

Adams County Department of Job and Family Services  
(ACDJFS)  
Ohio Works First Time Limits  
Hardship Criteria

**36 MONTH TIME LIMIT:** Section 5107.18 of the Ohio Revised Code limits Ohio Works First (OWF) to thirty-six (36) months for families that include an adult head-of-household, a pregnant minor head-of-household, minor parent head-of-household, or spouse of such head-of-household.

**20% EXEMPTION CRITERIA:** Section 5107.18 of Ohio Revised Code allows the local county department of job and family services to exempt up to 20% of the average monthly number of families receiving OWF from the time limit if it is determined the family suffers from a 'hardship'. The County Department of Job and Family Services defines hardship and determines if the OWF assistance group meets the criteria.

**ACDJFS HARDSHIP CRITERIA:** Ohio Works First (OWF) assistance groups who have reached the 36-month time limit for participation in the OWF program may be exempted from time limit if a hardship exists. The family must meet one or more of the hardship criteria described in Section A. Policy in Section B addresses limits on the number of months an OWF assistance group may receive benefits due to hardship. Section C addresses the treatment of an OWF transfer case. Section D explains the ACDJFS procedures for informing OWF assistance groups about the hardship exemption criteria.

**SECTION A**

All Ohio Works First adult assistance group members or the minor head-of-household subject to the 36-month time limit must meet one or more of these criteria in order for a hardship exemption to be considered:

- (1) The assistance group member can provide verification of domestic violence which would result in hardship to member(s) of the household, and the perpetrator of the domestic violence is not a member of the assistance group or a member of the household. Verification may consist of one or more of the following: a police report, an active civil protection order, residence at a domestic violence shelter, pending criminal domestic violence charges against the perpetrator, a criminal conviction of the perpetrator for domestic violence against a member of the assistance group, a sworn affidavit by the victim of domestic violence, or retention of an attorney coupled with cooperative steps to resolve the situation. This exemption criteria shall cease to apply if the perpetrator of domestic violence becomes a member of the assistance group or a member of the household.

(2) The assistance group member has minor or disabled children that require child care and no child care is available. This criteria is subject to verification by the ACDJFS. The assistance group must have exhausted all available community resources.

(3) The assistance group member has a 180 day reunification plan with the Adams County Children Services and ACDJFS and the assistance group member is satisfactorily participating with the case plan. Verification is required.

(4) The assistance group member is enrolled in an education/training program which has been prior approved by the ACDJFS, that is directly related to obtaining employment and the program will not end prior to reaching the 36-month time limit. The exemption criteria is allowable for no more than six (6) additional months or until the educational/training program is completed whichever occurs first.

(5) The parent(s) or caretaker of an assistance group has a serious physical illness or condition, or a serious mental illness or condition which renders the parent(s) or caretaker incapacitated for employment. The incapacity must be verified by a physician. An application for SSI or Social Security disability must be pending and the assistance group must have cooperated with CMS application procedures. If denied by CMS or SSI, the extension of benefits is denied.

(6) The parent or caretaker of an assistance group is providing medically necessary, full-time care for an immediate family member (child, stepchild, spouse, parent, stepparent, or sibling) who resides in their home. The medical necessity of remaining in the home to care for the disabled individual must be verified by a physician's statement. ACDJFS reserves the right to secure and rely upon a second opinion from a medical provider or its choice. The Assistance Group must have exhausted all available community resources.

(7) The capacity of the parent or caretaker of an assistance group to obtain self-sufficiency is being compromised by chemical dependency and the parent or caretaker is actively seeking treatment, as evidenced by current participation in an approved substance abuse treatment program. This extension is for a period not to exceed three (3) months.

## **SECTION B**

The hardship exemptions that are granted based on Section A are subject to the time and review specified in this section.

The ACDJFS staff will review the hardship exemption status of each OWF assistance group every (3) months period to determine if the assistance group continues to meet the hardship exemption criteria. The OWF assistance group exemption may be reviewed by ACDJFS staff prior to the three (3) months as needed.

If at any time during the hardship extension the OWF assistance group fails their required Self-Sufficiency Contract/Plan, the assistance group would no longer meet the hardship exemption.

The hardship exemption shall not exceed exceed twenty-four (24) months.

### **SECTION C**

Ohio Works First assistance groups that transfer to Adams County from another county shall have their hardship exemption reviewed based on Adams County's hardship criteria. Continuation of benefits will be determined by the hardship criteria as defined in Sections A, and B. Exemption status will no longer be determined by the previous county's criteria.

### **SECTION D**

ACDJFS will conduct a case conference with OWF assistance group three (3) months prior to the end of the 36-month time limit to review the following: plan for self-sufficiency, time limit regulations, support services, and hardship criteria.

The OWF assistance group can apply for continuing OWF benefits based on meeting the hardship exemption criteria after their assistance has been terminated. The OWF assistance group will be responsible for contacting ACDJFS for an eligibility appointment and the assistance group will be responsible for providing all required verification.

This Adams County Department of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS) policy is effective \_\_\_9-18-00\_\_\_.