

441—41.30(239B) Time limits.

41.30(1) *Sixty-month limit.* Assistance shall not be provided to a FIP applicant or recipient family that includes an adult who has received assistance for 60 calendar months under FIP or any state program in Iowa or in another state that is funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The 60-month period need not be consecutive.

a. An “adult” is any person who is a parent of the FIP child in the home, the parent’s spouse, or included as an optional member under subparagraphs 41.28(1) “b”(1), (2) and (3). In two-parent households or households that include a parent and a stepparent, the 60-month limit is determined when either a parent or stepparent has received assistance for 60 months.

b. “Assistance” shall include any month for which the adult receives a FIP grant. Assistance received for a partial month shall count as a full month.

41.30(2) *Determining number of months.*

a. In determining the number of months an adult received assistance, the department shall consider toward the 60-month limit:

(1) Assistance received even when the parent is excluded from the grant unless the parent, or both parents in a two-parent household, are supplemental security income (SSI) recipients.

(2) Assistance received by an optional member of the eligible group as described in subparagraphs 41.28(1) “b”(1) and (2). However, once the person has received assistance for 60 months, the person is ineligible but assistance may continue for other persons in the eligible group. The entire family is ineligible for assistance when the optional member who has received assistance for 60 months is the incapacitated stepparent on the grant as described at subparagraph 41.28(1) “b”(3).

b. When the parent, or both parents in a two-parent household, have received 60 months of FIP assistance and are subsequently approved for supplemental security income, FIP assistance for the children may be granted, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

c. When a minor parent and child receive FIP on the adult parent’s case and the adult parent is no longer eligible due to the 60-month limit on FIP assistance, the minor parent may reapply for FIP as a minor parent living with a self-supporting parent.

d. In determining the number of months an adult received assistance, the department shall not consider toward the 60-month limit any month for which FIP assistance was not issued for the family, such as:

(1) A month of suspension.

(2) A month for which no grant is issued due to the limitations described in rules 441—45.26(239B) and 441—45.27(239B).

(3) Rescinded IAB 1/9/02, effective 3/1/02.

(4) Rescinded IAB 1/9/02, effective 3/1/02.

e. The department shall not consider toward the 60-month limit months of assistance a parent or pregnant person received as a minor child and not as the head of a household or married to the head of a household. This includes assistance received for a minor parent for any month in which the minor parent was a child on the adult parent’s or the specified relative’s FIP case.

f. The department shall not consider toward the 60-month limit months of assistance received by an adult while living in Indian country (as defined in 18 United States Code Section 1151) or a Native Alaskan village where at least 50 percent of the adults were not employed.

41.30(3) *Exception to the 60-month limit.* A family may receive FIP assistance for more than 60 months as defined in subrule 41.30(1) if the family qualifies for a hardship exemption as described in this subrule. “Hardship” is defined as a circumstance that is preventing the family from being self-supporting. However, the family’s safety shall take precedence over the goal of self-sufficiency.

Families with an adult as defined in subrule 41.30(1) who is not a U.S. citizen, a battered alien as described at 41.23(4), or a qualified alien under 8 United States Code Section 1641 as described in subrule 41.23(5) are prohibited from receiving more than 60 months of FIP assistance. The family of an adult who is a nonqualified alien cannot meet the requirements of paragraph “e” since the department is precluded from using public funds to provide a nonqualified alien with family investment agreement or PROMISE JOBS services by Iowa Code sections 239B.8 and 239B.18 and rule 441—41.24(239B).

Eligibility for the hardship exemption shall be determined on an individual family basis. A hardship exemption shall not begin until the adult in the family has received at least 60 months of FIP assistance.

a. Hardship exemption criteria. Circumstances that may lead to a hardship exemption may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) Domestic violence. “Domestic violence” means that the family includes someone who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty. It includes:

1. Physical acts that resulted in, or threatened to result in, physical injury to the individual.
2. Sexual abuse.
3. Sexual activity involving a dependent child.
4. Being forced as the caretaker relative of a dependent child to engage in nonconsensual sexual acts or activities.

5. Threats of, or attempts at, physical or sexual abuse.

6. Mental abuse.

7. Neglect or deprivation of medical care.

(2) Lack of employability.

(3) Lack of suitable child care as defined in 441—subrule 93.134(1).

(4) Chronic or recurring medical conditions or mental health issues, or an accident or disease, when verified by a professional. The applicant or recipient shall follow a treatment plan to address the condition or issue.

(5) Housing situations that make it difficult or impossible to work.

(6) Substance abuse issues. A family requesting a hardship exemption due to substance abuse shall be required to obtain clinical assessment and follow an intensive treatment plan.

(7) Having a child whose circumstances require the parent to be in the home. This may include, but is not limited to, a child as defined in rule 441—170.1(234) or a child receiving child welfare, juvenile court or juvenile justice services. The safety of the child shall take precedence over the goal of self-sufficiency.

(8) Rescinded IAB 1/8/03, effective 1/1/03.

(9) Other circumstances which prevent the family from being self-supporting.

b. Eligibility for a hardship exemption.

(1) Families may be eligible for a hardship exemption when circumstances prevent the family from being self-supporting. The hardship condition shall be a result of a past or current experience that is affecting the family’s current functioning. Current experience may include fear of an event that is likely to occur in the future. The definition of the hardship barrier relies upon the impact of the circumstances upon the family’s ability to leave FIP rather than the type of circumstances.

(2) Families determined eligible for more than 60 months of FIP shall make incremental steps toward overcoming the hardship and participate to their maximum potential in activities reasonably expected to result in self-sufficiency.

(3) Barriers to economic self-sufficiency that were known and existing before the family reached the 60-month limit shall not be considered as meeting eligibility criteria for hardship unless the individual complied with PROMISE JOBS activities offered to overcome that specific barrier.

c. Requesting a hardship exemption.

(1) Families with adults as defined in subrule 41.30(1) who have or are close to having received 60 months of FIP assistance may request a hardship exemption. Requests for the hardship exemption shall be made on Form 470-3826, Request for FIP Beyond 60 Months. In addition, families that have received FIP for 60 months shall complete Form 470-0462 or Form 470-0466 (Spanish), Health and Financial Support Application, as described at rule 441—40.22(239B) as a condition for regaining FIP eligibility. Failure to provide the required application within ten days from the date of the department’s request shall result in denial of the hardship request.

(2) In families that request FIP beyond 60 months, all adults as defined in subrule 41.30(1) shall sign the request. When the adult is incompetent or incapacitated, someone acting responsibly on the adult’s behalf may sign the request.

(3) Requests for a hardship exemption shall not be accepted prior to the first day of the family's fifty-ninth month of FIP assistance. The date of the request shall be the date an identifiable Form 470-3826 is received in any department of human services or PROMISE JOBS office. An identifiable form is one that contains a legible name and address and that has been signed.

(4) To receive more than 60 months of FIP assistance, families must be eligible for a hardship exemption and meet all other FIP eligibility requirements.

(5) When an adult as defined in subrule 41.30(1) who has received FIP for 60 months joins a recipient family that has not received 60 months of FIP assistance, eligibility shall continue only if the recipient family submits Form 470-3826 and is approved for a hardship exemption as described in subrule 41.30(3) and meets all other FIP eligibility requirements.

(6) When an adult as defined in subrule 41.30(1) joins a recipient family that is in an exemption period, the current exemption period shall continue, if the recipient family continues to meet all other eligibility requirements, regardless of whether the joining adult has received FIP for 60 months.

(7) When two parents who are in a hardship exemption period separate, the remainder of the exemption period, if there is a need, shall follow the parent who retains the current FIP case.

d. Determination of hardship exemption.

(1) A determination on the request shall be made as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days following the date an identifiable Form 470-3826 is received in any department of human services or PROMISE JOBS office. A written notice of decision shall be issued to the family the next working day following a determination of eligibility or ineligibility for a hardship exemption.

The 30-day time standard shall apply except in unusual circumstances, such as when the department and the family have made every reasonable effort to secure necessary information which has not been supplied by the date the time limit expired; or because of emergency situations, such as fire, flood or other conditions beyond the administrative control of the department.

(2) When a Health and Financial Support Application is required to regain FIP eligibility, the 30-day time frame in rule 441—40.25(239B) shall apply.

(3) Income maintenance shall determine eligibility for a hardship exemption.

(4) The family shall provide supporting evidence of the hardship barrier and the impact of the barrier upon the family's ability to leave FIP. The department shall advise the applicant or recipient about how to obtain necessary documents. Upon request, the department shall provide reasonable assistance in obtaining supporting documents when the family is not reasonably able to obtain the documents. The type of supporting evidence is dependent upon the circumstance that creates the hardship barrier.

(5) Examples of types of supporting evidence may include:

1. Court, medical, criminal, child protective services, social services, psychological, or law enforcement records.

2. Statements from professionals or other individuals with knowledge of the hardship barrier.

3. Statements from vocational rehabilitation or other job training professionals.

4. Statements from individuals other than the applicant or recipient with knowledge of the hardship circumstances. Written statements from friends and relatives alone may not be sufficient to grant hardship status, but may be used to support other evidence.

5. Court, criminal, police records or statements from domestic violence counselors may be used to substantiate hardship. Living in a domestic violence shelter shall not automatically qualify an individual for a hardship exemption, but would be considered strong evidence.

6. Actively pursuing verification of a disability through the Social Security Administration may not be sufficient to grant hardship status, but may be used to support other evidence.

(6) The department shall notify the family in writing of additional information or verification that is required to verify the barrier and its impact upon the family's ability to leave FIP. The family shall be allowed ten days to supply the required information or verification. The ten-day period may be extended under the circumstances described in 441—subrule 40.24(1) or 441—paragraph 40.27(4) "c." Failure to supply the required information or verification, or refusal by the family to authorize the department to secure the information or verification from other sources, shall result in denial of the family's request for a hardship exemption.

(7) Rescinded IAB 12/12/01, effective 11/14/01.
(8) Rescinded IAB 12/12/01, effective 11/14/01.
(9) Recipients whose FIP assistance is canceled at the end of the sixtieth month shall be eligible for reinstatement as described at 441—subrule 40.22(5) when Form 470-3826 is received before the effective date of cancellation even if eligibility for a hardship exemption is not determined until on or after the effective date of cancellation.

(10) When Form 470-3826 is not received before the effective date of the FIP cancellation and a Health and Financial Support Application is required for the family to regain FIP eligibility, the effective date of assistance shall be no earlier than seven days from the date of application as described at rule 441—40.26(239B).

(11) Eligibility for a hardship exemption shall last for six consecutive calendar months. EXCEPTION: The six-month hardship exemption ends when FIP for the family is canceled for any reason and a Health and Financial Support Application is required for the family to regain FIP eligibility. In addition, when FIP eligibility depends on receiving a hardship exemption, the family shall submit a new Form 470-3826. A new hardship exemption determination shall be required prior to FIP approval.

(12) FIP received for a partial month of the six-month hardship exemption period shall count as a full month.

(13) There is no limit on the number of hardship exemptions a family may receive over time.

e. Six-month family investment agreement (FIA). Families who request a hardship exemption shall develop and sign a six-month family investment agreement (FIA) as defined at rule 441—93.109(239B) to address the circumstances that are creating the barrier. All adults as defined in subrule 41.30(1) shall sign the six-month FIA. The six-month FIA shall contain specific steps to enable the family to make incremental progress toward overcoming the barrier. Each subsequent hardship exemption shall require a new six-month FIA. Failure to develop or sign a six-month FIA shall result in denial of the family's hardship exemption request.

Families that request a hardship exemption shall be notified verbally and shall be hand-issued the notice of a scheduled appointment for orientation and FIA development. If the notice of appointment cannot be hand-issued, at least five working days shall be allowed from the date the notice is mailed for a participant to appear for the scheduled appointment for orientation and FIA development unless the applicant agrees to an appointment that is scheduled to take place in less than five working days.

Failure to attend a scheduled interview as required, except for reasons beyond the adult's control, shall result in a denial of the family's hardship exemption request. In two-parent families, both parents shall be required to participate in any scheduled interview. When the adult is incompetent or incapacitated, someone acting responsibly on the adult's behalf may participate in the interview.

(1) PROMISE JOBS staff shall provide necessary supportive services as described in 441—Chapter 93 and shall monitor the six-month FIA. Periodic contacts shall be made with the family at least once a month. These contacts need not be in person. Time and attendance reports shall be required as specified at rule 441—93.135(239B).

(2) The six-month FIA shall be renegotiated and amended under the circumstances described at 441—subrule 93.109(2).

(3) Any family that has been granted a hardship exemption and that does not follow the terms of the family's six-month FIA will have chosen a limited benefit plan in accordance with 441—Chapters 41 and 93.

f. Any family that is denied a hardship exemption may appeal the decision as described in 441—Chapter 7.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 239B.