

OTTAWA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
EXEMPTIONS TO THE 36 MONTH OWF TIME LIMITS

The Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services will make every attempt to help OWF participants overcome barriers to employment and self sufficiency.

Exemptions to the 36 month time limits will be granted only to assistance groups who have NOT failed to comply with the provisions contained in their Self Sufficiency Contract. This means that the assistance group members have not failed without good cause to participate as assigned and have not been sanctioned within 12 months prior to the end of the clients 36 month time limits. If a case is sanctioned during the exemption period the exemption will be voided and the client will have reached their 36 month time limit.

Hardship exemptions will be granted on a case by case basis.

MANDATORY 20% LIMIT

The number of hardship exemptions will be limited to 20% of the average monthly number of OWF assistance groups subject to time limits.

When Ottawa County reaches its maximum 20% limit all exempted cases will be reviewed to determine which cases will remain exempt. If Ottawa County reaches its 20% limit priority will be given in the following order.

- Households who have no other resources available, such as community agencies and family members.
- Households who are working in a dedicated manner to overcome barriers to employment.

HARDSHIP EXEMPTIONS

All exemptions will be granted in 3 month increments. Prior to the end of the 3 months the case will be reviewed to see if the barriers to employment still exist and if the client is actively working to overcome their barriers. In no case can time limits exceed 60 months.

Exemptions are as follows,

EDUCATION:(0601) An OWF recipient who is within 9 months of completing a formal education program, such as a degree, certificate or high school diploma, will be exempt. The participant must be receiving passing grades, verified by the school, and is a head of household in a single parent assistance group or a member of a two parent assistant group where the other parent is disabled by Social Security, Public Retirement ,V.A., or disabled by CMS (County Medical Services).

DISABLED CHILD:(0302) A single parent of a disabled child who is working with ALL community resources to obtain child care so that the parent can work.

DISABLED ADULT: (0403)Any OWF adult participant claiming a disability that will last for more than 12 months or will result in death, must apply for Social Security. If a SSI/SSD claim has been denied they must appeal that claim within 10 days of receiving the denial letter. A person claiming disability must participate in any rehabilitation program the agency deems appropriate. The agency may require the individual to participate in testing with a clinic, hospital physician or mental health agency including MR/DD and BVR.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE:(1204) A single parent who claims substance abuse as a disability must be enrolled and participating in a verifiable treatment program. The participant must sign a release of information allowing the agency to track their progress and program participation. The participant will be subject to random drug tests. Any refusals will result in the termination of the exemption.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:(0505) A police report must be filed and the victim must follow through with all court orders. Additional referrals to community organizations that provide services to victims of domestic violence will be made and victims must follow through with case plans.

An exemption once granted will become part of the participants self sufficiency contract. The agency will grant these exemptions with the understanding that the participant truly wants to overcome barriers to employment and is willing to work with the agency and the community to accomplish this goal.