

Trumbull County Job and Family Services  
Hardship Criteria  
AMENDMENT 1/1/03

Narrative:

The Trumbull County Job and Family Services agency has established hardship criteria in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 5107.18 (E). No more than 20% of the average monthly number of OWF participants, as determined annually by the state agency, may be exempted from the 36 month lifetime limit for participation in Ohio Works First. The agency will advise the OWF participants two (2) months prior to the anticipated expiration of assistance that they need to apply for a hardship exemption in order for a determination of eligibility for a hardship exemption to occur.

In order to obtain and maintain a hardship exemption the adult or minor head of household must :

1. Make application for a hardship exemption. OWF participants responding to the notice must do so no later than 15 days from the mailing date of the notification.
2. Once a hardship is established, the participant must comply with all requirements of the agency thru the self-sufficiency contract. **FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY CONTRACT ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANT AND THE AGENCY WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE HARDSHIP EXEMPTION AND THE SANCTION OR TERMINATION OF OWF ASSISTANCE.**

The hardship criteria established by the agency does not represent any guarantees of future assistance or continued assistance. If the department determines that the hardship has been remedied , no further exemption will be given and assistance will be terminated unless the assistance group meets another hardship exemption. Each hardship criteria has been assigned a priority of approval. The agency will approve hardship exemptions based upon these established priorities. If the agency reaches 18% of the allowed limit for hardship exemptions it will re-evaluate active OWF hardship cases , based upon a descending order of their assigned priority. Once the agency reaches the 20% exemption limit , those active hardship cases with a lower priority will be terminated.

The Agency will establish an application review panel. This panel will be responsible for the review of each application for a hardship exemption to

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determine whether the individuals employment barriers meet a condition as specified in the hardship criteria. Evaluation of the application will occur within 45 days of receipt of the request for hardship exemption. The review will be conducted by reviewing the application and the case record, as well as any other documentation provided. The panel may request that the assigned case manager contact the individual to obtain further documentation. In no event will a final determination be made until the 36<sup>th</sup> month of cash assistance is reached.

The panel will reevaluate any cases receiving a hardship exemption at the request of the assigned case manager based on changes in the case situation or documentation received.

Attached are the hardship criteria that will be utilized by the panel. The criteria are numbered and listed in descending order of exemption. The Agency reserves the right to end the hardship exemption for the criteria that is less severe, based upon the descending order , if the allowable hardship slots have been reached.

**THE TRUMBULL COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY MAINTAINS TOTAL RIGHT AND DISCRETION TO MANAGE THE EXEMPTION SLOTS AVAILABLE FOR TRUMBULL COUNTY , AND TO DENY OR TERMINATE AN EXEMPTION AS IS NECESSARY TO REMAIN IN COMPLIANCE WITH ORC 5107.18 (E).**

Trumbull County Job and Family Services  
O.W.F. Hardship Criteria  
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**PRIORITY 1:**

Special medical or psychological condition of a child ( minor or adult ) or a spouse that does not allow the child or spouse to be cared for in an available licensed child or adult care facility or by a private provider. *Documentation must be provided from a licensed physician that indicates both the length of time that such care is needed and that only the individual requesting the hardship extension is able to provide care.* Consideration will also be given in situations involving a child/ren expelled from school that require the adult requesting hardship to remain in the home to provide adult supervision. *Documentation must be provided from the child's school, courts or counselors that substantiate that the individual requesting the hardship extension is the sole source for supervision and the length of time that such care is needed.* Review of the case will occur every **6** months to determine that the need for the care by the parent/spouse continues.

**PRIORITY 2:**

Individuals having a Basic Medical form (ODJFS 7302 - Available at the CDJFS) , from a licensed physician, documenting that they are unemployable for 12 months or more **or who have been found disabled by County Medical Services (CMS)** and who have filed an initial application for SSI or SSA and are pending a determination of disability by the Social Security Administration. Individuals who meet the above criteria and are denied SSI or SSA on initial application, and who appeal, may receive a hardship exemption pending their appeal **provided the appeal does not exceed a period of 24 months.** These individuals must be assigned to a case manager at the time hardship is established. Cooperation with all agencies, medical and/or psychological professionals responsible for administration of disability programs, treatments and/or appointments must be complied with in order to grant and maintain a hardship exemption based upon this criteria. This activity is part of the self-sufficiency contract and requires a compliance review every **6** months.

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### **PRIORITY 3 :**

A domestic violence victim in receipt of services through Someplace Safe or other domestic violence facility , as documented by the agency. Each individual granted a hardship exemption based upon this criteria must cooperate with the domestic violence facility and participate in any service activity provided by the facility as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A compliance review is required every **6** months to determine if the assistance group is cooperating with and continuing to receive domestic violence services.

### **PRIORITY 4 :**

Failure of the agency to complete an assessment or self-sufficiency contract or employability plan for an OWF participant. Such failure by the agency must result in the OWF participant not achieving self-sufficiency in the 36 month time limit for assistance. Completion of the assessment, self-sufficiency contract and employability plan must occur at the time a hardship exemption is given. A review of the self-sufficiency plan and employability plan is required every **6** months while assigned a hardship for this reason.

### **PRIORITY 5 :**

OWF participants currently enrolled in and attending an approved Education and Training component as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A quarterly review of the individuals enrollment and attendance status will be conducted to determine if the individual is complying with all of the component requirements. This hardship exemption is not to exceed twelve (12) consecutive months.

### **PRIORITY 6 :**

Documentation from the public child care agency that the OWF participant assistance group is threatened with the removal of their child/ren due to the termination of OWF assistance due to the 36 month time limit or OWF families that have had their children removed from the home and are cooperating with the public child care agency through a plan of reunification. These hardship cases must have cooperation with the PCSA as part of their self-sufficiency plan and be reviewed every **6** months to determine that cooperation is occurring.

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### **PRIORITY 7 :**

An OWF participant that has cooperated with their self-sufficiency contract, but has not reached self-sufficiency at the time of the imposition of the time limits. The OWF participant must be actively seeking better employment or attending a training program of less than 6 months duration that will lead to employment or have a handicap or condition as documented by a professional evaluation that prevents them from working. Continued cooperation with the self-sufficiency contract is required to maintain this exemption. A case review of the self-sufficiency contract and employability plan is required at **6** month intervals.