

Petition/Sign Endorsement Forms Online

OEC Family Violence Option (FVO) for Ohio

The Family Violence Option (FVO) is a provision which gives states the option of waiving requirements and increasing services to families suffering from domestic violence without being penalized financially. States which choose the option can screen applicants for domestic violence while maintaining confidentiality, make referrals to counseling and other supportive services, and provide "good-cause waivers" from TANF program requirements.

The FVO is important because inflexible time limits may make it more difficult for domestic violence victims to escape the abuse and to establish economic independence. The temporary waivers under the FVO are intended to allow victims of domestic violence the time needed for a successful transition off of welfare by allowing flexibility in complying with work and job training requirements.

The FVO also allows states to waive child support cooperation requirements for domestic violence victims. Without these waivers, a recipient has to identify the father of her children and supply other information required by the state in order to qualify for TANF benefits. This can be dangerous for a battered woman since violence may increase when a legal action is taken against an abuser.

For more information [click here \(link to FVO Endorsement\)](#)

OEC Work After Good Education is Success (WAGES) Campaign

The Ohio Empowerment Coalition is committed to working for a just society free of poverty in which each person can receive quality supports necessary to reach her full potential in life. We envision a Society that recognizes the dignity and worth of each human being, and a Society that is committed to social and economic justice. The WAGES Campaign is not our end-all, be-all vision, but beginning steps towards reaching that vision. We urge the Ohio General Assembly to adopt:

EDUCATION & JOB TRAINING ALLOWANCES:

- Education, including G.E.D., post-secondary and vocational should count as the entire work requirement for *Ohio Works First* (OWF) recipients until they complete their degree. (The OEC supports recipients concentrating their time on earning a degree or completing a vocational or job-training program. Since recipients must do at least a 30 to 35 hours/weekly work requirement, their time should not be wasted at "workfare" sites that do not provide them a marketable skill or degree. In light of the three year time limit, they should be allowed to use these mandated hours in a way that

will train them for employment that will support their families. A degree is oftentimes the best route to leaving poverty.)

- The time clock should not tick for *Ohio Works First* participants enrolled full-time in educational or vocational programs until they complete their degree or program. The participants must be in compliance with their self-sufficiency agreements and making progress towards completion of their degrees or programs. (In addition to #1, recipients would be allowed to complete their educational or vocational programs or degrees before the three year time clock even started ticking. This would further assist them in finding livable wage jobs without the additional pressure of a time clock on top of the stresses of learning/studying and raising children.)
- Extend Ohio Works First exemptions at the state level for all recipients who are complying with work requirements. (Twenty states allow recipients to receive extensions of time on cash assistance as long as they are complying with work requirements and making a good faith effort to find employment. This policy would prevent the cut off of unemployed families by an arbitrary time limit if they are making an effort.)

PROTECT VULNERABLE FAMILY MEMBERS:

- Provide cash assistance to children in households when the parents reach the three year time limit without adequate means of income support. **Children should not have to bear the brunt of harsh policies that lead to homelessness and removal of children from their homes due to acute poverty. Providing cash assistance will preserve the family unit to keep mothers and children united.**
- Adopt the Family Violence Option (FVO) for Ohio to protect domestic violence victims. **Under the FVO, domestic violence victims would be protected from time limits, sanctions, and work requirements while they received help to escape their batterers.**
- Exempt disabled recipients and caregivers of disabled family members from time limits, sanctions and work requirements. Caregiving of disabled family members, though done out of love and caring, should nonetheless count as work.
- Exempt grandparents raising grandchildren on Ohio Works First from time limits, sanctions and work requirements.

“MAKE WORK PAY” POLICIES:

- “Make Work Pay” policy: *Ohio Works First* time limit should not tick for part-time workers receiving partial cash benefit checks. Part-time work would be 20 hours per week if feasible; otherwise 30 hours per week. (Many recipients are working at jobs that still make them eligible for partial OWF cash assistance. Currently, the time clock is counted on each month that a partial cash benefit check is issued. Once the three year time limit is reached, the partial cash assistance is cut off. The OEC

supports working recipients being allowed to “stop the clock” on partial cash assistance benefits so that the additional income can stabilize a family’s financial situation and reward them for working. In effect, this cash is a work subsidy.)

- Establish a State Earned Income Tax Credit that would help to stabilize families moving from welfare to work who are in low-wage jobs.*(This policy would reward work and help to further stabilize a low-income family’s financial situation).*

FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT:

- Monitor implementation of public assistance policy across Ohio to ensure that all applicants and recipients of the various public assistance programs (ex. food stamps, child care vouchers, etc...) receive consistent and respectful treatment by caseworkers and receive full rights of due process under the law.

For more info call the Ohio Empowerment Coalition (Toll-free) 1-877-862-5179 or [click here. \(link to WAGES Petition\)](#)