

## **EDF CLIMATE CORPS WORK AUTHORIZATION POLICY**

In compliance with federal law, all Climate Corps fellows extended an offer by one of our host organizations must be able to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and complete the required employment eligibility verifications document forms by the first day of employment. Host organizations may rescind an offer of employment if a fellow fails to obtain valid work authorization prior to the first day of employment. If a host organization chooses to rescind an offer of employment because a fellow failed to timely obtain work authorization, EDF makes no promises or representations that it will be able to identify alternative employment arrangements with another host organization.

EDF cannot directly assist you with obtaining work authorization. We can only assist you with any documentation necessary from EDF for these processes. You can find more information on these processes at the [USCIS website here](#).

Foreign national Climate Corps fellows who must apply for work authorization typically do so through one of the three immigration programs listed below. Because these programs involve different eligibility standards, application requirements, and processing times, Climate Corps has compiled suggested actions and timelines for each program below. It is the applicant's responsibility to seek authorization from the correct immigration program, and to do so early enough to receive the required work authorization before their start date.

Typically, an international student's educational program or academic institution hosts an International Students and Scholars Office, which assists a student with their application to the below programs. Students should contact their Designated School Official (DSO) in these offices after applying to Climate Corps, alerting them that they have applied to a paid employment program outside their educational program.

We highly encourage every applicant to apply for a Social Security number after they receive their work authorization as many host organizations in the US will require this. If you do not have a Social Security number, please inquire with your educational institution's International Students and Scholars Office on how you can acquire one. This process can take **two (2) months**.

The three most common immigration programs utilized by International Students are the Curricular Practical Training (**CPT**), Optional Practical Training (**OPT**), and **J-1 Visa** programs.

### **Curricular Practical Training (CPT)**

This option is for students who will continue their educational program once their employment with a non-academic institution is completed.

Students should contact their DSO after submitting an application to Climate Corps, alerting them that they have applied to a program outside their academic institution. Applicants determine from their DSO what is required to obtain valid CPT work authorization once they receive a confirmation letter from Climate Corps.

After a match is confirmed, EDF will supply fellows with a confirmation letter. Fellows should immediately pursue a CPT once this letter is received. Fellows are recommended to confirm in writing to

EDF once they have obtained work authorization. **It is recommended you secure your CPT work authorization before the start of June.** Any delay to this process should be immediately flagged with your Climate Corps contact.

#### **Optional Practical Training (OPT)**

This option is for Fellows who will be or have recently graduated from their educational program and might join Climate Corps or another employer within 90 days of completion of their employment program.

It is recommended to plan to apply for OPT as soon as is feasibly possible. Applicants for OPT may file their I-765 application up to 90 days before the end of their educational program. In order to be able to apply for OPT at this early date, students should speak with their DSO about obtaining the appropriate forms in early January. Moving to the interview stage does not guarantee that an offer will be made, **but as the OPT process can take up to four (4) months candidates are strongly encouraged to begin this process no later than the end of February. It is recommended you secure your CPT work authorization before the start of June.** Any delay to this process should be immediately flagged with your Climate Corps contact.

#### **J-1 Visas**

Students are encouraged to reach out to their J-1 program to learn about the process to acquire work authorization after they submit their application.

**As the J-1 work authorization process can take over two (2) months candidates should begin this process in March.**