

**Portage County Department of Job and Family Services
Ohio Works First Good Cause Criteria**

Pursuant to ORC Section 5107.18 An assistance group that has ceased to participate in Ohio Works First due to the 36 month state time limit) for at least 24 months, may reapply to participate in the program under the good cause provision. If found eligible under the county's good cause, then the assistance may not participate in Ohio Works First (OWF) for more than twenty-four additional months. The time limit applies regardless of whether the twenty-four months are consecutive. Any month the assistance group received OWF under the hardship provision reduces the amount of possible months under good cause. No assistance group will receive OWF in excess of the 60 month federal time limit under the good cause provision.

The assistance group must provide the Portage County Department of Job and Family Services verification acceptable to the county department of whether any members of the assistance group had employment during the period the assistance group was not participating in Ohio Works First and the amount and sources of the assistance group's income during that period to demonstrate that they made reasonable efforts toward self-sufficiency. Gross earnings should be at least equal to the OWF payment standard for the 12 months preceding the application.

Good Cause Reasons for Portage County include:

1. **Loss of recent employment** - The assistance group has recently (within the past 3 months) lost employment due to injury, company closing, or layoff through no fault of their own. Verification of employment dates, amount of earnings and reason for termination are required.
2. **Loss of spouse** - The parent/caretaker has recently (within the past 3 months) separated, divorced, or been widowed. The individual was supported by their spouse and has barriers to employment. Verification of legal separation, divorce, or death is required.
3. **Domestic Violence Consideration** - The parent/caretaker has recently (within the past 3 months) been a victim of domestic violence which creates a barrier to gaining or retaining employment. Verification of the abuse, that the individual is currently receiving counseling/treatment from a social service agency and has a plan for reaching self-sufficiency is required.
4. **Incapacity/Illness** - The parent/caretaker has recently (within the past 3 months) developed a physical impairment that renders them unemployable. Medical verification is required.

Once an assistance group is determined eligible under the good cause extension criteria, no subsequent determination of good cause shall be made unless the assistance group becomes otherwise ineligible for OWF.

Note: In order for a two-parent assistance group to qualify for OWF under the Good Cause provision, both parents or caretakers must meet at least one of the "good cause" criteria set forth in this plan.