - unexpected changes in your financial support
  - disaster in your home country which has affected your financial support
- You have been in F-1 status for at least one academic year. An academic year at RRCC is two 15 week semesters. If a reinstatement was required, the academic year counts from the date the reinstatement was granted. If a change of status took place, the academic year is counted from the date the F-1 status was approved.
- You are in good academic standing (not on probation).
- You are registered full-time.
- You have looked for a job on campus and have been unable to find sufficient work.

## Application Process

- Speak with an RRCC international student advisor in the ISS&P office about Economic Hardship eligibility and to obtain information on the application. Make sure that you make an appointment so that the advisor will be able to give you the time you will need to understand this process.
- You will need to complete an I-765 form which can be downloaded from the USCIS.gov website.
- You will need to submit the following documents along with your application:
  - Passport identification page, including photograph and expiration date
  - I-94 (both front and back pages)
  - Copy of any previously issued EAD cards
  - Two color passport style photographs; **IMPORTANT:** Photos must have a white background, be taken no earlier than 30 days before submission to the immigration service, be un-mounted, printed on thin, glossy paper, and un-retouched. The head should be bare, unless wearing a headdress as required by a

religious order to which you belong. The photo must be no larger than 1 ½ x 1 ½ inches, with the distance from the top of the head to just below the chin about 1 ¼ inches.

- Check or Money Order for \$ 340. Make sure that you check the USCIS website as the charges may have changed.
- Compile and mail your application to USCIS. You should receive a receipt from USCIS within four to six weeks and a decision within three to four months

### Where Can You Work?

Work is limited to 20 hours per week during the academic year, but may be full time in the summer. There is no restriction on the type of work or location. If your application to USCIS is approved, they will issue an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with dates of employment no longer than one year (but not beyond graduation or school transfer). Renewals are possible, but the same application procedure must be followed.

If you transfer to another school, your Economic Hardship EAD is automatically cancelled even though it may not have expired. You must reapply for Economic Hardship with your new institution. Working with the EAD after graduation or school transfer is considered illegal employment.