

Stark County
Department of Job and Family Services Good Cause Policy
For Restoration of OWF Cash Assistance
For up to an Additional 24 Months

Purpose:

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 5107.18(B) an assistance group that has ceased to participate in OWF due to the 36-month state time limit established in Revised Code Section 5107.18(A) for at least 24 months maybe eligible for OWF cash assistance if the assistance group is determined to have "**good cause**" to reapply to participate in the program if good cause exists as determined by the county department of job and family services. Good cause may include losing employment, divorce, domestic violence considerations, and unique personal circumstances. **Legal Brief 02-03** Legal Brief 02-03 issued by the ODJFS Office of Legal Services states in part that...

"The statute, in effect, creates a 24-month waiting period between the receipt of the 36th OWF cash assistance payment and determination of an additional period of eligibility for up to 24 additional months. The 24-month waiting period **does not mean** that the assistance group must have a 24-month break in receipt of OWF cash assistance between the loss of OWF eligibility due to the 36-month time limit and the extension of OWF due to good cause."

A state hardship exemption during the 24-month waiting period **does not interrupt** the 24-month waiting period **or delay** the subsequent approval of good cause because the time-limit hardship is authorized.

Assistance groups in receipt of 60 months of OWF and/or TANF cash assistance may be granted a Hardship Extension pursuant to the County Hardship Exemption policy, but **cannot** be granted an additional 24-month Good Cause extension under 5107.18(B).

Good Cause 24-month Extensions:

Good cause extensions are not countable toward the 20% limit for hardship extensions set forth in OAC Rule 5101:1 -23-011 and in federal law. Extensions due to good cause count toward the 60-month federal time limit. The Good Cause 24-month extension **need not be consecutive**. Once good cause is granted...

"no additional determination of good cause is required for the assistance group to remain eligible for OWF. If, however, the assistance group loses OWF eligibility after being determined eligible under the Good Cause provisions, a new application for OWF assistance would be subject to the good cause determination."

Therefore, when an assistance group loses OWF eligibility during a good cause extension due to the imposition of a sanction due to a failure to comply with the provisions of the self-sufficiency contract, **no new determination of good cause is required**.

In addition... " when an assistance group loses OWF eligibility during a good cause extension for any reason other than a self-sufficiency contract failure **AND** there is not at least a one-day interruption in receipt of benefits, **no new determination of good cause is necessary**, as there was no interruption in benefits. If there is at least a one day interruption in benefits, then a new determination of good cause will be required.

Written Notification of Decision:

The agency shall provide the assistance group with written notice of approval or denial of its request for Good Cause restoration of OWF benefits. If good cause is denied, the County shall provide the AG with the reason(s) for denial of the good cause request.

Good Cause Procedure:

Assistance Groups who wish to be considered for a Good Cause Extension shall make their request by using the **OWF Good Cause for Restorations of Benefits** form. The assistance group applying for Good Cause Restoration must provide the County with any requested documentation that would be needed to support the circumstances precipitating their need for such a restoration. The assistance group shall cooperate with the County during the Good Cause Review process.

Good Cause Restoration will not be granted to any assistance group that is under any type of sanction at the time of application for Good Cause. Assistance Groups which are subsequently sanctioned after the Good Cause Restoration is granted will not be required to reapply for Good Cause, but will be required to comply with self-sufficiency contract requirements. All applicable sanction policies will be applied if AG's fail to comply with self-sufficiency requirements.

The County shall make a ruling, based upon the Good Cause Request and the supporting documentation, within thirty days of the date that a signed and completed "Good Cause" request form is received by the County. Required documentation shall be provided within twenty days of the receipt of the request form. The County shall assist in obtaining the required documentation, at the request of the AG. If the required documentation is not provided within twenty days, and there has been no request for County assistance, the County may then deny the request for a Good Cause Restoration.

The County shall provide the Assistance Group seeking Good Cause Restoration with reasons for the denial. In addition, the agency shall provide a notice outlining its hearing rights.

Good Cause Restorations are assumed to be granted for a period of twenty-four (24) months. This twenty-four (24) month period need not be consecutive as Federal Guidelines allow up to 60 months of TANF in a lifetime.

A new Self-Sufficiency Contract and individual plan (s) will be required as a condition of OWF eligibility, therefore all adults will be referred to the JOBS program for completion of the contract and plan prior to authorization of cash assistance.

Good Cause Reasons:

Reason # 0176- Loss of Employment

You are a single custodial parent or an intact family with one disabled parent as verified by a licensed physician. You must demonstrate that you have made a good faith effort to become self-sufficient by verifying:

- Gross earnings at least equal to the OWF payment standard for twelve (12) of the previous twenty-four (24) months and:
 - (A) had good cause for loss of employment as established by the Stark County Department of Job and Family Services.
 - OR
 - (B) you have been under employed with earnings below the payment standard for four(4) of the last six(6) months.

Verification must be provided of any income from employment and other sources during the period in which the assistance group was not receiving OWF cash assistance.

Reason # 1801- Education/ Training Barriers:

You are a single custodial parent or an intact family with one (1) disabled parent as verified by a licensed physician who is enrolled and participating in an education or training program directly related to employment and has been enrolled in good standing for a minimum of twelve (12) of the last twenty-four (24) months.

Reason # 0376- Loss of income-You have had a loss of income in the past three (3) months due to divorce or separation from the primary wage earner

Reason # 1802- Loss of unearned income-

You have had a loss of unearned income not contributable to any failure to cooperate. Example: Unemployment benefits and extensions have expired

Reason #0676- Caretaker relative

You are a caretaker relative who is age sixty (60) or over.

Reason #

You have been a victim of domestic violence as verified by supporting documentation, where available.

Reason # 9076- Intercounty transfer of cases moving from Stark County (Transfers-Out).

Reason # 1876- Good Cause previously granted in another county.

Used when the reason for Good Cause granted in another county differs from any of Stark County's reasons listed above.

The County retains sole authority to revise, or omit any of the above reasons (excluding reasons # 9076 and 1876), or to provide additional good cause reasons as deemed appropriate.