

**Noble County
Department of Job and Family Services
Hardship Exemption Criteria**

PURPOSE:

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 5107.18 qualified individuals can participate in the Ohio Works First Program (“OWF”) for up to thirty-six months. The thirty-six month time limit rule applies to assistance group members that satisfy any of the following characteristics: the adult head of household, the spouse of the adult head of household, a pregnant minor head of household, minor parent head of household, or spouse of such a head of household.

An assistance group member is ineligible for OWF assistance after receipt of the thirty-sixth month of assistance, regardless of whether the thirty-six months of participation and assistance are consecutive. Following receipt of the thirty-sixth month of assistance, a qualified individual cannot receive further aid, absent a hardship exemption.

Ohio Revised Code §5107.18 permits the Noble County Department of Job and Family Services (“County”) to exempt participants from the thirty-six month OWF time restriction. The County may continue to extend OWF benefits to members satisfying certain exemption requirements. Pursuant to O.R.C. §5107.18 the County may exempt up to 20% of the average monthly number of OWF assistance groups from the thirty-six month time limit because of the presence of a hardship.

The County retains the sole discretion to determine whether OWF assistance group members qualify for a hardship exemption. Such determination shall be made in accordance with this policy and applicable law. If the County determines that there is the presence of a hardship that justifies an exemption within the scope of this policy and the County has not reached its 20% maximum, then the assistance group member is entitled to a hardship exemption and continued assistance for a period determined by the County.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed so as to require the County to grant any request for a hardship exemption solely because it has not reached the 20% maximum.

The County reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

HARDSHIP DEFINED

For purposes of this policy, hardship shall be defined as an event or condition a significant creating privation, suffering or adversity to the assistance group.

THE HARDSHIP EXEMPTION:

The County shall not exempt an OWF assistance group participant from OWF benefits until the participant has exhausted the thirty-six month time limit. A participant shall not be exempted prior to the grant of the thirty-six month of OWF assistance. The thirty-six month period does not have to be consecutive.

Although the County is prohibited from exempting an assistance group member from participation in OWF prior to the thirty-six month time limit, the County can make preparations for review prior to the completion of the thirty-six month time limit. The County may make decisions regarding the extension of a hardship exemption to a member prior to the conclusion of the thirty-six month time limit.

The County will hold a face-to-face meeting with an assistance group prior to the thirty-six month time limit to discuss possible solutions for resolving a potential hardship. During the interview, held prior to the expiration of the thirty-six month limit, the County shall discuss with the assistance group the presence of viable options for obtaining continued assistance. At these meetings, the County shall obtain information necessary to determine whether the assistance group is eligible for a hardship exemption. All hardship exemptions shall be reviewed on a monthly basis.

The County maintains the sole control and discretion to determine whether an OWF participant is eligible for the continued receipt of a hardship exemption. The duration of the hardship exemption is contingent upon the presence or absence of specific factors relating to the basis for the hardship exemption as set forth in this policy and the determinations of the County.

The County retains the authority to prioritize which groups are entitled to continue or begin their receipt of a hardship exemption. If the County has agreed to provide a hardship exemption for a specified duration, the County shall not revoke or limit the duration of a hardship exemption until the completion of the specified exemption period.

PROCEDURE:

Assistance groups who wish to be considered for an exemption shall make their request using the Noble County OWF Exemption Request Form. The assistance group seeking the hardship exemption must provide the County with any required documentation with the exemption request form. If a hardship exemption request is based on medical circumstances, the assistance group must provide appropriate medical documentation and be under the care of a medical professional. The assistance group shall cooperate with the County during the hardship review process.

In order to be eligible for a hardship exemption, the assistance group must comply with their self-sufficiency contract. The assistance group will be subject to the sanction process and continue to remain sanctioned until they meet compliance.

County shall make a ruling on the hardship exemption within thirty days of the date of the of the completed exemption request form. If the required documentation is not provided thirty days of the receipt of the form making the request, then the County may deny the

When
group
assistance group with the reasons for denial of a hardship request.

basis. The County shall make this

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for the purpose of aiding an assistance group member in achieving self-sufficiency.

failure of an assistance group to cooperate in any aspect of the hardship review shall be just and cause to deny a hardship request or to revoke a request that may have been previously

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reasonably necessary to monitor the progress.

OWF assistance groups that transfer in to Noble County from other counties or states shall have their hardship exemption determined by the criteria outlined in this Noble County plan and

EXEMPTION #1

assistance group includes an adult or minor head-of-household who has a serious physical or illness condition which renders him/her incapacitated for employment. In two-parent OWF both parents must meet this hardship criteria. The incapacity must be verified by a The County reserves the right to secure and rely upon opinion(s) from a medical provider(s) of its choice. The individual(s) must also be

EXEMPTION #2

The assistance group includes an adult or minor head-of-household who has been a victim of domestic violence within the last three (3) months and is actively seeking assistance from an established support provider which prevents him/her from pursuing, obtaining, and/or maintaining employment. This exemption must be verified by a police report.

The County retains the discretion to determine whether assistance group members satisfy a listed hardship exemption. Any hardship 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 hardship exemption.

The County cannot grant a hardship exemption to an OWF assistance group member once the County has filled the 20% limit.

PRIORITY OF EXEMPTIONS:

Priority will be given to the exemptions in the same order as their listing.

Donna J. Boyd, Director
Noble County Dept. of Job & Family Services

Noble County Commissioners

Date: September 21, 2000

Approved as to form:

Noble County Prosecutor

