

OWF TIME LIMITS: KEY PROVISIONS

What are the federal and state time limits?

Federal law limits the receipt of OWF to 60 months. State law initially limits the receipt of OWF to 36 months. The assistance group then remains ineligible for 24 months. After that period, if good cause exists according to the CDHS, the assistance group may be eligible for up to an additional 24 months of OWF.

Both federal and state law allow the state/CDHS to exempt up to 20% of the average monthly number of families receiving OWF from the time limit on the grounds that they determine that the time limit is a hardship. For federal purposes, this is not applicable until an assistance group has exhausted 60 months of cash assistance. For state purposes, hardship cannot be determined to exist until the assistance group has received 36 months of OWF.

Under state law, the determination of whether the time limit is a hardship to the assistance group is a CDHS determination. When an assistance group receives OWF benefits on the basis of a hardship determination, such benefits continue to count toward the federal 60-month time limit.

Who do time limits affect?

The time limit applies to a family that includes an adult head-of-household or a spouse of the head-of-household. The provisions also apply to a family that includes a pregnant minor head-of-household, minor parent head-of-household, or spouse of such head-of-household.

What types of benefits count toward time limits?

OWF cash assistance benefits issued by warrant, voucher, check including electronic funds transfer (EFT) or, in the future electronic benefits transfer (EBT) count toward the time limit. Transportation benefits paid to an assistance group containing unemployed members also count unless such benefits meet the definition of nonrecurrent, short-term benefits. TANF cash assistance received in another state after 10/1/97 also counts.

Are there any exceptions to the time limit?

Receipt of OWF assistance for purposes of applying the time limit does not include any month in which the assistance group returns either the check, warrant or voucher uncashed or unused, or the amount of the check, warrant, voucher, EFT, or EBT. Also, when the assistance group repays the amount of an overpaid month in full, that month does not count toward the time limit.

In certain instances, an assistance group is considered eligible for OWF, but no benefit was issued, such as when an assistance group is eligible for less than \$10. Any month in which a benefit was not issued does not count toward the time limit.

What happens to the count if the assistance group splits up?

The tracking record for each required member follows the required member as the individual moves into and out of different assistance groups. The assistance group's number of months is the highest number of months of receipt by each of the required members.

What happens to any other benefits the family might be receiving (e.g., Medicaid, food stamps, and child care) when they reach their OWF time limit?

The 36-month time limit only applies to OWF. Families will still receive Medicaid, Food Stamps, Child Care assistance, PRC, Child Support Enforcement Services and other program benefits if they meet that program's requirements.

The information contained in this handout is meant as a summary of certain key provisions relating to OWF time limits. For state and federal policy requirements, reference OAC 5101:1-23-01, 5101:1-23-011, ORC 5107.18 and 45 CFR 264.1

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