

Defiance County Department of Job and Family Services

Ohio Works First: Hardship Plan

Amendment -Revised - October 1, 2004

ORC section 5107.18 limits participation in Ohio Works First (OWF) to a cumulative total of thirty-six (36) months. That is, an assistance group is ineligible for OWF if the assistance group includes an adult who has participated in OWF for 36 months. An assistance group that has ceased to participate in Ohio Works First for at least twenty-four (24) months, whether consecutive or not, may reapply to participate in OWF. A CDJFS may exempt not more than 20% of the average monthly number of OWF participants from the time limit due to hardship.

HARDSHIP:

The following describes Defiance county's OWF Hardship determination process and eligibility factors which must be met before granting an exemption from the 36 month time limit for the receipt of OWF to an assistance group.

Requisite Eligibility Factors:

To be considered for a Hardship Exemption all of the following criteria must be met, in addition to qualifying for one of the hardship exemptions:

1. The OWF assistance group must have received at least 36 months of OWF cash assistance.
2. The CDJFS Employment Counselor or other CDJFS designee will conduct at least one face-to-face interview between the 24th and 36th month of receipt of OWF cash assistance, to explore barriers to self-sufficiency and solutions to those barriers. The required OWF assistance group member must have participated in the face-to-face interview(s) and satisfactorily completed his/her assignments as described in the Self Sufficiency Plan in order to be considered for a hardship exemption. Not participating in the face-to-face interview(s) or in the Self Sufficiency Plan assignments without good cause may also result in a sanction of OWF benefits as well as a loss of potential eligibility for a hardship exemption.
3. An assistance group, between the 24th and 36th month of receipt of OWF cash assistance, must not have been sanctioned, and also must not have been penalized for quitting a job without "just cause".

EXEMPTIONS FROM THE 36 MONTH CASH OWF ASSISTANCE LIMIT:

Priority A:

* An assistance group whose parent or caretaker has a serious physical/mental illness or condition rendering them incapacitated for employment. The incapacity must be verified by a physician on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302), SSI must be pending and the individual must be participating as assigned in the Self Sufficiency Plan. Defiance CDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. This exemption may be granted for up to 6 months, or until the SSI eligibility is determined, whichever is shorter. CRISE screen TLRU/code 0401 corresponds with this exemption.

* An assistance group whose parent or caretaker must provide medically necessary full-time care for an immediate family member (child, spouse, sibling, or parent) who has resided in their home for at least the 30th to the 36th month of the assistance groups' receipt of cash OWF assistance. The medical necessity of remaining in the home to care for the disabled individual must be verified by a physician's statement on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302) and must state that no other appropriate person can provide the needed care. Defiance CDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provide of its choice. This exemption may be granted for up to 6 months. CRISE screen TLRU/code 0402 corresponds with this exemption.

Priority B

* An assistance group whose adult caretaker is medically verified to be six or more months pregnant or caring for a child under three months of age. The assistance group must be participating as assigned in the Self Sufficiency Plan. CRISE screen TLRU/code 1001 corresponds with this exemption.

*An assistance group whose parent or caretaker's capacity to retain employment is being disrupted by domestic violence and is actively seeking help, as evidenced by residency in a spousal abuse shelter coupled with steps to resolve the situation, such as retention of an attorney. This extension is for a period not to exceed six months and the adult caretaker must be participating as assigned in the Self Sufficiency Plan. CRISE screen TLRU/code 0501 corresponds with this exemption.

*An assistance group whose teen parent is enrolled and in good standing in High School and for up to twelve months after receipt of the HS Diploma/GED. Those who are not attending high school full-time must be participating as assigned in the Self Sufficiency Plan. CRISE screen TLRU/code 1301 corresponds to this exemption.

Priority C

*An assistance group whose only or youngest parent/caretaker is 55 or more years of age. The parent or caretaker must be participating as assigned in the Self Sufficiency Plan. This exemption may be granted for up to 6 months. CRISE screen TLRU/code 0101 corresponds to this exemption.

*An assistance group whose parent or caretaker is enrolled and in good standing in an education or training program that, by itself or in combination with other assignments, meets their work participation requirement as described in the Self Sufficiency Plan. The participant must have completed at least 50% of the program. This exemption may be granted for up to 6 months. CRISE screen TLRU/code 0601 corresponds to this exemption.

In two parent households, both parents or caretakers must meet at least one of the hardship exemptions in this plan in order to qualify for a Hardship extension.

If and when ODJFS notifies Defiance CDJFS that exceeding the 20% tolerance is imminent, continued assistance will be given first to those with a Priority A exemption; second to those with a Priority B; third to those with a Priority C. When not all assistance groups in any priority group can be given an extension due to the operation of the 20% limitation, priority within that group will be given to those who have received the lesser number of months of OWF assistance since October 1, 1997.