

**Special Student Relief (SSR)** is the suspension of certain regulatory requirements by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for an F-1 student from parts of the world that are experiencing emergent circumstances. Regulatory requirements that may be suspended or altered for an F-1 student include: full course of study and on- and off-campus employment eligibility.

#### **Benefits of SSR:**

- o Ability to work on-campus over 20 hours per week during Fall and Spring semesters for the duration of the notice for your country, OR apply for off-campus work permission
- o Ability to reduce course load (RCL) during the Fall and Spring semesters for the duration of the notice for your country
  - o The RCL benefit is optional, but **the reduced course load benefit is only available to students who apply for SSR and obtain work authorization through the notice, and is not available separately**
  - o Students approved for the RCL benefit through SSR must remain enrolled in at least 6 credits for undergraduates or 3 credits for graduate students each Fall and Spring semester for the duration of the SSR benefits
- o Students must apply and receive a special I-20 that shows permission for these benefits

**A KIC Immigration Advisor will decide whether a student meets the eligibility criteria to apply for SSR.**

If a student is unable to document that their primary source of financial support comes from the affected country and is not sufficient for their current expenses, their application may be denied either by KIC or USCIS.

#### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- A citizen of an appropriate country who was lawfully present within the United States on an F-1 visa on the designated start date.
- Have an I-20 from Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Currently maintaining F-1 status
- Enrolled at Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Able to document that they are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in their country of citizenship.

#### **Directions for On-Campus Employment Authorization:**

- a. Meet the eligibility criteria above
- b. Complete a budget worksheet (last page of this packet)
- c. Employing Department must complete this [form](#)
- d. Gather supporting evidence about the crisis in your country of citizenship. You should gather more than one example. All documentation/evidence should be in English or have English translation. Examples of supporting evidence include but are not limited to:
  - o An article describing the disaster in your country that negatively affected your parent's business,
  - o An article or report about the decreased value of your country's currency,
  - o A letter from your scholarship provider saying that they are going out of business and can no longer support you, etc.,

- e. Write a **personal statement** to explain your unforeseen change(s) in your financial circumstances which arose as a result of the crisis in your country of citizenship. Be specific. Refer to your evidence. Provide a brief introduction about the crisis in your country. Detail:
  - o Why your parents, family, or other sponsors are unable to give you the previously promised support.
    - Your economic hardship as a result of the crisis and how the funding on your I-20 has changed as a result of the crisis.
    - Your academic and living expenses.
- f. If your sponsors are withdrawing support, obtain a letter from them which explains the situation. If you are not able to get this letter, please explain why in your statement.
- g. Submit the budget worksheet, documentation, and statement to KIC Immigration Advisor.

**To apply for SSR for on-campus employment authorization, submit the documents listed in item g above to your KIC Immigration Advisor. Your Immigration Advisor will follow up within one week regarding next steps. KIC will make a final eligibility determination. If KIC determines you are eligible, we will authorize full time on-campus work authorization and a reduction of your course load on a new I-20.**

Students cannot work beyond 20 hours per week while school is in session until they have been authorized in their SEVIS record by KIC.

#### **Directions for Off-Campus Employment Authorization:**

Eligible students seeking off-campus employment authorization must apply to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service for authorization. Applications for Special Student Relief employment authorization must first be submitted to and processed by KIC. Please see the list of required documents to prepare a complete application. Students do not need a job to apply for off-campus authorization through SSR.

- a. Meet the eligibility criteria above
- b. Complete a budget worksheet (last page of this packet)
- c. Gather supporting evidence about the crisis in your country of citizenship. You should gather more than one example. All documentation/evidence should be in English or have English translation. Examples of supporting evidence include but are not limited to:
  - o An article describing the disaster in your country that negatively affected your parent's business,
  - o An article or report about the decreased value of your country's currency,
  - o A letter from your scholarship provider saying that they are going out of business and can no longer support you, etc.,
- d. Write a **personal statement** to explain your unforeseen change(s) in your financial circumstances which arose as a result of the crisis in your country of citizenship. Be specific. Refer to your evidence. Provide a brief introduction about the crisis in your country. Detail:
  - o Why your parents, family, or other sponsors are unable to give you the previously promised support.
  - o Your economic hardship as a result of the crisis and how the funding on your I-20 has changed as a result of the crisis.
  - o Your academic and living expenses.

- e. If your sponsors are withdrawing support, obtain a letter from them which explains the situation. If you are not able to get this letter, please explain why in your statement.
- f. Complete [Form I-765 \(example Form I-765\)](#).
  - o Include copies of passport, visa, I-94, any previous EADs and 2 passport photos
- g. Submit the budget worksheet, documentation, statement, and I-765 to KIC Immigration Advisor.

**To apply for SSR for off-campus employment authorization, submit the documents listed in item g above to your KIC Immigration Advisor. Your Immigration Advisor will follow up within one week regarding next steps.**

If KIC recommends you for SSR and off-campus work authorization, you must pay an application fee to the US Department of Homeland Security (currently \$410). Students may request that the fee be waived using [Form I-912 \(example form I-912\)](#). This waiver request is not guaranteed. You can pay for the application fee using [Form G-1450](#) or with a check or money order. You will receive a new I-20 from KIC recommending off-campus work authorization and a reduction of your course load.

Off-Campus Employment authorization based on Special Student Relief allow students to work off-campus in any position for any number of hours per week based on the suspension of off-campus employment regulations stated above. **Employment may not begin until you have received the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) from USCIS.** Employment is authorized for one year or the expiration of the notice for your country, whichever is sooner.

Employment authorization is contingent upon maintaining your F-1 status. If at any time during your authorized period of employment, you fall out of status (for example by failing to complete a full-time course load) your authorization is immediately cancelled. Transferring to another school will also cancel your employment authorization even if your card has not yet expired.

Applications take an average of 2-3 months to process. Approximately 2-4 weeks after you send in the application you will receive a receipt in the mail from USCIS stating they have begun processing your application.

After you receive the I-20 from KIC, mail the I-20 and all your application materials to:

<p><b>For U.S. Postal Service (USPS):</b>          USCIS          Attn: I-765 C03          131 South Dearborn – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor          Chicago, IL 60603-5517          On the envelope, bottom right side, write  <b>"SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF."</b></p>	<p><b>For FedEx, UPS, and DHL deliveries:</b>          USCIS          Attn: I-765 C03 (Box 805373)          131 South Dearborn – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor          Chicago, IL 60603-5517          On the envelope, bottom right side, write  <b>"SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF."</b></p>
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**Please Note:** For off-campus work authorization, recommendation by KIC is not an approval and does not guarantee USCIS approval. A student cannot begin off-campus employment until they receive approval from USCIS in form of an Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

## Budget Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

TechID: \_\_\_\_\_ StarID: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

First Semester at MNSU: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_ I-20 End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Complete the budget worksheet below.
2. Write a statement to explain the unforeseen change(s) in your financial situation which arose as a result of the crisis in your country of citizenship. Be specific. Detail why parents, family, or other sponsors are unable to give you the previously promised support.
3. If your sponsors are withdrawing support, obtain a letter from them which explains the situation. If you are not able to get this letter, please explain why in your statement.
4. Gather supporting evidence of your situation. Examples of supporting evidence include but are not limited to an article describing the disaster in your country that negatively affected your parent's business, an article or report about the decreased value of your country's currency, a letter from your scholarship provider saying that they are going out of business and can no longer support you, etc.
5. Submit this completed worksheet, your personal statement, and supporting documentation to you KIC Immigration Advisor.

**Complete sections A-D as accurately as possible. Your first MNSU I-20 will be helpful for sections A and B.**

When I began at MNSU/applied for F-1 Visa		Today:	
A) My estimated expenses were		C) My expenses now	
Tuition	\$	Tuition	\$
Living Expenses/Insurance	\$	Living Expenses/Insurance	\$
Other*	\$	Other*	\$
Total	\$	Total	\$
B) My source(s) of funding were		My source(s) of funding now	
Personal Funds	\$	Personal Funds	\$
Family Funds	\$	Family Funds	\$
Funds from MNSU	\$	Funds from MNSU	\$
Other*	\$	Other*	\$
Total	\$	Total	\$
*If other, give details below:		*If other, give details below:	