

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES
HARDSHIP CRITERIA UNDER O.R.C. 5107.18

Παγε 1

Under O.R.C. ' 5107.18, a County Department of Job & Family Services can declare up to twenty percent (20%) of it's average caseload during the prior Federal Fiscal Year to be under a Ahardship@ and grant such Assistance Groups an exemption in order to continue assistance. Prior to the expiration of an Assistance Group's thirty-six (36) months of assistance, the Assistance Group will be reviewed to determine potential eligibility for a hardship exemption. Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services, at its sole discretion, will extend benefits to not more than twenty percent (20%) of its average caseload under the circumstances described below.

The Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services (TCJFS) has adopted the following criteria for determining whether an assistance group may qualify for a hardship exemption under O.R.C. ' 5107.18.

Hardship exemptions are only available to assistance groups who have complied with all aspects of the self-sufficiency contract, and have not been previously sanctioned for noncompliance in the past six (6) months under O.R.C. ' 5107.16.

Assistance groups receiving an exemption must continue to abide by the provisions of the self-sufficiency contract.

An assistance group which includes an adult who has participated in Ohio Works First (OWF) for thirty-six (36) months may be eligible for a Ahardship exemption@ if, upon reaching the thirty-sixth (36th) month of participation, one (1) or more of the following circumstances exists:

1. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household has a serious physical and/or mental illness or condition which renders them incapacitated for employment. The incapacity must be approved by the County Medical Services process, and the incapacitated individual must have a current SSI/SSD application. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption for the duration of the current SSI/SSD application process. If all appeal steps have been exhausted and a final decision is made denying eligibility for lack of a physical/mental disability, the hardship exemption will end.
2. The Assistance Group's adult's or minor head-of-household's ability to retain employment is disrupted by domestic violence and such parent or caretaker is actively seeking help, as evidenced by residence in a Harbor House facility. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of six (6) months.

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES
HARDSHIP CRITERIA UNDER O.R.C. 5107.18

Παγε 2

3. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household is currently enrolled in a degree or certificate program which is directly related to, and will prepare the individual for, an employment opportunity. The individual must remain enrolled and in good standing, as determined by the educational or training institution. The education or training program must, by itself or in combination with other assignments, meet the individual's work participation requirement. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption to complete the program, up to a maximum of ten (10) months.
4. The Assistance Group has an active Children's Services case plan, and the children are at risk of court removal should the Assistance Group lose its assistance. The Assistance Group must be cooperating and in full compliance with both Children's Services plans and Ohio Works First self-sufficiency plans. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of six (6) months.
5. The Assistance Group reaches its thirty-six (36) month time limit for assistance while continuing participation in Ohio Works First pursuant to O.R.C. ' 5107.10(E). The Assistance Group must be cooperating with the case plans prepared for the children. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption through the end of the six (6) payment months referenced in O.R.C. ' 5107.10(E)(2).
6. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household must provide medically necessary, full-time care for a child in the Assistance Group. The medical necessity of the parent or caretaker's remaining in the home to care for the disabled child must be verified by a physician's statement on a designated form. The TCJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provider of its choice. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of six (6) months.
7. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household loses his or her employment due to a natural disaster which forces the individual's employer to close. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of three (3) months, or until employment is found, whichever is shorter.
8. The Assistance Group loses access to childcare due to circumstances beyond its control and the lack of childcare prevents the parent or caretaker from pursuing, obtaining, and/or maintaining employment. The Assistance Group must provide documentation from at least five (5) recognized childcare providers indicating that childcare assistance was applied for and unavailable. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of three (3) months, or until suitable childcare is found, whichever is shorter.
9. The Assistance Group's adult or minor head-of-household is unable to find employment, and the unemployment rate for Tuscarawas County, as reported by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) is continuously at a rate greater than twice (2x) the Ohio Statewide average for at least three (3) months prior to the month

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES
HARDSHIP CRITERIA UNDER O.R.C. 5107.18

Παγε 3

in which eligibility for the Assistance Group will expire. Such an Assistance Group may receive an exemption up to a maximum of six (6) months or until such time as the Tuscarawas County unemployment rate is less than twice (2x) the Ohio Statewide average, whichever is shorter.

10. The Assistant Group's adult or minor head-of-household is an evacuee from a federally designated natural disaster area.

Assistance Groups qualifying for a hardship exemption under these criteria will be evaluated on a monthly basis to determine if the hardship exemption is still applicable.

An Assistance Group which exhausts its initial exemption and which meets the criteria for another hardship exemption based on different criteria may apply for another exemption. Extensions beyond the designated maximum periods are not permitted.

The Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services reserves the right to amend, modify, delete and/or change any and/or all of the above criteria. Should the Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services determine that these criteria should be amended, such amendments will be made public prior to their effective date whenever practical.

The State Department of Job & Family Services continually monitors the percentage of the average monthly number of Ohio Works First participants in each county that are granted hardship exemptions. Once a county department's exemptions equal or exceed eighteen percent (18%), the State department will immediately notify the county department. Upon notification from the State that the TCJFS has met or exceeded eighteen percent (18%), TCJFS will review all Assistance Groups receiving an exemption, to determine if any Assistance Groups no longer qualify for an exemption. Such review may be in addition to any regularly scheduled monthly review.

If, at any point, TCJFS can no longer grant hardship exemptions to all qualifying Assistance Groups due to the operation of the twenty percent (20%) limitation, TCJFS may amend, modify, delete and/or change any and/or all of the above criteria, and/or may develop and implement alternative hardship criteria to address the situation.