

**Coshocton county Department of Job and Family Services
HARDSHIP CRITERIA under O.R.C. § 5107.18**

Under O.R.C. § 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, the Assistance Group will be reviewed to determine potential eligibility for a hardship exemption. Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services, at its sole discretion, will extend benefits to not more than twenty percent (20%) of its average caseload under the circumstances described below.

The Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services has adopted the following criteria for determining whether an Assistance Group may qualify for a hardship exemption under O.R.C. § 5107.18.

Hardship exemptions are only available to Assistance Groups whose members have complied with all aspects of the self-sufficiency contract. Assistance Groups receiving an exemption must continue to abide by the provisions of the self-sufficiency contact.

An Assistance Group which includes an adult who has participated in Ohio Works First (OWF) for thirty-six (36) months while head-of-household or while married to the head-of-household may be eligible for a “hardship exemption” if one (1) or more of the following circumstances exists:

1. The Assistance Group’s adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility has a serious physical or mental illness or condition which renders them incapacitated for employment. The incapacity must be verified by two physicians (CCDJFS has the right to select one of the physicians) and the individual is pending SSI/SSD for mental or physical disability and pursued SSI /SSD eligibility more than six (6) months prior to the expiration of the time limit providing the case worker has made the referral within 60 days of the onset of the disabling condition. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption for the duration of the application process, up to a maximum of six (6) months.
2. The presence of the Assistance Group’s adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is medically necessary to provide care of a disabled immediate family member living in the home. An immediate family member is defined as a mother, father, brother, sister, child, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, or legal guardian. The medical necessity of the individual’s presence to provide care must be verified by a physician’s statement and other arrangements for the disabled member’s care is not available as verified by CCDJFS. CCDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months.

3. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility has complied with all aspects of the self-sufficiency contract and is unemployable as determined by the CCDJFS upon the expiration of benefits. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to six (6) months.
4. The Assistance Group's minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility who is currently enrolled, satisfactorily attending, and making progress in a program that will lead to the receipt of a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months or upon completion of the educational program.
5. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility and has been homeless (as defined by HUD) within the past three months, is cooperating with Metropolitan Housing or other appropriate agency, and this condition impacts the ability to be employed as determined by CCDJFS. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months or when housing is secured, whichever is shorter.
6. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is enrolled in an education or training program directly related to employment which at least 50% is completed by the expiration of the time limit and will be completed within six (6) months and the individual remains enrolled and in good standing as determined by the educational or training institution. The education or training program must, by itself or in combination with the assignments, meet the individual's work participation requirements. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months or when the training is completed, whichever is shorter.
7. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household single custodial parent caring for their child who has exhausted eligibility, through no fault of his or her own, is unable to procure child care services and the lack of child care prevents him or her from pursuing, obtaining and/or maintaining employment. The Assistance Group must provide documentation from at least five (5) CCDJFS recognized childcare providers indicating that childcare assistance was applied for and unavailable. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months, or until such time as suitable childcare arrangements are found, whichever is shorter.
8. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is satisfactorily participating in a rehabilitation program directly related to employment which will not be completed by the expiration of the time limit, but will be completed within twelve (12) months. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months, or until the training is completed, whichever is shorter.
9. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head of household who has exhausted eligibility is medically certified to be pregnant and in the third trimester of the pregnancy, or is caring for

a child under the age of three (3) months. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months, or until such time that the child reaches three (3) months of age, whichever is shorter. If the individual is employed prior to the third trimester they will not be exempt.

10. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is a victim of domestic violence within the past three (3) months as verified by a certified agency and this condition impacts the ability to be employed. The individual must be actively involved in or have successfully completed a treatment program. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months.
11. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is unable to secure employment and the unemployment rate for Coshocton County as reported by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services is continuously at a rate greater than ten percent (10%) for three (3) months prior to the month in which term limits will expire. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months until the unemployment rate for Coshocton County drops below ten percent (10%), whichever is shorter.
12. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility loses his or her employment within the last three (3) months prior to expiration of eligibility due to a situation which causes the individual's employer to close. The individual must be ineligible for unemployment benefits due to limited length of employment. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months, or until employment is found, whichever is shorter.
13. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household who has exhausted eligibility is unable to work due to satisfactory progress in an approved residential chemical dependency rehabilitation program. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption for the duration of the rehabilitation program up to a maximum of six (6) months.
14. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household is not employed who has exhausted eligibility and has not been given an opportunity to participate in work activity for at least twelve (12) months. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption of up to six (6) months with the inclusion of work requirements as identified in the individual's self-sufficiency plan.

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.

An Assistance Group which exhausts its initial exemption and which still meets the criteria for a hardship exemption may re-apply for an exemption. Such requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. **Extensions are not automatic.**

The Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services reserves the right to amend the above criteria. Should the Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services determine that these criteria should be amended, such amendments will be made public prior to their effective date whenever practical.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services continually monitors the percentage of the average monthly number of Ohio Works First participants in each county that are granted hardship exemptions. Once a county department's exemptions equal or exceed eighteen percent (18%), the state department will immediately notify the county department. Upon notification from the State that Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services has met or exceeded eighteen percent (18%), or at any point prior to such notification when Coshocton County determines such review to be beneficial, Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services will review all Assistance Groups receiving an exemption, to determine if any Assistance Groups no longer qualify for an exemption. Such review may be in addition to any regularly scheduled monthly review of individual Assistance Groups.

If, at any point, Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services can no longer grant hardship exemptions to all qualifying Assistance Groups due to the operation of the twenty percent (20%) limitation, Coshocton County Department of Job and Family Services may amend, delete and/or add to any of the above criteria and/or may develop and implement alternative hardship criteria to address the situation.

Amended 1/11/01:

Terry W. Miller, Director