

Addressing Severe Economic Hardship and Options for F1 Students

**Presented by:
The Center for International Education
International Students & Scholars**

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the session, you will recognize the following options to help you address economic hardship:

- Off-campus work permit due to Unforeseen and Severe Economic Hardship (SEH)
- Special Student Relief (SSR)
- Undergraduate, Non-resident Fee Waiver (NRT)
- Educational Leave of Absence
- Other Possible Options to Relieve Stress During Hardship

WHEN IS OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT AVAILABLE ?

- An F-1 student [must show an ability to afford](#) the costs of school and living expenses before entering the United States and should not plan to work off-campus.
- However, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will authorize off-campus employment as follows:
 - **only** in cases of severe economic hardship *occurring* after a student's enrollment in an academic program and
 - after the student has been in F-1 status for at least one full academic year, or
 - in [emergent circumstances](#) as defined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

WHAT SITUATIONS WILL QUALIFY A STUDENT FOR ASSISTANCE FROM USCIS?

Emergent Circumstances are world events that affect a specific group of F-1 students and which causes them to suffer severe economic hardship, including, but not limited to:

- ❖ natural disasters,
- ❖ wars and military conflicts,
- ❖ national or international financial crises.

A situation of severe economic hardship include:

- ❖ Loss of financial aid or [on-campus employment](#) (if the student is not at fault)
- ❖ Large increases in tuition or living costs
- ❖ Substantial decrease in the relative value of currency the student depends upon to pay expenses
- ❖ Unexpected changes in the financial conditions for a student's sources of financial support
- ❖ Unexpectedly large medical bills not covered by insurance
- ❖ Other substantial, unexpected expenses

EMPLOYMENT BASED ON SEVERE ECONOMIC HARDSHIP (SEH)



Who Qualifies?

- ☐ F-1 visa students who have encountered financial difficulties due to unforeseen circumstances may be eligible to apply for a part-time, off-campus work permit.
- ☐ The work permit allows employment off campus for up to a year.
- ☐ Work does not have to be related to your major.

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ Must be in lawful f-1 Status
- ✓ Have been **enrolled** in a full course of study for at least one academic year
- ✓ Be in good academic standing
- ✓ Must be able to provide evidence of financial hardship that was unforeseen and out of your control.
- ✓ Limited to part time employment during the Spring and Fall terms.



SEH Application Process



1

- Meet with a DSO to discuss your current situation and determine if you meet eligibility

2

- Explore all available options to ameliorate your current economic hardship.

3

- Complete the SHE Request Form and submit it to the Office of Internationals Students and Scholars along with all supporting documents.

4

- Allow 7-10 business for the review of your request and for the DSO to issue you an SEH I-20

5

- Mail your application packet, with supporting documents and [Fee](#) to USCIS. Allow 90 days for processing and approval.

6

- Receive your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) by mail.

7

- Apply for a Social Security number with the Social Security Administration if necessary.

**You may
renew your
EAD every
year, if the
SEH
continues.**

SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF (SSR)

Who Qualifies

- F-1 visa students from a particular region of the world who are directly affected by geo-political events that cause detrimental hardship.
- These events are described by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as Emergent circumstances.
 - natural disasters,
 - wars and military conflicts,
 - national or international financial crises.

Under an "**emergent circumstances**" determination, regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student include:

- [full course of study](#) allowing student to enroll in no less than 6 units per semester (generally)
- and on-campus or off- campus [employment](#), allowing student to work more than 20 hours per week under the on-campus employment regulations, practical training option known as CPT or through F-1 Severe Economic Hardship (SEH) Work Permit.

Current Special Student Relief Program Designations

Country	Effective dates	Federal Register notice
Lebanon	July 26, 2024 – January 25, 2026 and November 27, 2024 – May 27, 2026	89 FR 83897 (October 18, 2024) 89 FR 93634 (November 27, 2024)

ELIGIBILITY (SSR)

Must be in lawful F-1 Status.

Must be in good academic standing.

Must have citizenship in the affected country or region, as per the FR notice and have been lawfully present in the United States for the dates indicated in FR notice.

Must meet minimum course requirements for the duration of authorized employment.

Must demonstrate that employment is needed to alleviate severe economic hardship caused by the emergent circumstances.

SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF (SSR) Application Process



1

- **Meet with a DSO to discuss your current situation and determine if you meet eligibility**

2

- **Explore all available options to ameliorate your current economic hardship.**

3

- **Complete the SSR Request Form and provide any supporting documentation including employment authorization (EAD) if applicable.**

4

- **Allow 7-10 business for the review of your request and for the DSO to issue you an updated I-20 for SSR.**

5

- **Mail your application packet, with supporting documentation and fees to USCIS. Allow approximately 90 days for processing and approval.**

UNDERGRADUATE, NON-RESIDENT FEE WAIVER (NRT)



- Under exceptional circumstances, California State University, Long Beach, may grant a non-resident tuition waiver to eligible international students (holders of F-1 or J-1 visas) on the basis of economic hardship.
- Hardship must be the result of changes that *arose recently*, were *unforeseen*, and *beyond your control*.
- Waivers are only granted in the event of a catastrophic and sudden change in a student's financial situation, such as a death in the family or severe illness.
- Ordinary economic factors, such as fluctuations in currency exchange rates or business profitability, do not merit the granting of an NRT Waiver.
- The waiver will only waive out of state tuition fees for two terms.

Please be aware that economic hardship NRT waivers are rarely granted. Waiver is not available to graduate students!

ELIGIBILITY (NRT)

1

- Must be in lawful F-1 student status.

2

- Have only two terms left (Spring/Fall) before graduation. Average of 30 units or less.

3

- Be in good academic standing & 3.0 GPA.

4

- Must be able to provide evidence of financial hardship that was *catastrophic*.

5

- The waiver will only waive out of state tuition fees for two terms, summer & winter terms are not included.



NRT APPLICATION PROCESS



1

- Meet with a DSO to discuss your current situation and determine if you meet eligibility.

2

- Explore all available options to ameliorate your current economic hardship

3

- Complete the NRT Request Form and submit it to the Office of International Students and Scholars along with all supporting documents.

4

- Allow 7-10 business for the review and approval of your request.

5

- If approved, your non-resident fees will be waived only for your last two terms (Fall/spring for an average of 30 units.). Summer & winter terms are not included.

EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

- Matriculated undergraduate or graduate students, in good standing, who have completed at least one semester and have earned units at CSULB may apply for an Educational Leave for a minimum of 1 semester or a maximum of 4 semesters (depending on approval).
- Applications for Educational Leave must be submitted to Enrollment Services by the last day of the previous Fall or Spring semester.
- International student must meet with an International Student Advisor as soon as educational leave is considered an option.



<http://www.csulb.edu/registration-and-records/educational-leave>

Ed Leave...Things to consider



- ☐ Keep your spot in the university
- ☐ You must re-enter the U.S. with new SEVIS # & initial I-20 (**Unless you Transfer to another U.S. institution**).
- ☐ You will re-start your F-1 status upon return.
- ☐ You will need to wait 1 academic year upon return to qualify for CPT, OPT or SEH

Other Possible Options to Relief Stress During Economic Hardship

- On-Campus Employment ([CIE Guidance](#))
 - [49er Shops](#)
 - [Associated Students Inc.](#)
 - [Career Development Center](#)
 - [University Library](#)
 - [Office of Research & Economic Development](#)
 - Speak with your department or programs for assistantship opportunities.
- [Basic Needs Program](#)
 - Serves students who have been displaced, experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, an emergency, and/or a crisis.
- [Payment Plans](#)
- [Beach Pantry](#)

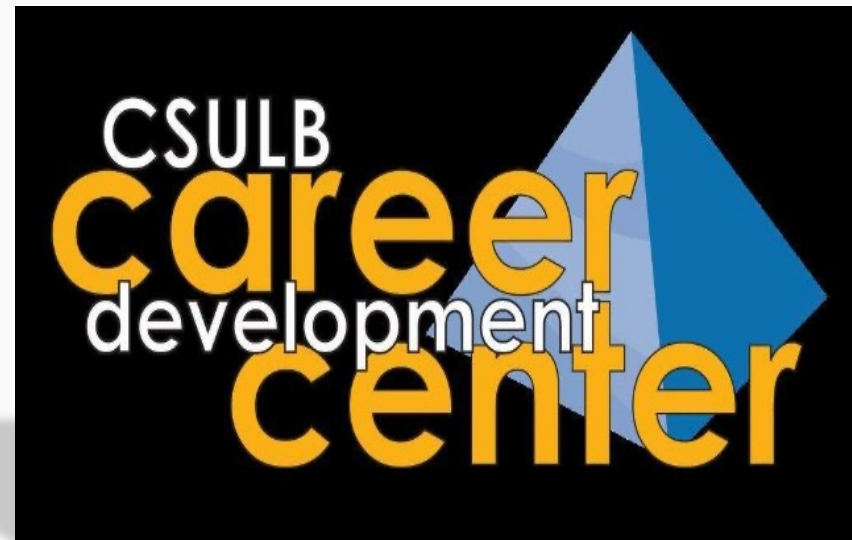
The Career Development Center

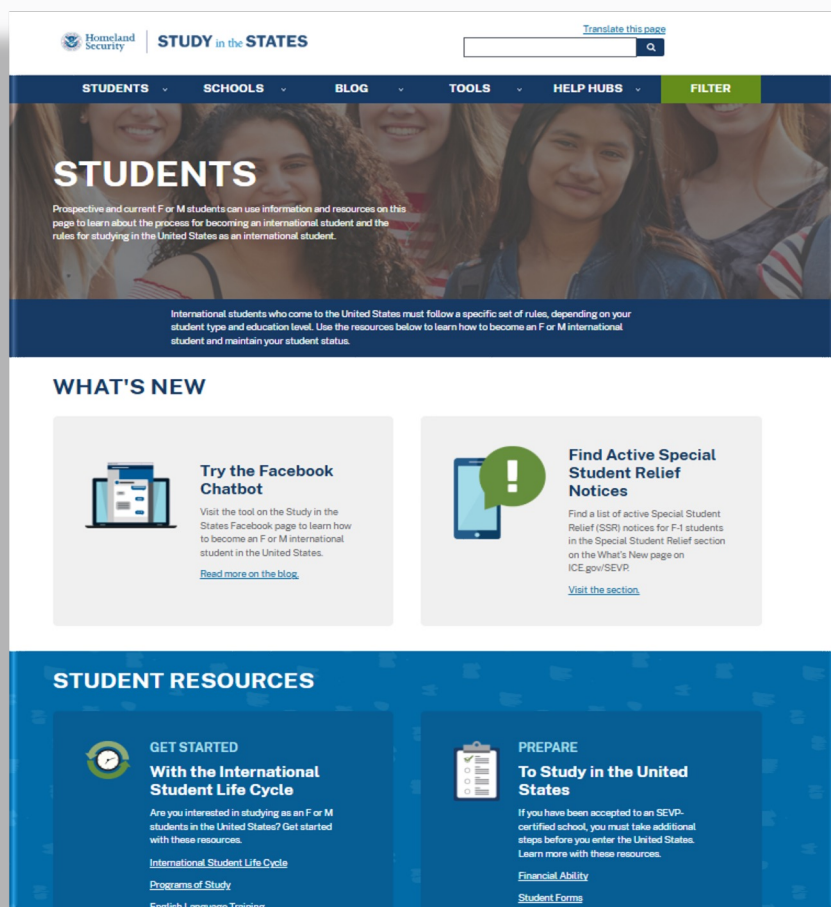
Location: BH 250

Online: [Career Development Center | California State University Long Beach](#)

Learn about:

Resume Writing
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Visit
<https://studyinthe-states.dhs.gov>

- The form I-20
- Maintaining Status
- Paying the I-901 Fee
- Training Opportunities in the U.S.
- Applying for a Visa

Center for International Education International Student Services

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Friday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Closed everyday 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Location: FND 185B

Email:

- cie-student@csulb.edu

Website and social media:

- [International Students and Scholars | California State University Long Beach \(csulb.edu\)](https://internationalstudentsandscholars.csulb.edu/)
- **Facebook:** CSULB International Student Services
- **Instagram:** CSULB_ISS

