

Hocking County Department of Job and Family Services

Ohio Works First (OWF) Hardship Exemptions

General Conditions-

No exemption from the OWF time limits can be granted more than 30 days prior to the expiration of the initial 36 month eligibility period.

A face-to-face interview to discuss the reasons for the hardship request will be conducted prior to the granting of any exemption. A hardship exemption review form must be completed to document the request.

There must be ongoing participation in OWF work activities.

Exemptions will be reviewed a minimum of once every three months and can be removed at any time. It should be noted that any months in which an exemption is granted **does** count against the 5 year federal limits.

All adults in the household must meet an exemption

Hardship will not be considered if there has been a self-sufficiency contract failure in the previous 12 months.

Exemptions

1. A pregnant woman in her last trimester who is physically unable to work due to her pregnancy. A physician's statement is required. **Up to three months of additional benefits.**
2. A single parent of a child less than 3 months old. **This exemption will be granted for one (2) month period.**
3. A single parent of a child under 6 years old and NO child care is available.
4. A caretaker relative aged 60 or older. The participant would be encouraged to seek work through Title V (Mature Services) and other senior employment and training.
5. The assistance group member is needed in the home on a 24-hour basis to care for a child or other immediate family member who is severely disabled or terminally ill and no other adult in the home or other arrangements for the care of the severely disabled or terminally ill person are available. Immediate family member is defined as an individual's spouse, child, adopted or step child.
 - a. A statement must be provided by a licensed physician that indicates the need for 24 hour care.
 - b. All supportive services must be explored and utilized if available. These services include services through the County Board of DD, Buckeye Community Services, Waiver, Passport, Court Systems, etc.
 - c. For school aged children, verification from the school and the physician must be received stating the child is unable to attend school and there are no other supportive services available.
6. The assistance group member is unable to work for at least (3) months due to mental health issues and has been and is currently receiving treatment on an ongoing, continuous basis with a mental health expert. Verification is required from a psychiatrist or psychologist. The caseworker will encourage all AG members that allege mental disabilities to apply for SSI/SSDI.

7. The assistance group member is unable to work for at least (3) months due to physical incapacity or disability and has been and is currently receiving treatment. Verification is required by a physician. The caseworker will encourage all AG members that allege physical disabilities to apply for SSI/SSDI.
8. The assistance group member has an active case plan with the Children Services Board and is satisfactorily participating in the case plan. Monthly verification is required from the CSB. **Up to six months of additional benefits.**
9. The assistance group member is enrolled in a full-time education/training program which does not facilitate any type of employment and is directly related to obtaining employment. The program will not end prior to reaching the 36 month time limit. An exemption will be granted only when the recipient has no other job skills and is unable to obtain employment. **This exemption is allowable for no more than (6) additional months or until the education/training program is completed whichever occurs first.**

The hardship exemptions that are granted are subject to the time limits. The OWF assistance group's hardship exemption will be reviewed a minimum of every three (3) months to determine if the assistance group continues to meet the exemption criteria. Exemptions may be reviewed by HCJFS staff prior to the required three months as needed.

The hardship exemption shall not exceed twenty four (24) months. No more than two extensions in any one category shall be granted.

Ohio works first assistance groups that transfer to Hocking County from another county shall have their hardship exemption reviewed and continuous benefits will be determined by the Hocking County Hardship criteria.

Each Ohio Works First assistance group receives notices from ODJFS explaining the 36 month time limit regulation; how many months of OWF eligibility have been used and how many OWF eligibility months are remaining. Each OWF assistance group will have an appointment scheduled to review the hardship criteria six (6) months prior to the end of the 36 month time limit. This meeting will be conducted with the OWF assistance group, Eligibility Referral Specialist, Child Support, Social Services, Workforce Development and Administrator.

Approved:

Robert Smith, Director

Board of County Commissioners

Laina Fetherolf, Hocking Co. Prosecutor

This HCDJFS policy is effective April 21, 2011.

**Hocking County Dept. of
Job & family Services**

Participant Name _____

Case/Cat/Seq _____

_____ I understand that my cash assistance time limits will expire on _____ and I am not requesting an exemption.

OWF Participant-I am requesting an exemption from the OWF time limits due to the following hardship:

_____ **Client Signature** **Date**

Family Services Worker: OWF countable months have been determined correctly? _____ Yes _____ No
Hardship Criteria Met: _____ Yes _____ No Number of months needed: _____
_____ **Worker Signature** **Date**

Hardship Exemption Decision:
Comments: _____
Hardship exemption approved beginning _____ Number of Months _____ Denied _____
_____ **Supervisor Signature** **Date**

Three month review date: _____
Notes/Contacts: _____