

LOGAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

36 MONTH TIME LIMIT EXTENSION POLICY

(AS IMPLEMENTED JUNE 1, 2000)

The Logan County Department of Job and Family Services, in order to adhere to our mission statement and assure that the families of Logan County who are in need of Ohio Works First assistance are not placed in undue hardship as a result of the 36 month time limit, has established the following guideline for extending the receipt of Ohio Works First (OWF) assistance.

“Hardship”, according to Black’s Law Dictionary, is defined in part as “*in general, privation, suffering or adversity*”. Privation being a lack of the basic necessities or comforts of life. Therefore, it is our goal to ensure that the families of Logan County are not denied, as a result of the 36 month time limit, the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and medical treatment.

When possible, an OWF household that has used 24 months of assistance will have face to face eligibility reviews scheduled every two months to determine their potential need for an extension of OWF assistance. When the household has used 30 months of eligibility, the face to face reviews will be scheduled monthly.

An extension *may* be available either when the household reaches the 36 month time limit, or at any point in the future when the household applies for benefits and is found to be eligible based on the criteria or by means of extenuating circumstances. Each case will be reviewed by a panel designated by the Director of the Logan County Department of Job and Family Services to determine if an extension is justified. The final decision of extended eligibility will be determined by the panel or by the Director, at his discretion. A household will retain the rights to a state hearing if they feel the action taken by the CDHS is incorrect.

If an extension is warranted, it may be authorized for a period not to exceed 3 months in length and a review will be held during the third month to determine if further extension is appropriate. During the period of extended OWF benefits, the recipient shall continue to be governed by the county’s OWF work program regulations as they relate to participation and self sufficiency. If the recipient does not comply with the OWF work program regulations during the extension, there shall be no further OWF eligibility, except as indicated by state/federal regulations.

If an individual has been sanctioned for non-compliance with the OWF self sufficiency

guidelines within the preceding 18 calendar months, their household will not be eligible for an extension of OWF benefits.

If a household's income (either earned, unearned, or both) including Food Stamp benefits, after the loss of OWF benefits due to the 36 month time limit, remains at or above 100 % of the Federal Poverty Guideline, the household will not be eligible for an extension of OWF benefits.

However, in situations where a household is near the poverty guideline, and due to special circumstances, a family's well being may be affected by loss of benefits, the agency panel may recommend to the Director that the 100% poverty guideline be waived for a stated good cause reason, as specified by the panel.

The following is a list of potential reasons and situations which could warrant an extension of OWF benefits. A household *may* qualify for an extension of OWF benefits by meeting one or more of these criteria.

A household *may* be eligible for an extension of OWF benefits if:

- ▶ the individual is a single custodial parent with a child under three months of age;
- ▶ the individual is providing care for a disabled family member, living in the individual's home, and other acceptable arrangements for the disabled member's care are not available;
- ▶ the individual is a caretaker who is over sixty years of age;
- ▶ the individual has been unable to participate in assigned work activities and has been unable to adequately prepare for employment opportunities for a substantial part of their 36 months of OWF eligibility due to a physical or mental incapacity as verified by a licensed physician, and the individual has been attempting in good faith to overcome their incapacitation;
- ▶ the individual is mentally or physically incapacitated, as verified by an appropriate medical professional, and has applied for SSI. Application must have been made prior to the individual's 24th month of eligibility and the individual has been and is currently, in good faith, pursuing the receipt of SSI.
- ▶ the individual has been the victim of domestic violence within the past 6 months (the instances of domestic violence must have been reported and documented to a local

law enforcement agency and the individual must no longer reside with the offender and must be willing to assist in the prosecution of the offender);

- ▶ the individual is enrolled and making satisfactory progress in an education or training program directly related to employment which will not be completed by the expiration of the thirty-six month time limit (The individual must have completed at least ½ of the full term of the program prior to the expiration of the thirty-six month time limit);
- ▶ the individual is pregnant and is physically unable to work due to their pregnancy, as verified by a physician;
- ▶ the individual is an adult with an alcohol or drug addiction which is a barrier to employment, and the individual has been in treatment for at least the previous six months and is demonstrating a good faith effort to overcome their barrier;
- ▶ the individual is working at least thirty hours per week and earning at least minimum wage, and is still eligible for OWF. An individual may earn one month of eligibility for extended OWF benefits, up to a maximum of 12 additional months, for each month in which the individual was employed at least 150 hours at minimum wage or more in unsubsidized employment. Counting of the months of employment shall begin October 1, 1997;.
- ▶ the individual has other extenuating circumstances, not listed here, that could require extended OWF benefits. The panel will review the case and extended benefits *may* be authorized, based on the recommendation of the panel.

If an individual fails to comply with program requirements during a hardship extension period, the hardship extension shall be removed.

In the event that the Logan County Department of Job and Family Services exceeds it's 20% allocation of extensions, all extensions will be reviewed and approved or denied based on the recommendations of the panel or the Director, at his discretion.