

STEM OPT Extension Online Filing Guide



International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)
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* This guide is meant to help you with best practices in completing the online form I-765 for STEM OPT application but should not be considered legal advice.

IMPORTANT

DO NOT submit your USCIS online application until your immigration advisor (DSO) has reviewed and approved your Draft Summary (Form I-765), and you have received a STEM OPT I-20 showing your STEM extension recommendation on page 2 of your new STEM OPT I-20.

TYPE		AUTHORIZATION DATES	
STEM OPT		07 JULY 2026 - 06 JULY 2028	
EMPLOYER NAME	START DATE	END DATE	CITY & STATE
MasonHub Inc.	07 JULY 2026	06 JULY 2028	ASHLEY, PA

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ▶ Submitting an online application if you already filed a paper one
- ▶ Not including a **signed**, new STEM OPT I-20
- ▶ Uploading the wrong file types or naming files incorrectly
- ▶ Password protecting or encrypting your files
- ▶ Submitting your application with something missing
- ▶ Don't get denied; follow this guide.

Prepare

Have items saved and ready to upload. Each document should be smaller than 6 MB.

1) Scan your photo (2 inches x 2 inches)

- See the [Department of State website](#) for detailed information.
- To obtain a digital file of your passport photo, contact your local Walgreens Photo Center to inquire if they will take passport photos and give you the digital file in one of the formats below on a flash drive.
 - ❖ Color, Max 6 MB
 - ❖ Test it with [DOS Photo Tool](#)
 - ❖ Save as PNG or JPG
 - ❖ File name for photo: Photo_LASTNAME

2) Scan I-94

- Save as PDF
- File Name: I94_LASTNAME

3) Scan Passport Bio Page

- Save as PDF (in color)
- File name: Passport_LASTNAME

4) If you've applied for OPT before...

- Scan and save a color PDF of your previous EAD card
- File name: EAD_LASTNAME

5) Have a credit/debit card ready

- You'll need to pay the \$470 fee online

Creating Your USCIS Account

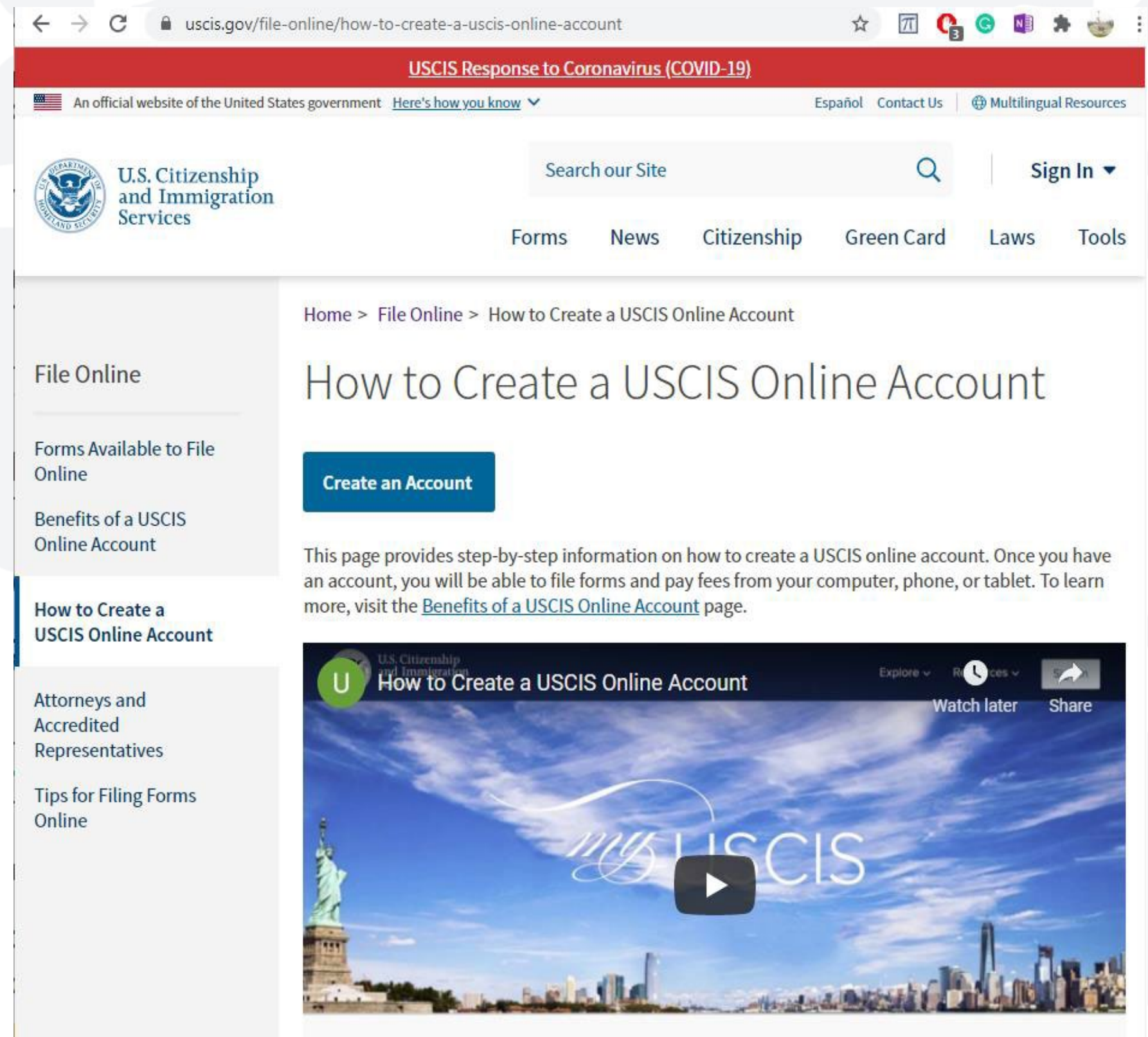
If you filed a paper application for Post-Completion OPT, create a USCIS account:

1) Visit: <https://myaccount.uscis.gov/sign-in>

2) Select “Create an Account”

3) Watch the video: [How to Create a USCIS Online Account | USCIS](#) for detailed instructions on how to set up your personal account.

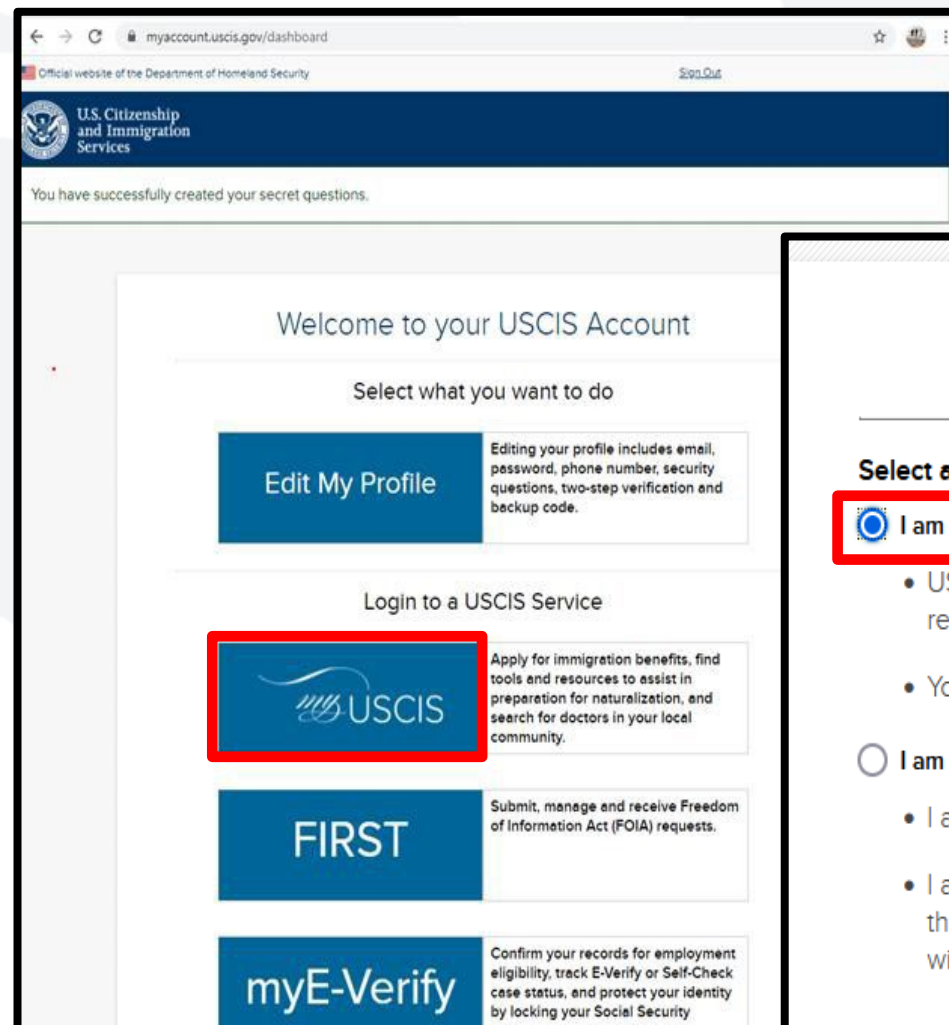
If you applied online for Post-Completion OPT, log into your existing USCIS account.



The screenshot displays the USCIS website's 'How to Create a USCIS Online Account' page. The browser address bar shows 'uscis.gov/file-online/how-to-create-a-uscis-online-account'. A red banner at the top reads 'USCIS Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)'. Below this, the site identifies itself as 'An official website of the United States government' with a 'Here's how you know' link. The header includes the USCIS logo, a search bar, and a 'Sign In' dropdown. A navigation menu lists 'Forms', 'News', 'Citizenship', 'Green Card', 'Laws', and 'Tools'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > File Online > How to Create a USCIS Online Account'. A large blue button labeled 'Create an Account' is prominent. Below it, a text block explains that the page provides step-by-step information on creating a USCIS online account, noting that users can file forms and pay fees from their computer, phone, or tablet. A video player is embedded at the bottom, titled 'How to Create a USCIS Online Account', with a play button and a 'Watch later' option. The video thumbnail shows the Statue of Liberty and the New York City skyline with the text 'myUSCIS' overlaid.

Finish Your Account Setup

- Select: **My USCIS**
- Then select: **Account Type**
- Last, select: **File a Form Online**



Account Type

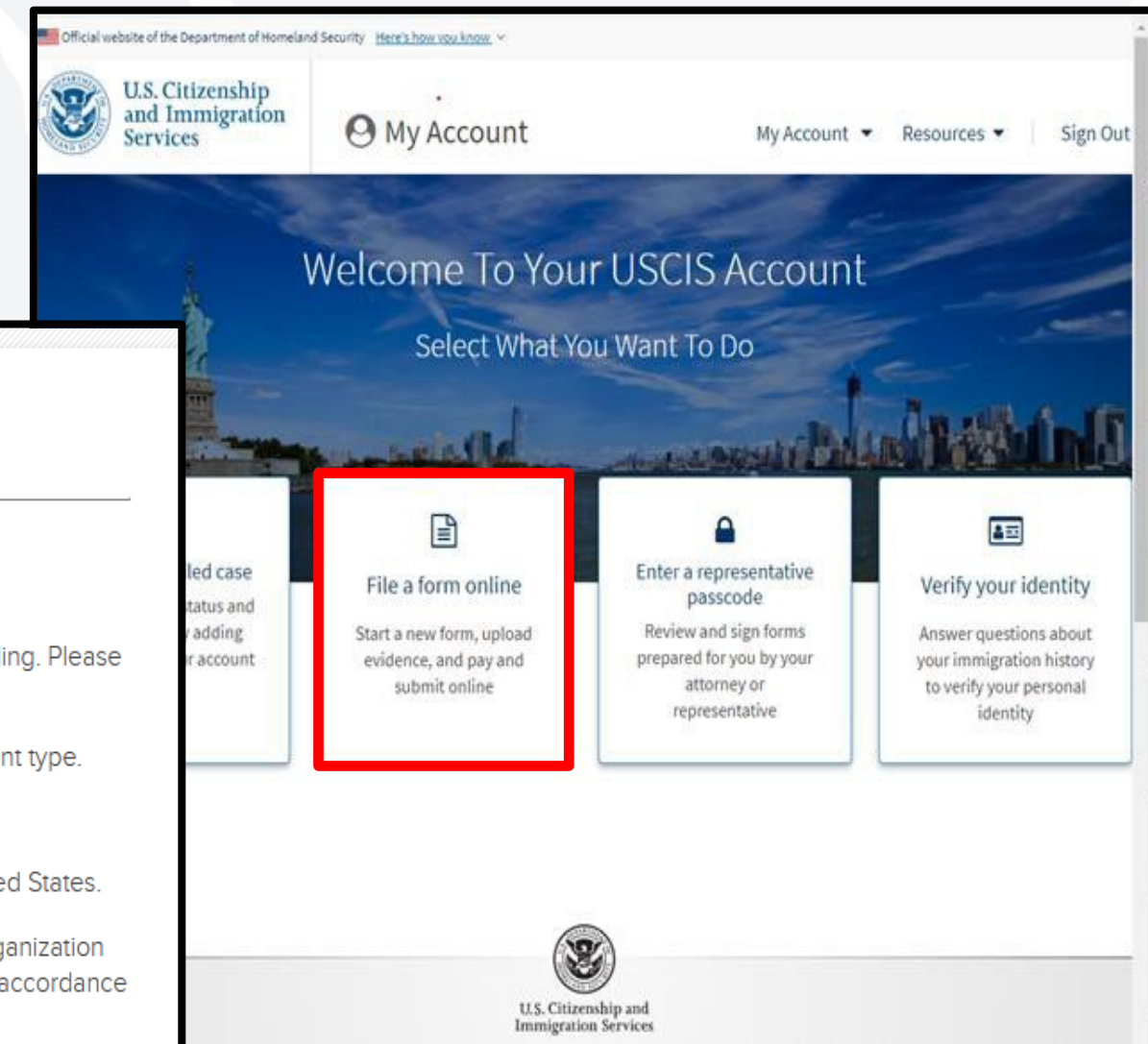
Select an account type:

☒ I am an applicant, petitioner, or requestor.

- USCIS only offers certain benefit types for online filing. Please refer to uscis.gov for further guidance.
- You cannot file an H-1B Registration with this account type.

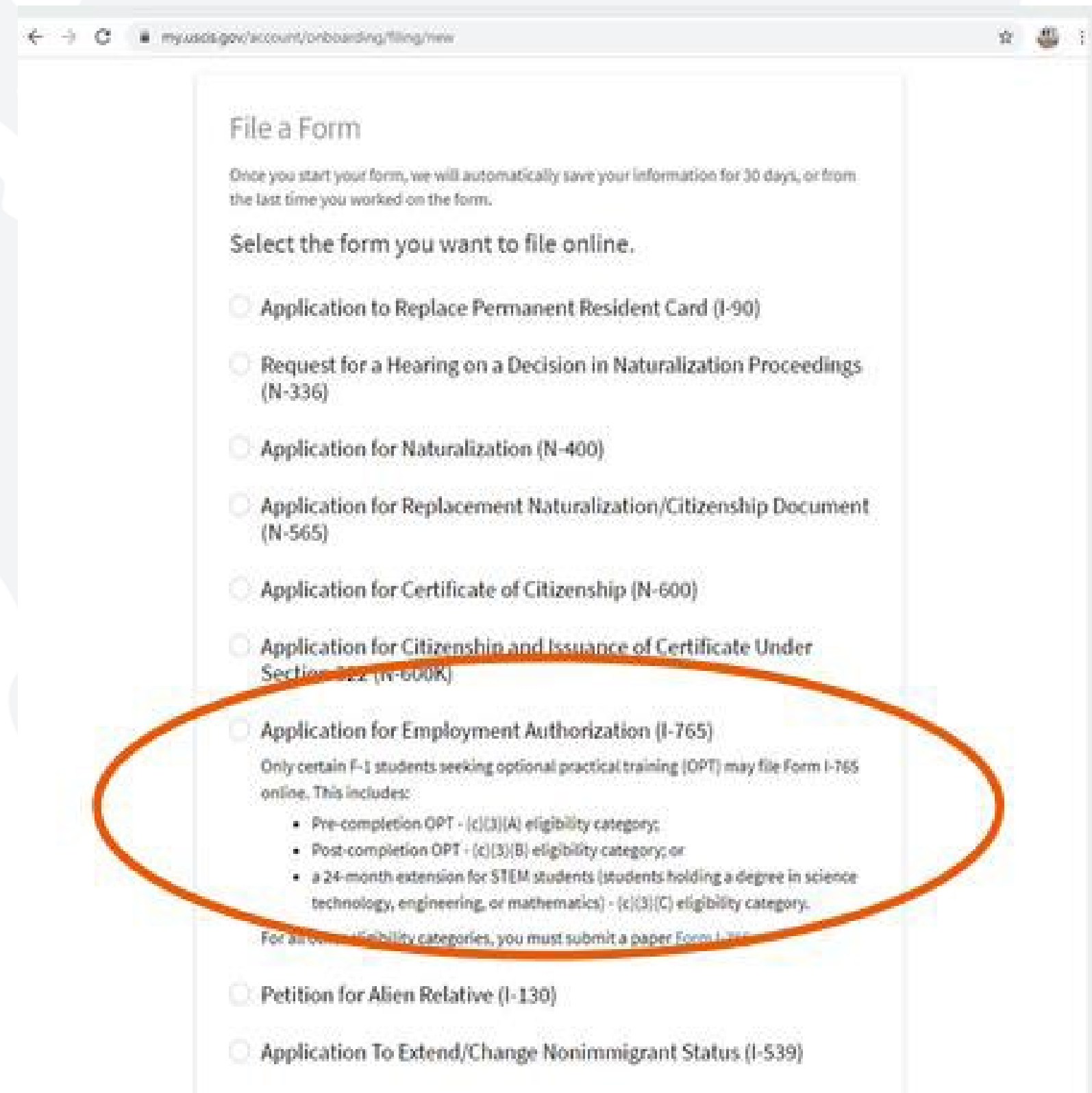
☐ I am a Legal Representative.

- I am an attorney eligible to practice law in the United States.
- I am an accredited representative of a qualified organization that is recognized by the Department of Justice in accordance with 8 CFR part 1292.



File a Form

- **Select: I-765, Application for Employment Authorization**
- **Click: Start Form**



The screenshot shows the USCIS 'File a Form' page. The browser address bar displays 'my.uscis.gov/account/onboarding/filing/new'. The page title is 'File a Form'. Below the title, a message states: 'Once you start your form, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.' The instruction 'Select the form you want to file online.' is followed by a list of form options, each with a radio button. The option 'Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)' is circled in orange. Below this option, a note specifies: 'Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:' followed by a bulleted list: '• Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category; • Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or • a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.' Below this note, it says 'For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper Form I-765.' The other visible options are 'Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90)', 'Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (N-336)', 'Application for Naturalization (N-400)', 'Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (N-565)', 'Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600)', 'Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 (N-600K)', 'Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)', and 'Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)'.

File a Form

Once you start your form, we will automatically save your information for 30 days, or from the last time you worked on the form.

Select the form you want to file online.

- ☐ Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90)
- ☐ Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (N-336)
- ☐ Application for Naturalization (N-400)
- ☐ Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document (N-565)
- ☐ Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600)
- ☐ Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322 (N-600K)
- ☐ **Application for Employment Authorization (I-765)**
Only certain F-1 students seeking optional practical training (OPT) may file Form I-765 online. This includes:
 - Pre-completion OPT - (c)(3)(A) eligibility category;
 - Post-completion OPT - (c)(3)(B) eligibility category; or
 - a 24-month extension for STEM students (students holding a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) - (c)(3)(C) eligibility category.For all other eligibility categories, you must submit a paper Form I-765.
- ☐ Petition for Alien Relative (I-130)
- ☐ Application To Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status (I-539)

Paperwork Reduction Act

- Select: **Start**

Note: *Your application will auto save a draft as you go through, but the draft will delete if you don't make changes within 30 days.*

Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor an information collection, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering the required documentation and information, completing the application, preparing statements, attaching necessary documentation, and submitting the application. The collection of biometrics is estimated to require 1 hour and 10 minutes. The public reporting burden for the collection of information for Form I-765WS is estimated at 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering the required documentation and information, completing the application, preparing statements, attaching necessary documentation, and submitting the application. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Office of Policy and Strategy, Regulatory Coordination Division
5900 Capital Gateway Drive, Mail Stop #2140
Camp Springs, MD 20588-0009

Do not mail your completed I-765 application to this address.

OMB No. 1615-0040
Expires: 07/31/2022



Security Reminder

If you do not work on your application for more than 30 days, we will delete your data in order to prevent storing personal information indefinitely.

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Start

Begin Online Application

The online application has multiple sections to complete.

The sections are as follows:

- 1) Getting Started
- 2) About You Section
- 3) Evidence Section
- 4) Additional Information Section
- 5) Review and Submit Section

I-765, Application for
Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Evidence

Additional Information

Review and Submit

Section 1: Getting Started

What is your eligibility category?

- Select: (C) (3) (C) STEM Extension
- List your STEM eligible major and degree level. *For example:* MS in Civil Engineering
- List your employer's name
- List your employer's e-verify number, which is 5-7 digits.
- Note: this is NOT the same as the Employer Identification Number (EIN), which is required on the Form I-983.



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

My Account ▼ Resc

I-765, Application for
Employment Authorization

Getting Started ^

Basis of eligibility

Reason for applying

Preparer and interpreter
information

About You ▼

Evidence ▼

Additional Information ▼

Review and Submit ▼

What is your eligibility category?

 You can file your request online only for certain eligibility categories

If your eligibility category does not appear on the drop-down list, you must file a paper [Form I-765](#). If you submit online and are not eligible for one of the listed categories, your application may be denied.

(c)(3)(C) STEM Extension ▼

Section 1: Getting Started (cont'd.)

What is your reason for applying?

- Select: **Renewal of permission to accept employment**

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- Select **'Yes'**

Is someone assisting you with completing this application?

- Select: **'No'** (unless an attorney or interpreter is helping you, then select 'Yes')

What is your reason for applying?

- ☐ Initial permission to accept employment
- ☐ Replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged employment authorization document or correction of my employment authorization document NOT DUE to US Citizenship and Immigration Services error
- ☒ Renewal of permission to accept employment

Have you previously filed Form I-765?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

[Back](#)

[Next](#)

Section 2: About You

What is your current legal name?

- Use name exactly as it is shown on your passport
- Type Full Given Name (include middle name as it shows as part of your Given Name on your passport)
- Type full family name (last name) in ALL CAPS

Click: Next

I-765, Application for
Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence

Additional Information

Review and Submit

What is your current legal name?

Your current legal name is the name on your birth certificate, unless it changed after birth by a legal action such as marriage or court order. Do not provide any nicknames here.

Given name (first name)

First Name

Middle name

Family name (last name)

LAST NAME

Always include your middle name with your given name unless your passport specifically has a line titled "Middle name"

Have you used any other names since birth?

Other names used may include nicknames, aliases and maiden names.

☐ Yes

☒ No

Select "No" unless you've had a legal document under another name. i.e. passport, social security card, etc.

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Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

How may we contact you?

- If you don't have a U.S. phone number, leave it blank.
- International phone numbers are not accepted.
- Use your personal (not SIUE) email address that you check often

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾ Resources ▾

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▴

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

How may we contact you?

Daytime telephone number

(123) 456-7890

Mobile telephone number (if any)

☒ This is the same as my daytime telephone number.

(123) 456-7890

Email address

student@yahoo.com

Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

Is your current mailing address the same as your physical address?

- Select **Yes** (unless you use the ISSS address)
- We recommend using your own address, but if you will be moving or have had issues receiving mail, you may use the ISSS address as shown.

What is your current U.S. mailing address?

We will use your current mailing address to contact you throughout the application process. We may not be able to contact you if you do not provide a complete and valid address. Please provide a U.S. address only.

In care of name (if any)

SIUE Office of Intl Affairs

Address line 1

Campus Box 1616

Street number and name

Address line 2

Apartment, suite, unit, or floor

City or town

Edwardsville

State

Illinois

ZIP code

62026

Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

- Fill out your biographical information throughout this section on the application.
- Click Next to continue

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started 

About You 

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence 

Additional Information 

Review and Submit 

What is your gender?

☒ Male

☐ Female

What is your marital status?

☒ Single

☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Widowed

[Back](#) [Next](#)

What is your city, town, or village of birth?

What is your state or province of birth?

What is your country of birth?

What is your date of birth?

[Back](#) [Next](#)

Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

- Use your I-94 to complete your immigration information in this section
- Click the link to view and print your I-94: <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov>
- If you hold more than one passport, click 'add country'

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started

About You

Your name

Your contact information

Describe yourself

When and where you were born

Your immigration information

Other information

Evidence

Additional Information

Review and Submit

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

What are your countries of citizenship or nationality?

List all countries where you are currently a citizen or national.

+ Add country

What is your Form I-94 Arrival-Departure Record Number (if any)?

Provide an 11-character I-94 Number.

When did you last arrive in the United States?

List your arrival date, place of arrival, and status at arrival.

Date of arrival (on or about)

MM/DD/YYYY

Place of arrival

Status at last arrival

*Your status at last arrival should be “**F-1 student**” unless you’ve completed a Form I-539 Change of Status with USCIS since your last entry.*

*Find this information in the “**Travel History**” section of the i-94 website:*

<https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/#/history-search>

Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

- Provide accurate information on the following pages.
- Click 'Next' to continue

What is the passport number of your most recently issued passport?

87654321

If you renewed your passport since you last entered the US, your most recently issued passport may have a different number from your most recent I-94. That is okay. Provide the number of your most recently issued passport.

What is your travel document number (if any)?

F-1 students do not have travel documents so leave this blank

What is the expiration date of your passport or travel document?

MM/DD/YYYY

Enter the end date of your most recently issued passport in MONTH/ DAY/ YEAR format.

What country issued your passport or travel document?

What is your current immigration status or category?

F1 - Student, Academic Or Language Program.

You must be in F-1 Student status to be eligible for OPT. If you are currently in the US in a status other than F1, you are not eligible for OPT.

What is your Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) Number (if any)?

Use the "Additional Information" section to include all previously used SEVIS numbers.

N- 0012345678

Your SEVIS ID number is located in the top left corner of your I-20.

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Next

Section 2: About You (cont'd.)

What is your A-number?

- This is the USCIS number on the front of your EAD card

What is your A-Number?

☐ I do not have or know my A-Number.

A-

What is your USCIS Online Account Number?

Providing your unique USCIS Online Account Number (OAN) helps us manage your account. You may already have an OAN if you previously filed certain paper forms and received an Account Access Notice in the mail. You can find the OAN at the top of the notice; it is not the same as an A-Number.

☐ I do not have or know my USCIS Online Account Number.

Has the Social Security Administration (SSA) ever officially issued a Social Security card to you?

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

What is your Social Security number (if known)?

098-78-6543

Do you want the SSA to issue you a Social Security card?

- ☐ Yes
☒ No

Section 3: Evidence

Upload your saved documents

- Pay attention to type, size, and naming requirement listed under “File requirements.”
- Save each Evidence document file with a standard file name.

For example:

- Photo_LASTNAME
- I94_LASTNAME

2 X 2 Photo Of You

Upload a recent color photograph of yourself that measures 2 inches by 2 inches, with your face measuring 1 inch to 1 3/8 inch from your chin to the top of your head. Your eyes should be between 1 1/8 inch and 1 3/8 inch from the bottom of the photo.

Make sure your whole face is visible, you are facing the camera directly, and the background is white or off-white. Your head must be bare, unless contrary to your religious beliefs.

If you need help understanding the photo requirements or want to resize, rotate, or crop your photo, you can use the Department of State's [photo composition tools](#). Please note that we cannot approve your application without your photo.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, or PNG
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

Section 3: Evidence (cont'd.)

Upload your saved documents

- Save each required Evidence document file with a standard file name. For example:
 - Passport_LASTNAME
 - CPTI-20_LASTNAME
- Click on 'Next' to continue

I-20, Certificate Of Eligibility For Nonimmigrant Student Status

Upload a copy of the Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status endorsed by the Designated School Official (DSO). For the (c)(3)(B) eligibility category, your DSO must have entered the recommendation for OPT into your SEVIS record within 30 days of you submitting Form I-765. If you fail to do so, we will deny your OPT request. For the (c)(3)(C) eligibility category, the Form I-20 must have been endorsed by the DSO within 60 days of submitting Form I-765.

File requirements

- Clear and readable
- Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF or TIFF
- No encrypted or password-protected files
- If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.
- Upload no more than five documents at a time
- Accepted file name characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses
- Maximum size: 6MB per file

[Choose](#) or drop files here to upload

Do not upload this document before submitting your draft I-765 to your immigration advisor.

You must upload your STEM OPT I-20 with a STEM extension request provided by your immigration advisor.

Failure to upload a new I-20 will result in a denial of your STEM extension application.

Section 3: Evidence (cont'd.)

Upload your saved documents

- Save and upload each required Evidence document file with a standard file name.
 - Example: Diploma_LASTNAME
- College Degree
 - Upload a copy of your diploma or official transcript showing degree completion. Your degree program must be listed on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#).
- Click on 'Next'

The screenshot shows the 'I-765, Application for Employment Authorization' form. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: 'Getting Started', 'About You', 'Evidence' (which is expanded), 'Additional Information', and 'Review and Submit'. Under the 'Evidence' section, the following items are listed: '2 x 2 photo of you', 'Form I-94', 'Employment Authorization Document', 'Form I-20', 'College degree' (which is highlighted in blue), and 'Institution accreditation'. The main content area is titled 'College Degree' and contains the following text: 'Upload evidence the degree that is the basis for the STEM OPT extension is in one of the degree programs currently listed on the [STEM Designated Degree Program List](#) or a copy of your prior STEM degree.' Below this text, there is a section titled 'File requirements' with a bulleted list: 'Clear and readable', 'Accepted file formats: JPG, JPEG, PDF, TIF, or TIFF', 'No encrypted or password-protected files', 'If your documents are in a foreign language, upload a full English translation and the translator's certification with each original document.', 'Accepted characters: English letters, numbers, spaces, periods, hyphens, underscores, and parentheses', and 'Maximum size: 6MB per file'. Below the list, there is a dashed box containing the text 'Choose or drop files here to upload'. At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'Back' and 'Next'.

Section 4: Additional Information

- Typically, there is no additional information needed in this section.
- Click 'Next' to continue

The screenshot shows the USCIS I-765 application form. The header includes the USCIS logo and the text "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services". On the right, there are links for "My Account", "Resources", and "Sign Out". The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization", "Getting Started", "About You", "Evidence", "Additional Information" (which is highlighted with a blue bar and an upward arrow), and "Review and Submit". The main content area is titled "Additional Information" and contains the following text: "You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form." followed by "Additional Information". Below this, it says: "If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing." and "If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank." There is a button labeled "+ Add a response" and a large text input area. At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Back" and "Next".

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

My Account ▾ Resources ▾ | Sign Out

I-765, Application for Employment Authorization

Getting Started ▾

About You ▾

Evidence ▾

Additional Information ^

Additional information

Review and Submit ▾

You must complete all fields with an asterisk (*) to submit this form.

Additional Information

If you need to provide any additional information for any of your answers to the questions in this form, enter it into the space below. You should include the questions that you are referencing.

If you do not need to provide any additional information, you may leave this section blank.

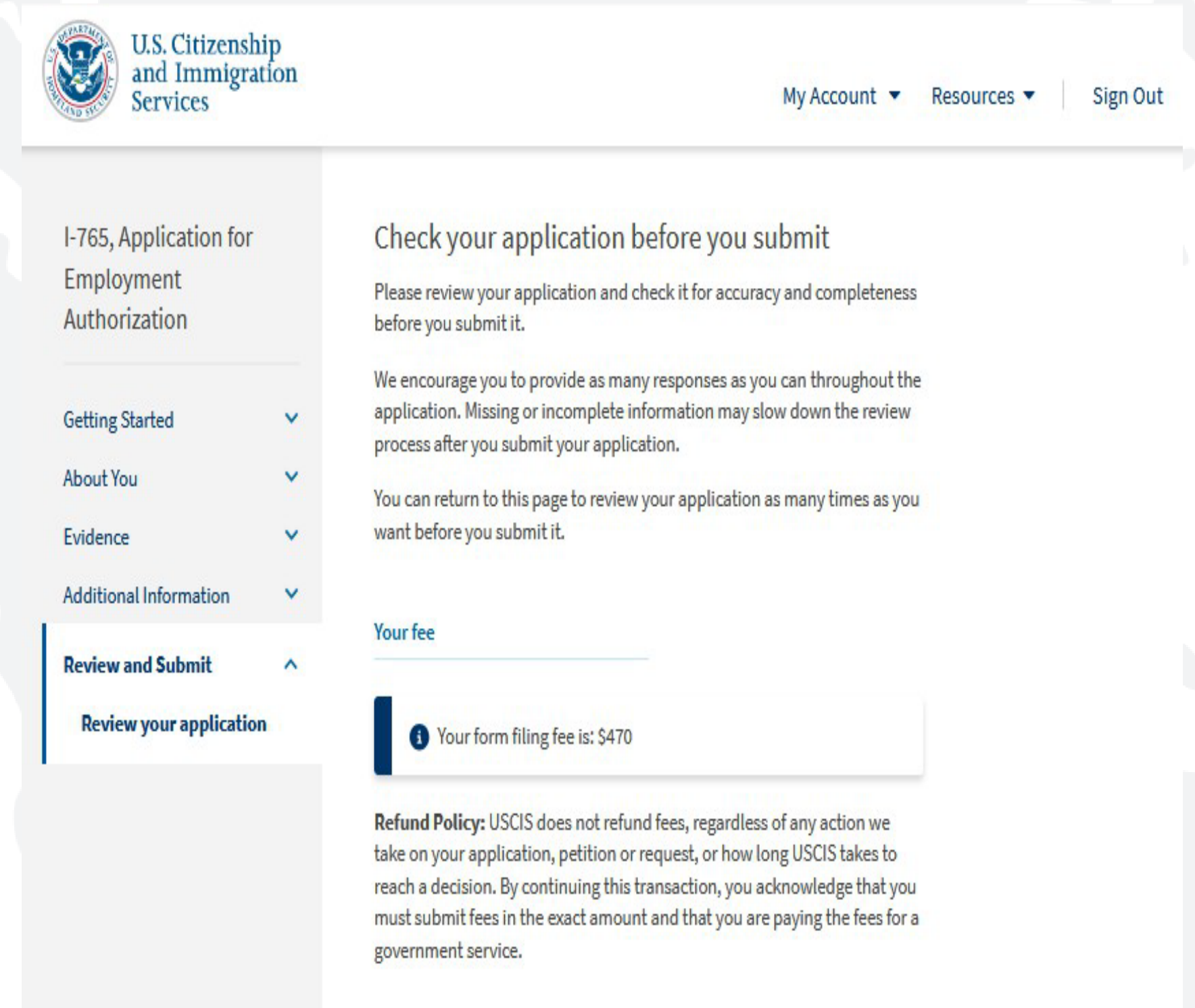
+ Add a response

Back Next

Section 5: Review and Submit

Review your application

- Correct any errors before moving on to the application summary.
- Make sure to pay the correct application fee. You will be able to pay by ACH withdrawal from your checking/savings account or by credit/debit card.
- Click 'Next'



The screenshot shows the USCIS website for the I-765 application. The header includes the USCIS logo and the text "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services". On the right, there are links for "My Account", "Resources", and "Sign Out". The main content area is titled "I-765, Application for Employment Authorization". A left-hand navigation menu lists the following steps: "Getting Started", "About You", "Evidence", "Additional Information", "Review and Submit", and "Review your application". The "Review and Submit" step is currently selected and highlighted with a blue bar. The "Review your application" link is also highlighted. The main content area contains the following text: "Check your application before you submit", "Please review your application and check it for accuracy and completeness before you submit it.", "We encourage you to provide as many responses as you can throughout the application. Missing or incomplete information may slow down the review process after you submit your application.", "You can return to this page to review your application as many times as you want before you submit it.", "Your fee", "Your form filing fee is: \$470", and "Refund Policy: USCIS does not refund fees, regardless of any action we take on your application, petition or request, or how long USCIS takes to reach a decision. By continuing this transaction, you acknowledge that you must submit fees in the exact amount and that you are paying the fees for a government service."

Section 5: Review and Submit (cont'd.)

IMPORTANT: DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION YET

- Your application summary
 - Review your application summary for accuracy and make any necessary corrections.
 - Then click “View Draft Snapshot” download and save the document as a PDF file with the file name: Form I-765_Lastname

- Your immigration advisor will review the document and issue your new STEM OPT I-20 **BEFORE** you may submit your application.

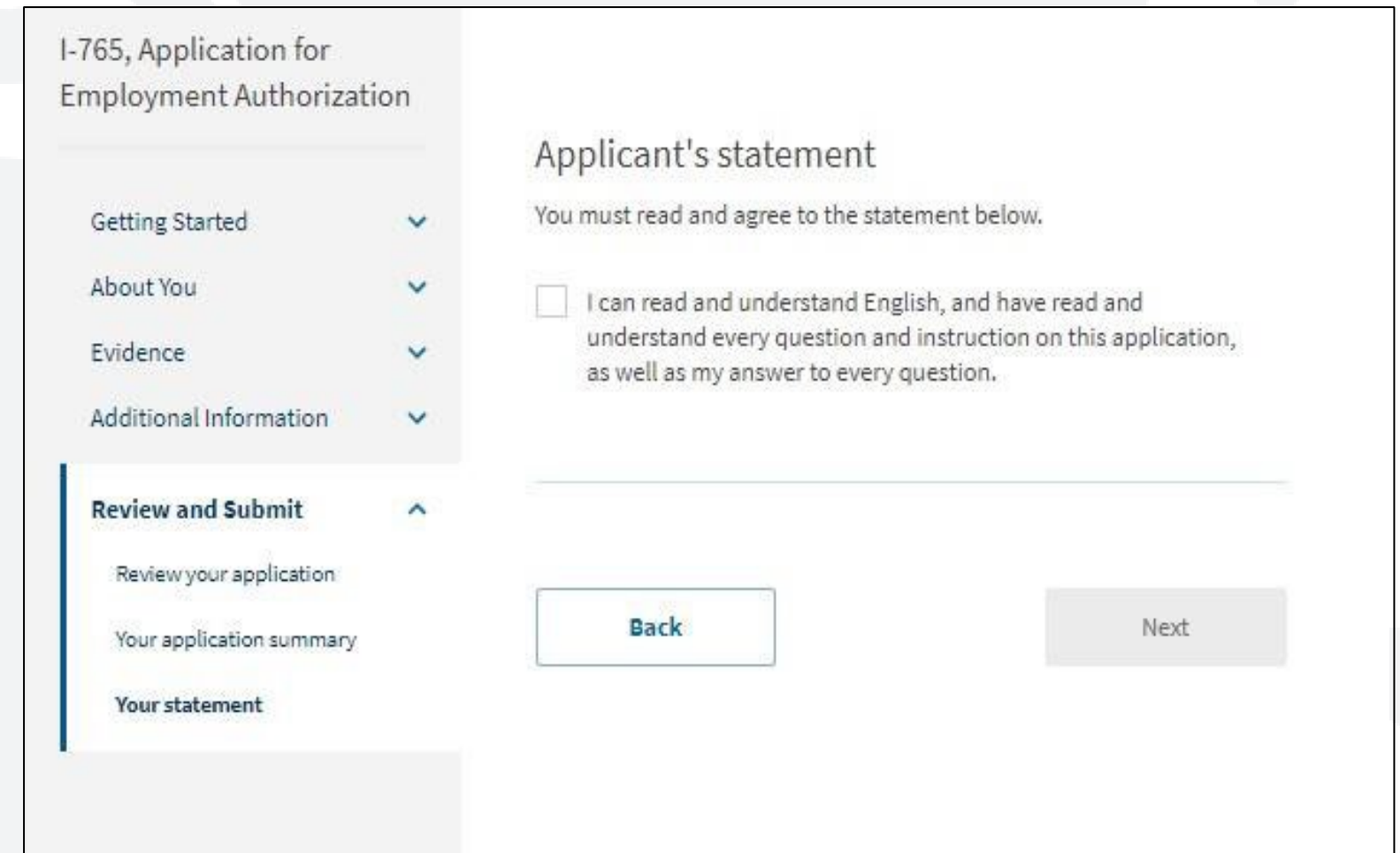
The screenshot shows the 'I-765, Application for Employment Authorization' review page. On the left is a navigation menu with sections: 'Getting Started', 'About You', 'Evidence', 'Additional Information', 'Review and Submit' (expanded), 'Review your application', 'Your application summary', and 'Your statement'. The main content area is titled 'Review the I-765 form information' and includes a 'Print' button. It contains instructions to review the application information and a link to 'View draft snapshot'. Below this, a 'Getting Started' section is visible, showing the 'Basis of eligibility'.

Request your STEM Extension I-20

- Complete [STEM OPT I-20 Request](#) form and upload the following:
 - Diploma or transcript showing degree completion
 - Form I-983 for each employer you will be working for while on your STEM extension
 - Draft PDF of online form I-765

What to Expect Next

- After your immigration advisor reviews and recommends your STEM OPT extension in SEVIS, you will receive a STEM OPT I-20 via email.
- Processing time for a STEM OPT I-20 after you have submitted your Draft Summary to ISSS is 2-3 business days.
- After you have received your STEM OPT I-20, review it for accuracy, print, and sign it. Save it as: STEMOPTI20_Lastname.
- Return to your online application and upload it in the Evidence>From I-20 section.
- Go to: Review and Submit
- Select the statement box, and select 'Next' to submit your STEM OPT application to USCIS.



The screenshot shows the 'I-765, Application for Employment Authorization' interface. On the left is a sidebar with a menu: 'Getting Started', 'About You', 'Evidence', 'Additional Information', 'Review and Submit' (highlighted with a blue bar), 'Review your application', 'Your application summary', and 'Your statement'. The main content area is titled 'Applicant's statement' and includes the instruction 'You must read and agree to the statement below.' Below this is a checkbox with the text 'I can read and understand English, and have read and understand every question and instruction on this application, as well as my answer to every question.' At the bottom right are two buttons: 'Back' and 'Next'.