

HANCOCK DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES HARDSHIP CRITERIA

April, 2000

Criteria are developed for the purpose of maintaining a focus on self sufficiency and protecting families with special needs.

Assistance groups receiving hardship extensions must be actively participating in approved programs to address their specific barriers to self sufficiency. Assistance groups meeting medical criteria must be under physicians orders.

Current recommendations:

1. Handicapped adults and children, excluding adults receiving SSI or RSDI.
2. Pregnant women with medical issues threatening the life of mother or child.
3. Families complying with a children's protective services case plan.
4. Individuals participating in a holistic program addressing substance abuse.
5. Victims of domestic violence requiring involvement of the court system.
6. Non-exempt Individuals who have not been given an opportunity to participate in a work activity for at least 12 months.

All extensions are limited to a maximum of 11 months, and subject to quarterly review to ensure compliance with special needs programs and medical plans. Assistance groups are limited to only one 11-month extension.

Eligibility for OWF hardship exemption is dependant upon an individual's having satisfactorily complied with the terms of the OWF self sufficiency contract. Satisfactory compliance is defined as having no OWF self-sufficiency failure sanctions within the 24 month period prior to the loss of time-limited eligibility. Any failure to comply with the terms of a self sufficiency contract which occurs during an exemption period will result in the loss of the remaining months of extended eligibility.

Failure to comply with the requirements of individual treatment/case plans will result in the loss of the remaining months of extension eligibility. Determination of treatment/case participation compliance will be made by the service provider.

Recipients will be required to provide documentation/verification of participation in programs designed to assist in their transition to self sufficiency at each quarterly review.

Application for a Hardship Extension must be filed with the O.W.F. case manager, and a face-to-face interview must be completed to explore alternate resources to move the assistance group towards self sufficiency prior to the determination of a hardship exemption. Eligibility for an extension will be determined only after supervisory review. Quarterly reviews are also subject to supervisory approval.