

## COLUMBIANA COUNTY HARDSHIP EXEMPTION CRITERIA

Under ORC 5107.18 a County Department of Job and Family Services can declare up to twenty percent (20%) of its average caseload during the prior Federal Fiscal Year to be under a "hardship" and grant such assistance groups an exemption in order to continue assistance. Prior to the expiration of an Assistance Group's thirty-six (36) months of assistance a face to face interview will be completed and the Assistance Group will be reviewed to determine potential eligibility for a hardship exemption. An Assistance Group may meet the hardship exemption criteria after the expiration of the thirty-six (36) month time limit. An application will be necessary to determine OWF eligibility based on the hardship exemption in that situation.

The case will be reviewed to determine if the Assistance Group meets the preliminary factor which is:

1. Income to the household is less than the OWF payment standard for the Assistance Group size.

If an Assistance Group meets the criteria, the Assistance Group will be reviewed for one of the primary factors.

An Assistance Group which includes an adult or minor head of household, who has participated in OWF for thirty-six (36) months may be eligible for a "hardship exemption" for a period not to exceed twenty-four (24) months based on the family's circumstances if, upon reaching the thirty-sixth (36<sup>th</sup>) month of participation, one or more of the following circumstances exists:

### Exemption 1:

The parent/caretaker is pending SSI/SSD for a mental or physical disability and has been unable to participate in an assigned work activity due to the disability as verified by a licensed physician. The individual pursued SSI/SSD eligibility more than six (6) months prior to the expiration of the time limit or within sixty (60) days of the onset of the disabling condition. CCDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon additional opinions from medical providers of its choice.

### Exemption 2:

The parent/caretaker is providing care for a disabled (as verified by a licensed physician)

immediate family member living in the home and other arrangements for the disabled member's care are not available as verified by the CCDJFS and their presence precludes them from obtaining or maintaining employment. An immediate family member is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sibling, or grandparent. CCDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon additional opinions from medical providers of its choice.

Exemption 3:

The 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 and will lead to self sufficiency. The individual must have been enrolled in the education or training program for at least six (6) months prior to the expiration of the time limit and must be completed within six (6) months of the expiration of the time limit.

Exemption 4:

The parent/caretaker is not employed and has transferred from another county and, who through no fault of his or her own, has not been given an opportunity to participate in a work activity leading to self sufficiency for the last twelve (12) months as determined by the CCDJFS.

Exemption 5:

The individual is a caretaker who is over sixty (60) years of age.

Assistance Groups qualifying for a hardship exemption under these criteria will be evaluated on a monthly basis to determine if the hardship exemption is still applicable.

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