

Trumbull County Department of Job & Family Services

Amendment of 1/1/10 is Revised Effective 4/1/11

Hardship Exemption Criteria

NARRATIVE:

The Trumbull County Job and Family Services agency has established Hardship Criteria in compliance with Ohio Revised Code Section 5107.18 (E). No more than 20% of the average monthly number of OWF participants, as determined annually by the state agency, may be exempted from the 36 month lifetime limit for participation in Ohio Works First. The agency will advise the OWF participants two (2) months prior to the anticipated expiration of assistance that they need to apply for a hardship exemption in order for a determination of eligibility for a Hardship Exemption to occur.

In order to obtain and maintain a Hardship Exemption, the adult or minor head of household must:

1. Make application for a Hardship Exemption. OWF participants responding to the notice must do so no later than 15 days from the mailing date of the notification.
2. Once a hardship is established, the participant must comply with all requirements of the agency through the self-sufficiency contract.
FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY CONTRACT ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANT AND THE AGENCY WILL RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THE HARDSHIP EXEMPTION AND THE SANCTION OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE.

The hardship criteria established by the agency does not represent any guarantees of future assistance or continued assistance. If the department determines that the hardship has been remedied, no further exemption will be given and assistance will be terminated unless the assistance group meets another hardship exemption. Each hardship criteria has been assigned a priority of approval. The agency will approve hardship exemptions based upon these established priorities criterion. If the agency reaches 18% of the allowed limit for hardship exemptions it will re-evaluate active OWF hardship cases. based upon a descending order of their assigned priority. Once the agency reaches the 20% exemption limit, those active hardship cases with a lower priority will be terminated.

The agency will establish an application review panel. This panel will be responsible for the review of each application for a hardship exemption to determine whether the individuals employment barriers meet a condition as specified in the hardship criteria. Evaluation of the application will occur within 45 days of receipt of the request for hardship exemption. The review will be conducted by reviewing the application and the case record, as well as any other documentation provided.

The panel may request that the assigned case manager contact the individual to obtain further documentation. In no event will a final determination be made until the 36th month of cash assistance is reached.

The panel will re-evaluate any cases receiving a hardship exemption at the request of the assigned case manager based on changes in the case situation or documentation received.

Attached are the hardship criteria that will be utilized by the panel. The criteria are numbered and listed in descending order of exemption. The agency reserves the right to end the hardship exemption for the criteria that is less severe, based upon the descending order, if the allowable hardship slots have been reached.

**THE TRUMBULL COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
MAINTAINS TOTAL RIGHT AND DISCRETION TO MANAGE THE
EXEMPTION SLOTS AVAILABLE FOR TRUMBULL COUNTY, AND TO DENY
OR TERMINATE AN EXEMPTION AS IS NECESSARY TO REMAIN IN
COMPLIANCE WITH ORD5107.18 (E).**

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Hardship Exemption Criteria PRIORITIES

Priority Criteria 1

Special medical or psychological condition of a child (minor or adult) or spouse that does not allow the child or spouse to be cared for in an available licensed child or adult care facility or by a private provider. *Documentation must be provided from a licensed physician that indicates both length of time that such care is needed; and that only the individual requesting the hardship exemption is able to provide care.* Consideration will also be given in situations involving a child or children expelled from school that require the adult requesting hardship to remain in the home to provide supervision. *Documentation must be provided from the child's school, courts, or counselors that substantiate that the individual requesting the hardship exemption is the sole source for supervision; and the length of time that such care is needed.* Review of the case will occur every six (6) months to determine that the need for the care by the parent/spouse continues. No consideration shall be given to a child/adult who is actively attending school. However, consideration shall be given when a child is expelled for thirty (30) days or more.

Priority Criteria 2

Individuals having a Basic Medical form (ODJFS 7302 – Available at the CDJFS) or Mental Assessment (ODJFS 7308) from a licensed physician documenting that they are unemployable ~~for a minimum of twelve (12) or more months, or who have been found disabled by the State's County Medical Services (CMS), and who have filed an application for SSI/SSA at the Social Security Administration and are pending a determination of disability by the Social Security Administration.~~ Individuals who meet the above criteria and are denied SSI or SSA and appeal this decision may receive a Hardship Exemption pending their appeal until a decision of eligibility is made on the appeal or the customer is able to return to work. ~~A Basic Medical is required to cover the entire appeal process.~~ Medicals should not be less than twelve (12) consecutive months. These individuals must be assigned to a case manager at the time hardship is established. Cooperation with all agencies, medical and/or psychological professionals responsible for administration of disability programs, treatments and/or appointments must be complied with in order to grant and maintain a hardship exemption based upon this criteria. This activity is part of the self-sufficiency contract and requires a compliance review every six (6) months. Individuals denied on a second initial application or second appeal, are limited to a total of six (6) additional months of Hardship Exemption. No further consideration of Hardship shall be made on this criteria.

Priority Criteria 3

A domestic violence victim, separated from their spouse (or significant other) and has completed a JFS03803 (OWF & Food Stamp Domestic Violence Waiver) or currently in receipt of services through Someplace Safe or other domestic violence facility, as documented by the respective Agency. Each individual granted a Hardship Exemption based upon this criteria must cooperate with the domestic violence facility and participate

in any service activity provided by the facility as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A compliance review is required every six (6) months to determine if the assistance group is cooperating with and continuing to receive domestic violence services.

Priority Criteria 4

Failure of the Agency to complete an assessment or self-sufficiency contract or employability plan for an O.W.F. participant. Such failure by the Agency must result in the O.W.F. participant not achieving self-sufficiency in the 36 month time limit for assistance. Completion of the assessment, self-sufficiency contract and employability plan must occur at the time a Hardship Exemption is given. A review of the self-sufficiency plan and employability plan is required every six (6) months while assigned a Hardship for this reason.

Priority Criteria 5

O.W.F. participants currently enrolled in and attending an approved Education and Training component as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A quarterly review of the individual's enrollment and attendance status will be conducted to determine if the individual is complying with all of the component requirements. This Hardship Exemption is not to exceed twelve (12) consecutive months.

Priority Criteria 6

Documentation from the public child care agency that the O.W.F. participant assistance group is threatened with the removal of their child(ren) due to the termination of O.W.F. assistance due to the 36 month time limit or O.W.F. families that have had their child(ren) removed from the home and are cooperating with the public child care agency through a plan of re-unification. These Hardship cases must have cooperation with the PCSA (Public Children Services Agency) as part of their self-sufficiency plan and be reviewed every six (6) months to determine that cooperation is occurring.

Priority Criteria 7

A TANF participant that has cooperated with their self-sufficiency contract, but has not reached self-sufficiency at the time of the imposition of the time limits. The TANF participant must be actively seeking better employment or attending a training program of less than six (6) months duration that will lead to employment or have a handicap or condition as documented by a professional evaluation that prevents them from working. Continued cooperation with the self-sufficiency contract is required to maintain this Exemption. A case review of the self-sufficiency contract and employability plan is required at six (6) month intervals.

Priority Criteria 8

Exhaustion of unemployment compensation within the last six (6) months of application.

as documented by the respective Agency. Each individual granted a Hardship Exemption based upon this criteria must cooperate with the domestic violence facility and participate in any service activity provided by the facility as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A compliance review is required every six (6) months to determine if the assistance group is cooperating with and continuing to receive domestic violence services.

4. _____ Failure of the Agency to complete an assessment or self-sufficiency contract or employability plan for an O.W.F. participant. Such failure by the Agency must result in the O.W.F. participant not achieving self-sufficiency in the 36 month time limit for assistance. Completion of the assessment, self-sufficiency contract and employability plan must occur at the time a Hardship Exemption is given. A review of the self-sufficiency plan and employability plan is required every six (6) months while assigned a Hardship for this reason.

5. _____ O.W.F. participants currently enrolled in and attending an approved Education and Training component as part of their self-sufficiency contract. A quarterly review of the individual's enrollment and attendance status will be conducted to determine if the individual is complying with all of the component requirements. This Hardship Exemption is not to exceed twelve (12) consecutive months.

6. _____ Documentation from the public child care agency that the O.W.F. participant assistance group is threatened with the removal of their child(ren) due to the termination of O.W.F. assistance due to the 36 month time limit or O.W.F. families that have had their child(ren) removed from the home and are cooperating with the public child care agency through a plan of re-unification. These Hardship cases must have cooperation with the PCSA (Public Children Services Agency) as part of their self-sufficiency plan and be reviewed every six (6) months to determine that cooperation is occurring.

7. _____ A TANF participant that has cooperated with their self-sufficiency contract, but has not reached self-sufficiency at the time of the imposition of the time limits. The TANF participant must be actively seeking better employment or attending a training program of less than six (6) months duration that will lead to employment or have a handicap or condition as documented by a professional evaluation that prevents them from working. Continued cooperation with the self-sufficiency contract is required to maintain this Exemption. A case review of the self-sufficiency contract and employability plan is required at six (6) month intervals.

8. _____ Exhaustion of unemployment compensation within the last six (6) months of application. Completion of the assessment, self-sufficiency contract and employability plan must occur at the time a Hardship Exemption is given. A review of the self-sufficiency plan and employability plan is required every six (6) months while assigned a Hardship for this reason.

I have read the information provided on the Hardship Exemption Application. I understand that by submitting this application for consideration for a Hardship Exemption, I am agreeing to the review of my circumstances by a committee consisting of Agency staff as well as members of the Community Planning Committee or their

designee(s). By my signature below, I am agreeing to the exchange of and disclosure of information about me with the review committee members, for the purpose of

determining eligibility for this Exemption. I realize that I may choose not to authorize the release of information to the full review committee and limit the determination of Hardship to Agency staff alone.

Client Signature

Date