

**PIKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
OHIO WORKS FIRST HARDSHIP CRITERIA
AMMENDMENT
EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2010**

The Pike County Department of Job and Family Services (PCDJFS), in accordance with Section 5107.18 (E) of the Ohio Revised Code, is responsible for establishing hardship criteria for Ohio Works First (OWF) participants. The hardship exemption allows a maximum of 20% (determined annually) of the OWF participants who have exhausted the thirty-six (36) month time limit to continue to receive cash assistance by meeting one or more of the hardship criteria.

In order to apply for a hardship exemption, the OWF participant must complete a request form and provide requested information and verification to substantiate the hardship. The request may be submitted at any time after the thirty-sixth (36th) OWF check is issued.

If the hardship exemption is granted, the participant must then continue to comply with self-sufficiency contract established between the participant and the PCDJFS. Failure to do so will result in the loss of the hardship exemption and termination of the OWF. The participant will remain ineligible for OWF according to the PCDJFS sanction and compliance policies in effect for OWF participants that have received OWF for less than thirty-six (36) months. Upon compliance the OWF participant must reapply and reestablish a hardship exemption.

When the PCDJFS determines that a hardship ceases to exist, assistance will be terminated.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

The PCDJFS Income Maintenance Worker will review each request to determine whether the participant's hardship meets the condition(s) as specified in the exemption criteria. The review will include the request form and the case record. The PCDJFS reserves the right to request additional information or verification that may be needed to make a determination. The determination will be reviewed and approval granted by the Income Maintenance Supervisor. The Income Maintenance Worker will review eligibility for all cases receiving a hardship exemption, as often as warranted by the exemption criteria, but at least once every twelve (12) months.

THE HARDSHIP CRITERIA

The following criteria shall be applied to determine whether a potential hardship exists. The criteria are listed in descending order of priority. If allotted slots have been filled, the PCDJFS reserves the right to end a hardship exemption for the criteria that is lower in priority, to exempt an assistance group higher in priority. Those participants that lose eligibility for a hardship exemption under these circumstances will be given an opportunity to reapply and reestablish a hardship exemption if another slot becomes available. The PCDJFS maintains total right and discretion to manage the exemption slots available for the county and to deny or terminate an exemption as necessary to maintain compliance with ORC 5107.18 (E).

1. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker has a short-term physical/mental illness or condition rendering them incapacitated for employment (including high-risk pregnancies and caretakers in inpatient substance abuse treatment). A physician must verify the incapacity **per written documentation**. The incapacity must be reestablished every twelve (12) months or less based on the physician's determination. PCDJFS reserves the right to secure and consider a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after the expiration of the **physician's statement** or the end of the incapacity.
Code: 0401
2. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker must provide medically necessary full-time care for another household member. The medical necessity of remaining in the home to care for the disabled individual must be verified by a physician's statement. The medical necessity must be reevaluated every twelve (12) months or less based on the physician's determination. PCDJFS reserves the right to secure and consider a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after the expiration of the physician's statement or the need for full-time care.
Code: 0402
3. An assistance group that has not received nor been offered needed services, although the assistance group received OWF during the thirty-six (36) month period.
Code: 0901
4. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is medically verified to be six (6) or more months pregnant or caring for a child less than three (3) months of age.
Code: 1001
5. A homeless assistance group, including those residing in a homeless shelter. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after establishing their own residence.
Code: 0801
6. An assistance group in which a parent/caretaker suffers from domestic violence and is actively seeking help, as evidenced by factors such as, residence in an abuse shelter, a current protective court order, or retention of an attorney. The parent/caretaker will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after they establish their own residence.
Code: 0501
7. A single parent/caretaker assistance group with a child under the age of six (6), when childcare is unavailable.
Code: 0301

8. An assistance group in which a parent/caretaker is under the age of eighteen (18) or between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty (20) and remains enrolled and in good standing in a program of study leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent. Upon graduation, the exemption may be extended up to three (3) months to allow time for a job search.
Code: 1301
9. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is enrolled and in good standing in a PCDJFS approved education or training program. The parent/caretaker will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after completion of the education or training program.
Code: 0601
10. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is employed at least thirty (30) hours per week, or at least thirty-five (35) hours per week between two parents in the assistance group, at an income level insufficient to cause the family to lose OWF eligibility.
Code: 1501
11. An assistance group that has had their children removed from the home and is still receiving OWF for the six (6) month grace period, pending reunification. Should the thirty-six (36) month time limit hit during these six (6) months, the family would qualify for a hardship exemption, lasting three (3) months after reunification.
Code: 0201
12. **An assistance group member has experienced a verified loss of income from employment due to lay-off, on-the-job injury, or company closing. The individual did not cause his or her own job loss.**
Code: 1502
13. **An assistance group has other unique personal circumstances. This Agency will make the determination of hardship based on the following criteria:**
 - a. **The mandatory nature of the thirty-six (36) month time limit;**
 - b. **The twenty (20) percent exemption limitation;**
 - c. **This agency's duty to conduct required assessments and evaluations, to identify barriers and address them, to develop an appropriate self-sufficiency plan and to complete all assignments; and**
 - d. **The unique circumstances of the assistance group.****Code: 0902**

******NOTE:**

In order for a two (2) parent assistance group to qualify for "Hardship", both parents must meet at least one (1) Hardship criteria in this plan.

OWF EXTENSION REQUEST FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

List everyone living in your home on the lines below.

NAME

SSN

AGE

RELATIONSHIP

NAME	SSN	AGE	RELATIONSHIP

Please circle the following Hardship Criteria that applies to your assistance group:

1. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker has a short-term physical/mental illness or condition rendering them incapacitated for employment (including high-risk pregnancies and caretakers in inpatient substance abuse treatment). A physician must verify the incapacity **per written documentation**. The incapacity must be reestablished every twelve (12) months or less based on the physician's determination. PCDJFS reserves the right to secure and consider a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after the expiration of the **physician's statement** or the end of the incapacity.
If yes, who? _____
2. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker must provide medically necessary full-time care for another household member. The medical necessity of remaining in the home to care for the disabled individual must be verified by a physician's statement. The medical necessity must be reevaluated every twelve (12) months or less based on the physician's determination. PCDJFS reserves the right to secure and consider a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after the expiration of the physician's statement or the need for full-time care.
If yes, who? _____
3. An assistance group that has not received nor been offered needed services, although the assistance group received OWF during the thirty-six (36) month period.
If yes, what services? _____
4. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is medically verified to be six (6) or more months pregnant or caring for a child less than three (3) months of age.
If yes, who is pregnant, and what is the due date? _____

5. A homeless assistance group, including those residing in a homeless shelter. The assistance group will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after establishing their own residence.

6. An assistance group in which a parent/caretaker suffers from domestic violence and is actively seeking help, as evidenced by factors such as, residence in an abuse shelter, a current protective court order, or retention of an attorney. The parent/caretaker will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after they establish their own residence.
7. A single parent/caretaker assistance group with a child under the age of six (6), when childcare is unavailable.
8. An assistance group in which a parent/caretaker is under the age of eighteen (18) or between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty (20) and remains enrolled and in good standing in a program of study leading to a high school diploma or its equivalent. Upon graduation, the exemption may be extended up to three (3) months to allow time for a job search.
9. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is enrolled and in good standing in a PCDJFS approved education or training program. The parent/caretaker will continue to meet the exemption for three (3) months after completion of the education or training program.
10. An assistance group whose parent/caretaker is employed at least thirty (30) hours per week, or at least thirty-five (35) hours per week between two parents in the assistance group, at an income level insufficient to cause the family to lose OWF eligibility.
11. An assistance group that has had their children removed from the home and is still receiving OWF for the six (6) month grace period, pending reunification. Should the thirty-six (36) month time limit hit during these six (6) months, the family would qualify for a hardship exemption, lasting three (3) months after reunification.
12. **An assistance group member has experienced a verified loss of income from employment due to lay-off, on-the-job injury, or company closing. The individual did not cause his or her job loss.**
If yes, who? _____
13. **An assistance group has other unique personal circumstances. This agency will make the determination of hardship based on the following criteria:**
 - a. **The mandatory nature of the thirty-six (36) month time limit;**
 - b. **The twenty (20) percent exemption limitation;**
 - c. **This agency's duty to conduct required assessments and evaluations, to identify barriers and address them, to develop an appropriate self-sufficiency plan and to complete all assignments; and**
 - d. **The unique circumstances of the assistance group.**
 If yes, what are the unique circumstances? _____

******NOTE:**

In order for a two (2) parent assistance group to qualify for "Hardship", both parents must meet at least one (1) Hardship criteria in this plan.

Signature

Date