

**YOU CAN HELP HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES KEEP THEIR
RI WORKS CASH BENEFITS
June 2010**

- At the end of June, 850 families around the state will lose their RI Works cash benefits because they will reach the **new 24 month time limit**. Other families will lose assistance because of the 48 month time limit.¹
- Families can continue to receive cash assistance benefits if they request a “hardship exception”.
- To receive “hardship benefits” the family needs to submit a one-page hardship request form to the local DHS office. Families should do this as soon as possible to avoid a break in benefits but can submit this request even after benefits stop.
- Hardship benefits are granted for three months at a time and the family can reapply.
- The family can qualify for hardship benefits based on any of the reasons below that prevent a parent from having a job. The parent will need to participate in an appropriate activity to keep the hardship benefits.

Reason	Required Activity	Proof that needs to be submitted with hardship application
High Unemployment Rate	Job search at One Stop Center	None
Parent is disabled	Short term (less than 6 months): comply with doctor’s orders. Long term: attend program at Office of Rehabilitative Services and apply for SSI benefits	Doctor’s Form: C-1b
Parent needs to be at home to care for disabled spouse or child	Consult with DHS worker on options	Doctor’s Form: C-1b for spouse or child
Family is homeless (living in shelter, on street or with another family for less than 90 days)	Housing search	Letter from shelter provider. If not available, as requested by DHS worker
Domestic violence	Work with Family Violence Option Advocate	Documentation by Family Violence Option Advocate

You can help by:

- Identifying families that have been notified that their case will close because of the time limit or that have already lost benefits
- Help the parent submit the hardship request form and gather the necessary documentation. You can obtain the necessary documents at www.povertyinstitute.org

For more information, contact Heidi Collins at 456.2751 or hcollins@ric.edu

¹ The RI Works program has two time limits: a 48 month lifetime limit and a limit of 24 months in any 60 month period. Months of cash assistance received since May 1997 count against the 48 month limit. Months of assistance received since July 2008 count against the 24 month limit.