

Checklist for NJ First Act Exemption Request:

Please ensure that all steps are followed diligently to facilitate a smooth application process:

1. **Application Form:**

Use the current form available on the NJ First website. Outdated forms, especially those with a fax number, are not accepted.

2. **Signature:**

The application form must include a wet signature, which is a handwritten signature using pen and ink on a hard copy document.

3. **Personal Statement:**

Provide a narrative of your exemption grounds: personal hardship or employer critical need. You will need to include documents that support your narrative (see below).

4. **Save and reference the Acknowledgment Email regarding the documentation that proves your hardship:**

Carefully read, save, and refer to the acknowledgment email, which contains essential details about the process and documentation requirements. Failure to include the necessary supporting documentation most often results in an unfavorable outcome.

5. **Supporting Documentation:**

Include documents that validate and prove your hardship or critical need. The acknowledgement email you received includes specific expectations of the types of documents the committee seeks. Demonstrating hardship often requires substantial documentation. For example, a claim of financial hardship will require proof of income, a comparative budget, and corresponding supporting documents that show the validity of your budget numbers, proof of housing comparisons between New Jersey and the other locale, and so forth. By way of another example, proof of a medically involved personal hardship typically includes a hand-signed letter on official letterhead from a medical provider validating your narrative.

6. **Employer Critical Need (ECN):**

Ensure that your ECN letter adheres to all criteria listed in the acknowledgment email. (The most common deficiency is failure to provide a “wet” signature—a signature in ink.) Letters should not include personal hardship rationale; instead, focus on the employer’s need.

7. **Documentation Deadline:**

Submit all required materials by the specified deadline. Failure to do so may result in consideration of your request being postponed. (In some cases, the Agenda must be locked early, so do not unnecessarily delay in addressing application deficiencies.)