Economic Hardship Work Authorization

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 CLC 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."

If you believe you qualify for economic hardship work authorization, make an appointment to meet the International Advisor.

Requirements and Guidelines:

- Must have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year. Must prove to USCIS that employment is necessary due to severe economic hardship caused by circumstances beyond your control that arose after obtaining the F-1 status.
- Limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session; can be full-time during official school breaks
- Can be in any job. Does not have to be related to course of study.

To Apply:

1. Document the circumstances causing the economic need
2. Write statement of why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient
3. Complete form I-765. Enter (c)(3)(iii) at item 16 (http://www.uscis.gov/i-765)
4. Obtain 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)
5. Obtain passport-style photos, 2” x 2”, color, front view
6. Make copy of I-20 issued with International Advisor’s recommendation for economic hardship employment plus signature on page 3
7. Make copy of I-94, front and back
8. Make copy of the ID pages of your passport
9. Ask for letter from International Advisor summarizing and verifying your financial situation and supporting your application
10. Make a copy of everything to keep
11. Send registered/certified mail to the USCIS Lockbox listed below. Request must be received within 30 days of the date on the I-20.

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
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Notes:

- If the application is approved, USCIS will issue an EAD (Employment Authorization Document) to you. If the application is denied, you will be notified by USCIS in writing but you may not appeal. The fee is nonrefundable.

- 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.