

**HARRISON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF JOB and FAMILY SERVICES
GOOD CAUSE POLICY
EFFECTIVE 10-01-02
Revised 06-07**

PURPOSE:

Federal **TANF** law provides for a 60 month time limit for receipt of TANF cash assistance for an assistance group that includes an adult who has participated in the program for 60 months. Each month of receipt of assistance under the state time limit, state hardship and (state) good cause counts toward the federal 60 month time limit.

Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code section 5107.18 (B), an assistance group that has ceased to participate in OWF due to the 36 month state time limit for at least a 24 month waiting period may be eligible to participate in OWF if the family is determined to have “GOOD CAUSE”. The 24 month “waiting period” does not mean that the assistance group must have a 24 month break in receipt of OWF cash assistance between the loss of OWF eligibility due to the 36 month time limit and the extension of OWF due to good cause, as a state hardship extension during the 24 month waiting period does not interrupt the 24 month waiting period or delay the subsequent approval of good cause.

Extensions due to good cause count toward the 60 month federal time limit. There is a 24 month “durational limit” for good cause extensions, which means that a good cause extension may be provided to an OWF assistance group for no more than a total of 24 months whether consecutive or not. Any months of receipt of state hardship after the 36 month time limit count toward the federal 60 month limit, and reduce the amount of potentially available months under good cause. Receipt of OWF under a good cause extension cannot result in the assistance group receiving more than the federal 60 month time limit. The assistance group can receive benefits beyond the 60 month time limit if the CDJFS determines that the federal time limit is a hardship and a hardship extension is approved. Harrison Co. DJFS has opted to allow the termination of OWF assistance with the monthly mass change following the 60 month federal time limit and make a subsequent determination of eligibility for a “HARDSHIP” extension after the mass change.

The Harrison County Department of Job and Family services retains the sole discretion to determine whether OWF assistance group members qualify for a GOOD CAUSE EXTENSION. Such determinations shall be made in accordance with this policy and applicable law. If the County determines that there is the presence of “GOOD CAUSE” that justifies an extension within the scope of this policy, then the assistance group member is entitled to a “GOOD CAUSE EXTENSION”, NOT to exceed the federal 60 month limit.

GOOD CAUSE DEFINED:

For purposes of this policy, “GOOD CAUSE” shall be defined as:

- **LOSING EMPLOYMENT (with Good Cause reason) (0101)**

1. The assistance group must provide the CDJFS with acceptable verification of any member/s (of the assistance group) or financially responsible person’s employment during the period the assistance group was not participating in OWF and the amount and sources of the assistance group’s income during that period. **MUST PROVIDE REASON FOR LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT AND APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION. IF DENIED UNEMPLOYMENT - WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR GOOD CAUSE ASSISTANCE.**

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2. If the loss of employment is due to lay-off or closing of their current place of employment. Must provide verification of lay-off, closing. **Layoff or closing must have occurred within the past 30 days from date of application.**

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3. If the individual has an ON THE JOB INJURY. Must provide medical documentation of injury and if work related. **(Must not be eligible for Workers’ Comp. and verify the reason for denial/ineligibility for Comp.) Eligibility for Good Cause program will be based on Good Cause reason for ineligibility for WC.**

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- **DISABLED (0102)**

Individual in the assistance group or financially responsible individual has LOST EMPLOYMENT due to a non-work related injury or illness. Must provide medical documentation. **Disability is expected to last less than 9 months as per medical documentation.**

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- **DIVORCE (0303)**

The assistance group must provide verification of divorce. **Divorce must have been recent (within past 30 days) and has impacted families (parents) ability to seek and obtain employment to remain or become Self-Sufficient.**

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- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (0404)**

The individual has been a victim of domestic violence within the past three months as verified by a police report and this condition impacts the ability to be employed. The assistance group must provide verification from law enforcement or court. Required to be participating with Women’s Tri-County, counseling or actively seeking help from a support provider.

The County retains the discretion to determine whether assistance group members satisfy a listed GOOD CAUSE provision. Any Good Cause presented by an assistance group member that is not listed in the above-listed written exemptions shall not result in the awarding of an OWF GOOD CAUSE EXTENSION.

Once eligibility under good cause is established, no subsequent determination of good cause shall be made as long as all other OWF eligibility requirements continue to be met. Exceptions to this provision are as follows:

1. When an assistance group loses OWF eligibility during a good cause extension due to the imposition of a sanction due to a failure to comply with the provisions of the self-sufficiency contract. In these cases, the provisions of ORC section 5107.17 are applicable, and as a result, no new determination of good cause is necessary for the assistance group to resume OWF participation; and,
2. When an assistance group loses OWF eligibility during a good cause extension for any reason other than a self-sufficiency contract failure and there is not at least a one-day interruption in receipt of benefits, no new determination of good cause is necessary, as there was no interruption in benefits. (If there is at least a one day interruption in benefits, then a new determination of good cause needs to be made.)

Any extension of OWF assistance beyond the 60 month time limit shall be based on “HARDSHIP” as defined as any circumstances under which the CDJFS determines that the time limit is a hardship, and the CDJFS shall use the same grounds for determining federal hardship as it uses for determining state hardship.

The second part of hardship definition, which is based on the fact that the family includes someone who is temporarily or permanently unable to work because the individual has been battered, or subjected to extreme cruelty. Each assistance group will have unique circumstances to be addressed to enable the assistance group to reach economic independence and eliminate the need for assistance.

The CDJFS will consider both of the following:

- That TANF was created to provide assistance that is temporary and not as an entitlement; and
- That the CDJFS has a responsibility to assist the family in overcoming barriers and achieving self-sufficiency.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The JFS 07100 OR JFS 07200 application will be accepted to explore Extension of OWF due to GOOD CAUSE .