

# **Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services**

## **Ohio Works First – Hardship Extension Criteria Implemented April 1, 2003**

Section 5107.18 of the Revised Code limits participation in Ohio Works First (OWF) to 36 months and allows Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services to exempt up to 20% of the average monthly number of families receiving OWF when the CDJFS determines that the time limit is a hardship. The assistance group will have the opportunity to apply for a hardship determination, with the determination being at the sole discretion of the Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services.

Federal law 45 C.F.R. Section 264.1 limits receipt of OWF or TANF benefits to a maximum of 60 months. Any participant granted an exemption beyond 36 months, continues to use months counting toward the five year federal limit.

### **APPLICATION FOR HARDSHIP EXTENSION**

A family will have the opportunity to apply for a hardship extension determination, within the month prior to or any time after the expiration of the family's 36 months of assistance. The assistance group will not receive OWF cash assistance until the Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services approves their application for hardship extension. If the application is approved, the benefits will go back to the date of application.

### **HARDSHIP EXTENSION CRITERIA**

The following is a list of potential reasons and situations which could warrant a Hardship extension of OWF benefits. A household may qualify for an extension of OWF benefits by meeting one or more of these criteria. Criteria below are listed in the order of priority, starting with the highest priority.

- All adults in the assistance group can provide documentation of physical disability as determined by a medical physician or psychological disability as determined by a psychiatrist sufficient to render them unemployable in a full or part time job.

- An assistance group has a single caretaker who is providing care for an immediate family member, living in the same home; with a serious physical condition, verified by a licensed physician; or psychological condition, verified by a psychiatrist and other arrangements for the disabled member's care are not available as determined by Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services.
- An assistance group whose single custodial parent has a child under three months of age. Exemption applies until the child reaches three months of age.
- An assistance group whose parent or caretaker's capacity to obtain or retain employment is being disrupted by domestic violence and is actively seeking help. Parent or caretaker must be a resident in a spousal abuse shelter, have a current protective order, or a police report documenting domestic violence.

Supervisory approval is needed to grant a hardship extension. Such extensions shall be determined between one and six months. All other OWF eligibility requirements must continue to be met. If an individual fails to comply with program requirements during a hardship extension period, the hardship extension shall be removed.

The priority for extensions will be reviewed at any point in time when the number of hardship extensions approaches the number of slots available for extension. At that time, Hardship extensions will be rescinded in order of priority to ensure that the total extensions remain below the 20% cap.