

**From:** "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services" <uscis@public.govdelivery.com>

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**Subject:** USCIS Update Regarding Applicants Filing Form I-765 for OPT



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

Public Engagement  
Division



## **USCIS Update Regarding Applicants Filing Form I-765 for OPT**

USCIS continues to experience delays at certain lockboxes in issuing receipt notices for Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, based on eligibility categories described in 8 C.F.R. 274a.12(c)(3), relating to optional practical training (OPT) for F-1 students. While we have made progress in addressing the delays, we would like to provide additional clarifications and reminders:

- These delays will not affect the received date. All submissions are date stamped upon arrival at the Lockbox, so regardless of when the Lockbox processes your application, your received date will reflect the date it actually arrived at the Lockbox.

- We will not reject applications solely because they were filed at the lockbox address in use prior to the change to the [filing address instructions](#) announced on Jan. 8, 2021. We encourage applicants filing [Form I-765](#) to always check the form instructions on our website for the most up-to-date filing instructions.
- If you have timely filed Form I-765 based on STEM OPT, and your post-completion OPT period expires while the application is pending, we will automatically extend the employment authorization for 180 days. The Form I-20 endorsed by the designated school official recommending a STEM extension together with the expired Form I-766 employment authorization document (EAD) issued for post-completion OPT establishes identity and work authorization for purposes of documenting employment authorization.

### **What USCIS Is Doing**

We are aware of the impact the delays have had on nonimmigrant students. The [USCIS lockbox workforce](#) continues to work extra hours and redistribute its workload, while maintaining COVID-19 protection measures, in order to minimize delays. Once we open and process your application, we print and mail the receipt notice. We are working to prevent receipting delays from resulting in a payment that is past its validity date.

The USCIS Service Centers are aware of the impact of these delays and will work as quickly as possible to process Form I-765 applications for OPT.

### **What You Can Do**

If you have already filed your application and are waiting for your receipt notice, we appreciate your patience. Currently, we recommend that you wait eight weeks before contacting us to inquire about your case status. We are working as quickly as possible to complete the intake of all filings. As a reminder, you can [create a free USCIS online account](#), [check the status of your case](#), and our [current processing times](#) from your mobile device, anywhere, anytime using our case status online tool.

USCIS will continue to monitor this situation and will announce any additional changes on our website, [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

For more information on USCIS and our programs, please visit [uscis.gov](http://uscis.gov) or follow us on Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)), Facebook ([/uscis](#)) and Instagram ([@USCIS](#)).

Kind regards,  
Public Engagement Division  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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