

**Athens County Department of Job and Family Services**  
**Hardship Exemption Policy**  
Revised September 1, 2008

**Exemption Criteria**

The term “hardship” is defined in Black’s Law Dictionary as “privation, suffering, or adversity” and in Webster’s New World Dictionary as “a thing hard to bear, specific cause of discomfort or suffering, as poverty, pain, etc.” and “hard circumstances of life.”

The county department will determine whether the 36-month time limit is the “specific cause of discomfort or suffering, as poverty, pain, etc.” or “a thing hard to bear,” or if the time limit creates “privation, suffering, or adversity.” To determine whether a hardship exists, the ACDJFS will look at the unique circumstances of the assistance group.

All other OWF eligibility factors must be met. The exemption criteria apply only to the time limit rule.

**Procedure**

All cases scheduled for termination due to time limits will be reviewed by their assigned Social Program Coordinator sixty to thirty days prior to termination. The assigned SPC will complete a Hardship Assessment Form (ACDJFS #162) that will include a recommendation for approval or denial. This information will be submitted to the review committee prior to the first of the month preceding the scheduled termination. If the Children Services Board is involved, they will be asked to provide a representative to present information and a recommendation to the committee.

A committee of four staff members, appointed by the Director, and including a Family Service Supervisor, a Social Program Coordinator, a CSEA representative and an Income Maintenance Eligibility Worker, shall review each case scheduled for termination due to the time limits, in the first week of the month prior to the scheduled termination date or within thirty days of re-application. The committee, by majority vote, shall decide whether or not the case qualifies for a hardship exemption. The committee will be convened and chaired by the Supervisor and a record kept of the vote on each case. Notification of the results will be e-mailed to appropriate staff within two (2) business days. The final (detailed) report will be issued within thirty (30) days.

Upon receiving the results of the committee decision, the Income Maintenance Eligibility Worker will initiate the proper notification of approval of good cause or notification of adverse action. The Income Maintenance Eligibility Worker will also review each case for continued Food Stamp, Medicaid, and Childcare eligibility. The social program coordinator will review each case for possible referral to other programs for assistance.