Economic Hardship Employment Authorization

Preconditions: Must have been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year and prove to USCIS that employment is necessary due to severe economic hardship caused by circumstances beyond his or her control that arose after obtaining F-1 status. Student must apply for EAD from USCIS, and receive EAD before employment.

Examples of hardship likely to be approved include:
- Natural Disaster in home country
- Sponsor loses job or has major illness/injury and is unable to work
- Severe financial or currency crisis in home country

Location: Designed for off-campus employment but no specific prohibition on it being used on-campus.

Duration: Granted by USCIS in increments of one year at a time, or until the program end-date, whichever is shorter; authorization ends if a student transfers schools.

Hours per week: Limited to 20 hours per week while school is in session; can be full-time during official school breaks.

Field/level of work: Can be in any job. Does not have to be related to course of study.

Student should prepare the following for submission to USCIS:

- A written statement describing the unforeseen hardship situation and, if possible, backup documentation; for example, a letter from home telling of a change in family circumstances or proof of a currency devaluation in the student's country. Explain why other employment options are unavailable or insufficient (a simple statement should suffice)
- Complete Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, using the code: (c)(3)(iii) for question 27
- Pay $410 fee using credit card, personal check or money order.
- New signed I-20 from DSO requesting work authorization
- 2 passport photos
- Copy of the student's I-94
- Copy of the ID pages from the student's passport, visa, and for applications for renewal of work authorization, a photocopy of the previously issued EAD
- Mail all of the above to the USCIS Processing Center in Texas. Average EAD processing time is 2.5-3.5 months.