

HARDSHIP EXEMPTION CRITERIA FOR FRANKLIN COUNTY

A county can declare up to 20% of its average caseload (as determined by the average caseload for the immediately prior Federal Fiscal Year) under “hardship” and continue their OWF assistance. All Assistance Groups who receive an extension or exemption for “hardship” are required to continue participation in an appropriate work-related activity as described in their “Plan For Self Sufficiency”.

Prior to terminating OWF, all assistance groups reaching the 36-month time limit will be reviewed for a possible hardship extension. Franklin County will extend benefits to no more than 20% of its average caseload and only under these specific circumstances:

Priority Level 1: Definite Barriers Caused By Medical Issues

This category includes definite medical (including physical and mental health) barriers to employment of the adult caretaker or a family member living in the home. Periodic, long term evaluation and case management is required. FCDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. Where appropriate, the disabled individual must apply for SSI. In addition, the parent or caretaker is required to participate in a program that can assist with employment. Individuals who fall under this category include:

1. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker has serious medical problems that render them incapacitated for employment. The incapacity must be verified by a physician on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302), SSI must be pending, and the individual must be participating in an Alternative or Developmental assignment.
2. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker must provide medically necessary full-time care for an immediate family member (child, spouse, parent or sibling) residing in their home, and other acceptable arrangements for the care of the disabled individual(s) are not available. The medical necessity of remaining in the home to care for the disabled individual(s) must be verified by a physician’s statement on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302).
3. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker must provide medically necessary full-time care for children diagnosed with mental health problems that receive special care, and other acceptable arrangements for the care of the child are not available. The medical necessity for this special care must be verified by a physician’s statement on a completed Basic Medical (ODHS 7302).
4. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker requires long term care but is not eligible for SSI benefits. The SSI denial must be documented. The incapacity and need for long term care must be verified by a physician on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302).
5. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker is physically unable to work due to their pregnancy. The incapacity must be verified by a physician on a completed Basic Medical form (ODHS 7302).

Priority Level 2: Surmountable Barriers

This category includes barriers that can be systematically eliminated. The parent or caretaker is experiencing one or more barriers to employment that may include transportation, child care, education, work history, criminal history, domestic violence, substance and alcohol abuse, housing, depression and other chronic, non-debilitating conditions. The extension is for a period not to exceed 90 days. If barriers still exist at the end of the extension, an application needs to be made for an additional extension. It is the individual's responsibility to contact FCDJFS if an extension or exemption is needed. The total length of the extensions cannot exceed one (1) year. The parent or caretaker is required to participate in community-based training and employment programs. If the parent or caretaker does not actively participate in removing the barrier (as evidenced by failure to comply with the terms of their "Plan For Self Sufficiency"), they will lose this exemption or extension. Individuals who fall under this category of surmountable barriers include:

1. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker suffers from domestic violence and is seeking or participating in a support program. The individual must be actively seeking help, as evidenced by residence in a spousal abuse shelter, a current protective court order, a police report or a sworn affidavit coupled with steps to resolve the situation (such as retention of an attorney).
2. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker has been convicted of a felony offense but is seeking employment and is participating in a training program.
3. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker has multiple (three or more) employment barriers occurring simultaneously.
4. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker is employed (not self-employed) full-time (40 or more hours per week) but who still does not make enough money to terminate OWF benefits.
5. An Assistance Group that did not get the services they needed. This is evidenced by the fact that, although the Assistance Group received OWF during the 36-month eligibility period, the individual had not received a work or training assignment.
6. An Assistance Group whose parent or caretaker is currently engaged in education and training in order to obtain employment. The education or training program must be 75 percent complete at the time the extension is granted. Those seeking a GED must take the GED examination within 90 days of the time the extension is granted.
7. An Assistance Group whose teen-parent is enrolled in (and in good standing) in High School pursuing their HS diploma or GED. Those who are not attending High School on a full time basis must be assigned to and fulfilling their work activity requirement.