

# Special Student Relief (SSR)

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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 a full course of study and on- and off-campus employment eligibility.

**Ethiopia: December 12, 2022 – June 12, 2024**

DHS suspending certain regulatory requirements for F-1 nonimmigrant students whose country of citizenship is Ethiopia, regardless of country of birth (or individuals having no nationality who last habitually resided in Ethiopia), and **who are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in Ethiopia**. The Secretary is taking action to provide relief to these Ethiopian students who are lawful F-1 nonimmigrant students so the students may request employment authorization, work an increased number of hours while school is in session, and reduce their course load while continuing to maintain their F-1 nonimmigrant student status.

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## BENEFITS OF SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF (SSR)

- **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**
- **Ability to reduce course load (RCL) in during the Fall and Spring semesters for the duration of the notice for your country**
  - < **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**
  - < **Students approved for the RCL benefit through SSR must remain in 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**
- **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.**

# TPS vs. SSR

- Temporary Protected Status (TPS) work authorization is offered to various visa classifications, when applicable, include F-1 students.
  - It's a layer of protection, but students must follow F-1 rules associated with enrollment
  - TPS does not grant a reduced course load
  - TPS does not grant permission to work more hours in an on-campus job
- Special Student Relief (SSR) is offered only to eligible F-1 students.

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## 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 with evidence that they are experiencing severe economic hardship as a direct result of the current crisis in their country of citizenship.**

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## Evidence:

- 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:
    - ✓ An article describing the disaster in your country that negatively affected your parent's or sponsor'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.,
  - < Proof your financial circumstances have changed from when you applied for your F-1 visa
    - ✓ Bank statements of your sponsor from the time you applied and current
    - ✓ Statement from your sponsor clarifying how the crisis has impacted their ability to cover your expenses

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- 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 personal statement.
- 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:**
    - ✓ 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.
    - ✓ 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.

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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:	
<b>A) My estimated expenses were</b>		<b>C) My expenses now</b>	
Tuition	\$	Tuition	\$
Living Expenses/Insurance	\$	Living Expenses/Insurance	\$
Other*	\$	Other*	\$
Total	\$	Total	\$
<b>B) My source(s) of funding were</b>		<b>My source(s) of funding now</b>	
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:	



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## How to Apply:

- If applying for **on-campus employment authorization** the following to your immigration advisor:
  - < budget worksheet
  - < documents/evidence (see previous slides for more detail)
  - < personal statement
    - ✓ Your on-campus employer must also verify you will be employed more than 20 hours/week, using this [link](#)
- If applying for **off-campus employment authorization**, your application must include:
  - < [Form I-765](#) with associated \$410 fee
  - < copies of passport, visa, I-94, previously issued EADs
  - < 2 passport photos
  - < budget worksheet
  - < documents/evidence (see previous slides for more detail)
  - < personal statement

**All sent to your immigration advisor in the KIC.**

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## Things to note:

### On-Campus SSR

- You are not authorized to work more than 20 hours/week on-campus until approved by KIC and receive an updated I-20.
- You must maintain full-time enrollment until you are approved for SSR by KIC and receive an updated I-20.

### Off-Campus SSR

- You are not authorized to work off-campus until you are approved by USCIS and receive your EAD card in the mail with an employment start date in the future.
- You must maintain full-time enrollment until you are approved by USCIS and receive your EAD card in the mail with an employment start date in the future.