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Washington, DC

ICE announces employment authorization eligibility for certain Syrian students

WASHINGTON — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has announced special relief for certain F-1 Syrian students who have suffered severe economic hardship as a direct result of the civil unrest in Syria since March 2011. This relief applies only to students who were lawfully present in the United States in F-1 status on April 3, 2012, and enrolled in an institution that is certified by ICE's Student and Exchange Visitor Program.

ICE has published a [notice](#) in the Federal Register suspending certain regulatory requirements in order to allow eligible Syrian F-1 students to obtain employment authorization, work an increased number of hours during the school term, and, if necessary, reduce their course load while continuing to maintain their F-1 student status.

"We want to ensure that students from Syria, who were here when civil unrest began, are able to continue their studies without the worry of financial burdens," said Louis Farrell, director for the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. "The changes announced in this notice will allow eligible students from Syria to obtain employment authorization so that they can meet their basic living expenses while continuing to pursue their education in the United States."

There has been ongoing civil unrest in Syria since March 2011. Approximately 514 Syrian F-1 students are currently enrolled in schools in the United States. The civil unrest in Syria has increased the financial burden on many of these students, who previously relied on assistance from the Syrian government or family members in Syria to meet basic living expenses. In addition, the situation in Syria has made it unfeasible for these students to safely return to Syria in the foreseeable future.

ICE manages the Student and Exchange Visitor Program and the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, which automates the process for collecting, maintaining, and managing information about international foreign students, exchange visitors and their dependents during their stay in the United States.

To learn more about the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, visit www.ice.gov.

<http://www.ice.gov/news/releases/1204/120403washingtondc.htm>