



Press Release

November 25, 2005

USCIS ANNOUNCES INTERIM RELIEF FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY HURRICANE KATRINA

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced specific interim relief today for the approximately 5,500 foreign academic students adversely impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The Notice, which was published in the *Federal Register*, will allow Katrina-impacted foreign [academic students](#) (F-1 visa holders) to:

- Apply for immediate, short-term employment authorization;
- Work additional hours on-campus, or work off-campus if granted employment authorization; and
- Reduce normal course load requirements if granted employment authorization.

The interim relief will remain in effect until February 1, 2006. Foreign vocational students (M-1 visa holders) and foreign exchange students (J-1 visa holders) are not eligible for this interim relief. DHS will continue to monitor the adverse impact of Hurricane Katrina in the affected areas to determine if modification of the interim relief is warranted and will announce any modifications in the *Federal Register*.

Eligible foreign academic students wishing to work additional hours on-campus must obtain approval from their designated school official. Eligible foreign academic students wishing to work off-campus must file an Application for Employment Authorization (Form I-765) directly with the Texas Service Center at:

*U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Texas Service Center,
P.O. Box 853062, Mesquite, TX 75815-3062.*

Applicants should mark the front of the envelope on the bottom right-hand side with the phrase, "HURRICANE KATRINA SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF." Applicants who are unable to pay the Form I-756 filing fee may request a [fee waiver](#). Read our [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Katrina-impacted foreign academic students not covered by the Notice and their dependents (F-2 visa holders) may request deferred action and apply for employment authorization based on economic necessity. A grant of deferred action in this context means that, during the period that the grant of deferred action remains in effect, DHS will not seek the removal of the foreign academic student or his or her qualified dependents based upon the fact that the failure to maintain status is directly due to Hurricane Katrina. Deferred action requests are decided on a case-by-case basis. USCIS cannot provide any assurance that all such requests will be granted. A grant of deferred action does not provide an individual any legal immigration status in the United States. Therefore, in order to resume their nonimmigrant status, foreign academic students who are granted deferred action must apply for reinstatement following the period of deferred action, which shall expire no later than February 1, 2006.

Eligible foreign academic students and their qualified dependents wishing to request deferred action and apply for employment authorization based on economic necessity must submit a letter, substantiating their need for deferred action, and file an Application for Employment Authorization ([Form I-765](#)) directly with the Texas Service Center at the address above. Applicants should mark the front of the envelope on the

bottom right-hand side with the phrase, "HURRICANE KATRINA SPECIAL STUDENT RELIEF." Applicants who are unable to pay the Form I-756 filing fee may request a fee waiver.

For additional information, please refer to the [Federal Register Notice](#) or visit the USCIS website at <http://uscis.gov/>.

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On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.