

## Domestic Violence and Public Benefits



### What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence has both an everyday meaning and a legal meaning. For the purposes of public benefits, domestic violence is when someone in your household is hurt by someone who is or was a partner, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, or other part of your household or family.

Domestic violence includes hitting, hurting, threatening, or making you feel afraid by following you or preventing you from moving around freely.



### Do I have to report domestic violence to my case worker?

You are not required to report domestic violence to any case worker. However, you can report domestic violence to any case worker. If you want to tell your case worker about domestic violence, ask to talk to your case worker in private.

Any information you share with your case worker is confidential. However, case workers are required to report child abuse.



### What happens if I report domestic violence to my case worker?

If you are the victim of domestic violence, some requirements in the Ohio Works First (OWF) and food stamp (also known as SNAP or food assistance) programs may be waived. That means those requirements will not apply to you while the waiver is in effect.

**Work Requirements:** You may be temporarily excused from working, looking for work, going to school, or attending job trainings if any of these activities would put you or your children in danger of domestic violence or interfere with your ability to escape domestic violence.

**Child Support:** You may be temporarily excused from cooperating with child support rules if the agency thinks that cooperating would not be in the best interests of the child or would make it more difficult for the caretaker or child to escape domestic violence. If the agency makes that decision, you may not have to cooperate with establishing paternity, establishing a child support order, or enforcing a child support order.



### Do OWF time limits apply to victims of domestic violence?

In Ohio, a person can get OWF benefits for only 36 months. If you are a victim of domestic violence, you may get OWF benefits beyond the 36-month limit if losing the OWF money would put you or your children in danger of domestic violence or interfere with your ability to flee domestic violence.



## How does domestic violence affect subsidized housing?

There are several types of subsidized housing benefits, including a Housing Choice Voucher (also known as a Section 8 voucher), public housing, and tax-credit housing.

If you get subsidized housing benefits and report domestic violence, you have legal protections. Generally, you cannot be denied subsidized housing benefits based on the fact that you are a victim of domestic violence. Also, you cannot be evicted because of the domestic violence.

Also, if you or a member of your household are unsafe in your unit and you live in subsidized housing, you can request an emergency transfer to a safe unit.

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**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.**

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