

**OWF TIME LIMITS
HARDSHIP CRITERIA FOR DELAWARE COUNTY**

36 Month Time Limit

Section 5107.18 of the Ohio Revised Code limits participation in Ohio Works First (OWF) and cash assistance to 36 months, for families that include an adult head-of-household or a spouse of the head-of-household, or a pregnant minor head-of-household, minor parent head-of-household, or spouse of such head-of-household. Time limits do not apply to food stamps, medical card or daycare services.

20% Exemption Criteria

Section 5107.18 of the Ohio Revised Code allows the County Department of Job and Family Services to exempt up to 20% of the average monthly number of families receiving OWF from the time limit on the grounds that they determine that the time limit is a hardship. The determination of hardship criteria is a County Department of Job and Family Services determination.

Delaware County's Hardship Criteria

Assistance Groups who have reached the 36 month time limit for participation and cash assistance in the OWF program may be exempted from the time limit if all the criteria in Section A are met along with one or more of the hardship criteria in Section B. Section C addresses limits on the number of months an assistance group may receive OWF benefits due to a hardship and frequency of reviews for assistance group meeting a hardship exemption. Section D addresses how OWF assistance groups that transfer in from other counties will be treated. Section E addresses how households reaching the 36 month time limit will be informed about the exemption criteria.

Section A (Assistance group must meet all criteria in this section.)

- 1) The total gross income of the OWF assistance group and all other household members, including but not limited to individuals who are normally excluded from the OWF standard filing unit as per OAC Section 5101:1-23-10, does not exceed the Allocation Allowance Standard in OAC Section 5101:1-23-20 for the appropriate household size. Household members, age 60 or older who are not natural or adoptive parents, or stepparents of a minor child in the OWF assistance group, and their income are excluded from this determination.
- 2) The total available resources as defined in FS Manual Section 5101:4-4-01 (A) of the OWF assistance group and all other household members, including but not limited to individuals who are normally excluded from the OWF standard filing unit as per OAC Section 5101:1-23-10, does not exceed \$5000. Household members, age 60 or older who are not natural or adoptive parents or stepparents of a minor child in the OWF assistance group and their resources are excluded from this determination.
- 3) OWF assistance group members who are required to cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), are cooperating with CSEA and have not been sanctioned for failure to cooperate, without good cause, in the preceding 6 months, prior to reaching the 36 month time limit.
- 4) OWF assistance group members who are required to participate in OWF Work Activities or LEAP activities, are actively and successfully participating in those activities as per their individual self-sufficiency plans, and have not been sanctioned for non-participation without good cause, in the preceding 6 months, prior to reaching the 36 month time limit.

Section B (The OWF adult or minor head-of household , subject to the time limits must meet one or more of these criteria.)

- 1) Is required in the home to provide full time care for a dependent child who has documented physical health problems; is medically fragile; is diagnosed with mental health problems that require special care' and/or has special needs that require 24 hour care from a parent and no other resource is available.
- 2) Has a dependent child involved with court systems (i.e. custody, juvenile, and probate); mental health and/or counseling preventing employers from hiring that individual. Documentation required.
- 3) Documented chronic or acute illness or disability (to include mental, emotional, and physical disorders) of an adult or child in the family. The adult may require long term care but are not eligible for SSI benefits. Families must cooperate with treatment.
- 4) Documented victims of domestic violence while they are relocating and are involved with support services.
- 5) Working but still doesn't make enough to get off of public assistance and has documented proven barriers to limit their work hours (i.e. childcare is not available, lack of transportation, health reasons).
- 6) Pregnant mothers, who are physically unable to work due to documented pregnancy risks, until the newborn child/children reach six weeks of age.

Section C (Hardship exemptions granted, based on Sections A & B are subject to the time limits and reviews specified in this section).

An OWF assistance group hardship exemption period will be determined relevant to individual circumstances. In no event shall an assistance group continue to receive OWF benefits for more than 24 months based on hardship.

Each exemption month in which cash is received is counted towards the 60 month Federal time limit.

An OWF assistance group's hardship exemption will be reviewed every 3 months to determine if the assistance group continues to meet the exemption criteria or whenever the agency is aware that the assistance group no longer meets the exemption criteria.

During the exemption period, the assistance group must cooperate with OWF and self-sufficiency plans according to participation requirements. Failure to cooperate will result in discontinuation of hardship exemption.

In the event that the number of assistance groups exempted from the 36 month time limits exceeds the allowable 20% amount for the county, OWF assistance groups with the least number of criteria in Section B will lose their hardship exemption first, followed by highest number of months.

Section D (Transfer-In cases from other counties)

All OWF assistance groups that transfer in to Delaware County, from other counties, will have their hardship exemption determined by the Criteria in Section A, B, and C, and exemption status will no longer be determined by the previous county's criteria.

Section E (Informing households of exemption criteria)

OWF assistance groups that are close to reaching the 36 month time limit will be identified. Notices are continually generated by the CRISE system notifying the assistance group of the number of months of OWF received. In addition to this, the county will send the household a manual notice at least 3 months prior to reaching the 36 month time limit. This notice will inform the assistance group of the number of months of OWF/ cash received, the number of months remaining, and the projected date for OWF to end because of the 36 month limit. The notice will also notify the assistance group of an interview date to meet with agency staff to review the participants situation and their plans for when the 36 months time limit is reached. At this interview, the assistance group will be informed of the counties hardship criteria.

Upon termination of OWF after reaching the 36 month time limit, the assistance group will be responsible for contacting their Family Support Case Manager to apply for continuing OWF benefits based on meeting exemption criteria and to provide documentation of how they meet the criteria.