

CRAWFORD COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

HARDSHIP EXEMPTION POLICY

It is the intent of the Crawford County Job and Family Services to assure that families who have received 36 months of OWF cash assistance have been afforded the opportunity to realize self-sufficiency in that time frame. Under ORC Section 5107.18, a County Department of Job and Family Services may declare up to twenty percent (20%) of the average caseload during the prior Federal Fiscal Year to be under a “hardship” and grant such assistance groups exemption in order to continue assistance.

To that purpose, the following procedure has been adopted.

1. The CCJFS offers OWF recipients Intensive Case Management which includes but is not limited to: employment skills evaluation and development, employment seeking services, mental health assessment, basic needs assessment, Healthy Start and all other Medicaid and Food Stamps and child care services. Assistance is provided in locating employment, child care and in developing budgeting skills. Transportation, parenting classes and referrals for legal services, etc. may also be arranged.

This program is offered to all OWF cash recipients who have received at least 18 months of OWF cash assistance. If they refuse this program, it will be offered again at the time recipients reach 24 months of cash assistance. The recipient may request to participate at any point from 18 - 36 months of their AG’s receipt of cash assistance.

If a recipient refuses to utilize the intensive case management services, there will be no hardship waiver granted. Signed documentation of their refusal will be in their case file.

2. The recipient may qualify for hardship exemption due to Severe Incapacity if:
 - The recipient has a CCJFS medical form completed by a licensed physician verifying the recipient’s severe incapacity and length of incapacity, or
 - The adult OWF recipient’s continuous presence is required to provide 24 hour care for OWF assistance group member in the home due to severe incapacity, verified by a licensed physician on the CCJFS medical form.

In either case, the severely incapacitated recipient must actively be pursuing SSI/SSA disability claims and/or cooperating fully with the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Exemptions for severe incapacities may be granted at three (3) month intervals not to exceed eleven (11) months. The CCJFS reserves the option of sending the recipient for a second medical opinion to a physician of the agency’s choice.

3. The recipient may qualify for hardship exemption due to Terminal Illness if a recipient or assistance group member (who has been living in the household of the recipient for 12 months or more prior to the 36 month time limit) has been diagnosed by a licensed physician and is expected to live for six (6) months or less and the assistance group has reached the 36 month time limit. This will be reviewed at the end of the six (6) months or upon death of assistance group member, whichever occurs first.

4. The recipient may qualify for a hardship exemption due to **Domestic Violence** if:

- The recipient has a history as a victim of domestic violence. This must not be a first occurrence coinciding with reaching the 36 month time limit.
- Police reports must have been made for previous domestic violence incidents and those reports must be made available to CCJFS.
- The recipient must utilize Domestic Violence counseling from an agency recognized as having a Domestic Violence Counseling Specialist.
- The recipient must file a Temporary Protection Order or Civil Protection Order and continue follow-up with a court system. Ending pursuit of this constitutes termination of hardship.
- The recipient must cooperate by utilizing **Intensive Case Management**.
- The hardship exemption may be granted at three (3) month intervals not to exceed eleven (11) months.
- The recipient must have fully cooperated with the Child Support Enforcement Agency in establishing paternity and securing child support payments.

5. 20% County Limitation:

Under Federal and State law only a limited number of persons may be exempted by CCJFS. At such time as CCJFS approaches 80% of the 20% limit for the number of allowable hardship exemptions, the agency will review all cases to redetermine exemptions.

6. Application for Hardship Exemption Waiver:

An OWF recipient who is approaching the 36 month time limit for benefits, and feels that he/she may qualify for a hardship exemption, may apply for such an exemption. To apply, the recipient must file an application (see attached) and supply the supporting documentation(s) concerning the hardship. Such requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the existing Hardship Exemption Policy.