

# Economic Hardship

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## OFF CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT for International Students in F-1 Status

### **ECONOMIC HARDSHIP:**

Economic hardship is defined as a financial crisis which prevents you from meeting your overall expenses while pursuing your studies in the U.S.

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- **What are the Requirements?**

- Full time registration and in good academic standing.
- Demonstrate that on-campus employment is not available or is insufficient.
- Demonstrate that part-time off-campus employment will not interfere with studies.
- Evidence of the claimed unforeseen circumstances causing the economic hardship.

- **Examples of Circumstances that Cause Economic Hardship:**

*Unforeseen circumstances such as:*

- Substantial fluctuations in the value of the currency or exchange rates.
- Unexpected changes in the financial condition of the sponsor.
- Medical bills, etc.

- **What other documents are required to apply for economic hardship?**

- Chairperson / Academic Advisor's confirmation of your Studies Completion Date.
- Degree Audit (pick up from the Registrars' office).
- \$380 money order (Immigration fee) made payable to USCIS (US Citizenship Immigration Services).
- Valid passport with the stapled I-94 card (old passport also if you have one).
- Pratt I-20 and any previous I-20s from Pratt or any other schools.
- 2 Photos (Passport style).
- Letter explaining the circumstances of your economic hardship and why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient.
- Supporting documentation to prove what you've explained in your letter.

- **Can I work full time?**

You cannot work more than 20 hours a week during the Fall and Spring semesters (20 hours include on and off campus). You can work full time only during Pratt vacations.

- **Who is eligible to Apply?**

Students who are in valid F-1 status for at least 1 academic year (2 semesters).

- **What documents provide evidence of economic hardship?**
  - Letter from the applicant addressed to Immigration explaining the unforeseen circumstances which led to the hardship
  - Letter from the financial sponsor accompanied by certified documents to corroborate the hardship described in the letter.
  
- **When can I start working?**
  - When you receive the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from Immigration
  
- **How long can I engage in employment for economic hardship?**
  - 12 months, unless your studies end before the 12 month period.  
NOTICE: You must not work beyond the date authorized on your EAD
  
- **Do I need a job offer to apply?**
  - No
  
- **Is employment limited to my field of study?**
  - No
  
- **Can I travel outside the U.S.?**
  - No. Your travel will be restricted with this employment.
  
- **Do I have to pay taxes?**
  - Yes, except Social Security Tax (FICA) if you have been in the United States for less than 5 years.
  
- **Can I engage in one year of practical training after I complete my studies?**
  - Yes. Economic need work permission does not affect your eligibility for optional practical training.
  
- **Where do I get assistance to apply for economic hardship?**
  - Call the Office of International Affairs for an appointment (718) 636-3674.
  
- **Where do I send my application?**

USCIS  
 Attn: AOS  
 2501 S. State Hwy. 121 Business  
 Suite 400  
 Lewisville, TX 75067
  
- **Should I send it regular mail?**
  - Send your application by Priority mail with Certified Mail.