

What Can I Do if My Benefits Are Sanctioned in Ohio?



What is a sanction?

- If you get Supplemental Nutritional Assistance (SNAP, sometimes known as Food Stamps) or cash assistance (Ohio Works First, or OWF), you must agree to a self-sufficiency plan and work assignments
- If you do not follow your plan or do the work assignments, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) may stop your benefits (a sanction)



What should I do if I am sanctioned?

- To continue getting benefits ask for a hearing within 15 days of the notice
- You can still ask for a hearing up to 90 days from the date of the notice, but will not continue to get benefits if it has been longer than 15 days



How do I fight a sanction at a hearing?

Contact SEOLS as soon as possible to seek assistance

To win at your hearing, you need to show you had a good reason for not following your plan or work requirements. This could include:

- Death in the family
- Illness/doctor's visit (get a doctor's note)
- Job interview
- Lack of childcare
- Denied reasonable accommodation
- Transportation issues



What happens if you are sanctioned?

- If you are sanctioned, your OWF or SNAP benefits will stop for a period of time
 - 1st sanction = 1 month
 - 2nd sanction = 2 months
 - 3rd sanction = 6 months (may also lose Medicaid for 6 months)
- You may be eligible for benefits again after the sanction period
 - Talk with your local JFS about what you need to do to be eligible again. You may have to complete missed hours, submit a new application, or sign a compliance form to get your benefits back



Tips for avoiding sanctions

- Let your caseworker know ahead of time if you must miss an assignment
- Get a doctor's excuse if sick
- Keep a calendar of all hours worked and all hours missed

- Request a reasonable accommodation if you have a health condition that makes it harder or impossible to complete your requirements
- If you do not understand something, ask a JFS worker to explain it to you
 - Make sure you have time to read and understand your self-sufficiency plan.
 - Don't sign anything you have not read or do not understand
- Keep copies of all documents you give to JFS and always get a document receipt
- Call your caseworker right away to discuss any problems and keep a record of your calls.

The information on this flyer is not legal advice. If you are seeking representation or legal advice, please contact SEOLS. An attorney-client relationship does not exist between you and SEOLS.

How to contact SEOLS:

www.seols.org

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