Mahoning County
Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program
Biennial Renewal
Revised October 1, 2015

The Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) Program is designed to provide benefits and services to low-income families to help with essential support needed to move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These supports include nonrecurring, short-term, crisis-oriented benefits and ongoing services that are directly related to the four objectives of the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) Program which do not meet the Federal definition of assistance. Nonrecurring, short-term assistance addresses discrete crisis situations, not to exceed four months in duration and dependent upon federal, state and local funding.

Assistance Group Composition

PRC benefits and services are available to a family Assistance Group (AG) which includes a minor (under the age of 18) child living with a parent or caretaker relative or a pregnant individual as defined in Sections 5108.01 and 5108.06 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Some PRC benefits and services are available to the non-custodial parent of a minor child who receives or is eligible for but does not receive assistance, lives in the county but does not live in the same household as the minor child. The scope of benefits can vary for assistance groups.

Eligibility

Eligibility for PRC benefits and services is contingent upon the AG's demonstration and verification of the need for financial assistance and/or services and whether or not the county determines the provision of PRC benefit or service will satisfy that need. In order for eligibility to be determined, the income of the AG must be compared to the economic need standard established for the benefits and services requested. The economic need standards are based upon the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guideline measures which shall be updated annually when the federal guidelines are released. When determining eligibility for the PRC AG, the AG's gross income must be equal to or less than the economic need standard.

Income

Total gross income of all members of the AG is included, excluding that which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for Ohio Works First (OWF) or the Disability Assistance (DA) program. Per OAC 5101:1-24-20, the following types of income are excluded as income and resources in determining financial eligibility for PRC benefits and services: Child Support payment distributions made by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; Drug discounts and transitional assistance received under the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement, and Modernization Act; Monetary allowances paid under Section 401 of the Veteran's Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 effective December 1, 2000; Payments authorized and made by the Veterans Administration to provide certain benefits including a monthly allowance for children with covered birth defects who are the natural children of women veterans who served in the

Republic of Vietnam from February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975.

All income which is received and/or expected to be received during the thirty (30) day budget period is considered when determining financial need. The 30-day budget period begins 30 days projected from the date of the PRC application unless this period of time does not accurately reflect expected income. In this instance, income received 30 days prior to the date of application may be utilized. Contracted agencies have the option of using self-declaration to verify income.

Resources

Liquid resources in excess of $2,000 available to the household may be considered when determining financial need.

Residence

Services or benefits will be available only to those residing in Mahoning County. Residence will be established by living in the county voluntarily with the intent to remain permanently or for an indefinite period of time. Residence is also established by an applicant who is not receiving assistance in another state or county and who has entered the county with a job commitment, whether or not currently employed.

Ineligible Family AGs

Federal and State law must be adhered to when providing PRC benefits and services. Listed below are federal and state prohibitions based on 42 U.S.C.608 section 431 of PRWORA (as amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1965 and Balanced Budget Act of 1997), and Ohio Revised Code:

1. No assistance for families without a minor child.
2. No assistance to a single individual, unless such individual is pregnant.
3. No medical services except for family planning services.
4. No benefits or services to an individual who is not a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien.
5. No assistance for families that fraudulently receive assistance under the OWF and PRC programs until repayment, in full, occurs (also known as an Intentional Program Violation).

In addition, AGs will not be eligible in the following situations:

1. No assistance for fugitive felons or those in violation of parole.
2. No assistance to families where the head of household has failed to pursue paternity and child support or who are not actively pursuing paternity and child support, as applicable.
3. No assistance to families where the minor children are not attending school or the equivalent (for example: home schooling).
4. No assistance to families that fraudulently received assistance under any other program administered by the agency until repayment in full occurs.

5. No assistance to families who have an outstanding overpayment resulting from an administrative error or an inadvertent household error until a repayment agreement is signed by the party responsible for reimbursement.

Frequency

A family may be eligible for several PRC benefits or services over time. The agency will have the final decision as to whether further benefits or services are appropriate for the PRC AG. When an individual has received benefits or services in another PRC AG, the agency shall determine whether further benefits or services are appropriate.

Program Integrity

The PRC AG will be given a choice of providers/vendors when appropriate and convenient. Under no circumstances will an employee of the Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services be an approved vendor. A PRC AG that is discovered to have fraudulently received or improperly disposed of PRC benefits or services will be required to reimburse the Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services the full cost of the benefit or service and may be subject to possible prosecution. Providing false and/or misleading information on the application will render the household ineligible for any PRC benefit or service for a twenty-four-month period.

Program Operation

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of families applying for PRC benefits or services, the program shall be continuously in operation according to the standards of policy and procedure as set forth within this document. The covered benefits or services or the amounts specified for the benefits and services listed in the section detailing the scope of coverage may not be reduced, limited or restricted unless the program is amended.

Scope of Benefits/Services

The attached chart contains the scope of benefits and services provided under the PRC program in Mahoning County. The chart also contains the specific assistance groups served, the economic need standards for the particular benefit/service, caps on the benefits/services, and the targeted groups. The targeted groups are used to customize service delivery specific to the family's circumstances.

Standard of Promptness

The focus of this program is to provide and authorize benefits and services within ten (10) days of receipt of a signed application. In some instances, this time frame will not be met due to unavoidable delays on the part of the applicant or the agency.

The ten-day standard of promptness is intended to stress the importance of processing PRC applications in an appropriately efficient manner. The denial of a PRC application due only to the

expiration of the ten-day period is not an acceptable eligibility determination practice. The AG record shall contain sufficient documentation of the case activity on the PRC application, including an explanation of unexpected or unavoidable delays in processing the application.

Community Resources

Every effort must be made to explore the availability of resources within the local community prior to the authorization of a PRC benefit or service. For the purposes of the PRC program, the 'community' may be defined to include areas beyond the county's boundaries. The PRC AG is required to apply for and utilize any program, benefit, or support system which may reduce or eliminate the presenting need. County staff determining eligibility for the PRC program must be aware of any community resources which could assist a family in need of immediate services. The PRC application provides a section for written documentation of attempts to locate and utilize community resources

Applicant Responsibility

An applicant applying for a PRC benefit or service is responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information, and cooperating in the eligibility determination process. An applicant must utilize available income and resources in meeting the presenting need. This includes ongoing assistance programs such as OWF, DA, SSI, and food stamps, as well as unemployment compensation, social security, and special energy programs. There is no PRC eligibility if the AG fails to make use of available income or resources that are in an amount sufficient to meet a portion of, or the entire amount of the presenting need.

Application

The MCDJFS 3800 'Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) Program for Mahoning County is to be used when a family is applying for PRC benefits and services. The application and any other information gathered during the eligibility determination process shall be kept in the ongoing OWF, Medicaid, and/or Food Stamp AG's records. If the AG is not in receipt of ongoing assistance, a separate case shall be maintained for the PRC application and related verifications. PRC benefits and services provided to noncustodial parents shall also be kept in a separate AG case. During the eligibility determination process the applicant will be advised of their hearing rights if they disagree with the notice of approval or denial.

Eligibility factors, time restraints, and amounts available to pay for the various PRC benefits and services covered must be explained. Anyone applying for PRC services must receive appropriate information about, referrals to, and access to Medicaid, food stamps, child care assistance and other programs that provide benefits that could help make the transition to work successful. Voter registration as prescribed by the secretary of state should also be available to PRC applicants (reference section 329.051 of the ORC).

PRC assistance will be authorized with the expectation that the PRC AG will be able to function without additional or with limited agency help. Benefits and services shall be provided which

directly lead to or can be expected to lead the family to becoming self-sufficient by accomplishing one of the four purposes of TANF:

a. Providing assistance to needy families;

b. Ending the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;

c. Preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and

d. Encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Notice of Approval/Denial

If it is determined that an application for PRC is approved, the ODHS 4074, "Notice of Approval of Your Application for Assistance" shall be mailed. If it is determined that an application for PRC is denied, the ODHS 7334, "Notice of Denial of Your Application for Assistance" shall be mailed.

Once eligibility for PRC is established, authorization shall occur and a payment for the benefits or services will be generated. Authorization may occur at any time during the period beginning on the date the PRC is approved. Payment will be authorized within 30 days, unless additional information is needed, and will be made to the vendor.

Client Registry Information System - Enhanced (CRISE) computer system shall be utilized to track services received from county to county through the statewide clearance process. The CRISE application entry process (ARAD) shall be used to register the assistance group and PRC driver - formerly emergency assistance (AEOEA) will record the manual issuance of benefits and services. PRC services provided from Family and Children's First, Early Start and the School Readiness programs may be tracked and recorded though the ODJFS 2827, Monthly Financial Statement.

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
<u>Job Preparation Services and Benefits</u> Categories:				
Job readiness assessments	Not to exceed $250 in a lifetime	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% of Federal Poverty Level	Parents and caretakers relatives with minor children
Pre-employment background check	Not to exceed $250 in a lifetime			
Testing for state licenses, board certification, commercial drivers' license	Not to exceed $250 in a lifetime			
GED preparation	Not to exceed $250 in a lifetime			
CSEA case management services. Employment and training support activities designed to obtain or retain employment or improve employment activities.	Limited to availability of TANF funding	Non-custodial parent with minor child		Non-custodial parent with minor child in Child Support Enforcement system and has court or administrative ordered child support. Individuals who are employed, underemployed or unemployed.

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
<u>Work Support/retention services</u> Expenses for tools/equipment/supplies/job support clothing not provided by employer. **(limited to clients referred by MCDJFS Work Activities Program)**	Not to exceed $500 in a lifetime Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% of Federal Poverty Level	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that obtain employment of at least 20 hrs. per week
Job retention bonus $250 job retention bonus after the second month of continuous employment at same job and $450 job retention bonus after the fifth month of continuous employment at the same job that $250 bonus was issued	Limited to once every 5 years Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% of Federal Poverty Level	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that become ineligible for TANF cash assistance due to employment of at least 30 hours per week.

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
Contingency Services Rent	Actual amount needed to prevent court ordered eviction up to $600. Must present court ordered notice.	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL Family must have sufficient income to maintain prevention status	Families at risk of losing current employment through no fault of their own.
Utilities	Actual amount needed to prevent disconnection up to $250. There will be no payment if service is already off. ** Not to exceed $850 for both (once every twenty-four months).			Utilities Must show a payment history of no more than 3 missed payments over the previous twelve (12) months
Essential Household items/appliances (Bed, washer, dryer, refrigerator, stove).	Repair or purchase of essential household items/ appliance, up to maximum payment of $250 per item per application (once every seven (7) years). Original invoice required from vendor. If not addressed in a lease agreement a landlord statement is needed to verify essential household item is not provided at residence. Limited to availability of TANF funding			

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
Transportation Services and Benefits Bus Pass	Not to exceed 4 months Limited to once per year Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children and Non-custodial parents	200% FPL	Employed parents or caretaker relatives of minor children and Employed Non-custodial parents. Must be employed 20 hours per wk. and making at least federal minimum wage.
Gas allowance to assist with purchase of fuel. First month gas allowance issued upon PRC approval, subsequent months of gas allowance will be issued after receipt of pay stubs indicating full month of employment.	$60.00 monthly gas allowance if employed 20 – 29 hours per week $90.00 monthly gas allowance if employed 30 or more hours per week Not to exceed 4 months Limited to once per year Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that become ineligible for TANF cash assistance due to employment. Must provide written documentation of how fuel costs are incurred.

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Targeted Population
Summer Youth Employment Program Serve persons from a TANF-eligible family	Provides paid employment up to $10 per hour for youth ages 16-24 from May 1, 2015 to October 31, 2015 Provide bus pass for transportation, work related items such as uniforms, tools, licenses or certifications, case management activities, job coaches & mentors	As defined by TANF eligibility guidelines.	200% Federal Poverty Guidelines	Youth ages 16-17: youth is a minor child in a needy family and is in school (youth may be 18 if they are a full time student in a secondary school Youth ages 18-24: in a 'needy' family that has a minor child Youth ages 18-24: that have a minor child and be considered 'needy' Youth may be non-custodial parents as long as they are considered 'needy' and have a minor child Youth in the temporary or permanent custody of a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) who are placed in a licensed foster care setting, that are between the ages of 16-17 years of age or 18 years of age if they are a full time student in a secondary school

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Targeted Population
Diversion/Contingency Services Diversion Program for Temporarily Incapacitated Persons. Program subject to availability of funds.	Provides single cash payment specific to the AG's total monthly expenses not to exceed $1,500. (once yearly from date of application) Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	Must meet OWF eligibility guidelines	OWF applicant who is temporarily unable to work meeting the following 3 conditions: 1. Employed 3 out of 4 months preceding the application, 2. Verification is provided from a physician verifying the temporary condition, 3. Plan exists to return to work within 4 months from the date employment was suspended.
Contingency Program for persons affected by temporary employer shutdowns of more than 60 days.	Provides single cash payment specific to the AG's total month expenses not to exceed $1,500. (once yearly from date of application) Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	Must meet OWF eligibility guidelines	OWF applicant applying for self and children who is temporarily unable to work due to a temporary employer shutdown. Must meet the following 3 conditions. 1. Employed with the employer up to shut down date 2. Provide verification from employer of return date within 4 months from the date employment was suspended. 3. Apply for unemployment benefits

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Targeted Population
High School Graduation Assistance Program Serve persons from a TANF-eligible family	Provides Senior Graduation Dues up to $150 per student for youth ages 16-24 from January, 28 2015 to June 6, 2015 Senior Graduation Dues to include: fees, cap and gown, etc.	As defined by TANF eligibility guidelines.	200% Federal Poverty Guidelines	Youth ages 17 and under: youth is a minor child in a needy family and is verified by their high school to be graduating in Spring 2014 (youth may be 18 if they are a full time student in a secondary school Youth ages 18-24 in a 'needy' family that has a minor child Youth ages 18-24 that have a minor child and be considered 'needy' Youth may be non-custodial parents as long as they are considered 'needy' and have a minor child Youth in the temporary or permanent custody of a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) who are placed in a licensed foster care setting, that are between the ages of 16-24 years of age or 18 years of age if they are a full time student in a secondary school .

Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
Job Readiness Training Short-term training, not to exceed eighteen (18) months Short-term education expenses, as deemed appropriate to achieve self-sufficiency	Not to exceed $3000 in a lifetime combined for short-term training and education expenses. And only if not eligible through Mahoning Columbiana Training Association with the exception of STNA	Parents with minor children Caretaker relatives with minor children Non-custodial parents	200% of Federal Poverty Level	Individuals who are employed, underemployed, or unemployed but employable
Family Disaster Assistance Benefits to assist with damage or loss sustained as a result of natural disaster upon declaration by the Governor	Cap based on amount allocated by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children and individuals living in their households	200% of FPL	Families sustaining disaster-related damage or loss upon disaster declaration by the governor

The Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services shall implement the PRC Program as written above.

All of the terms and conditions of the PRC Plan shall remain in full force and effect and are hereby adopted and reaffirmed. The PRC Plan is in compliance with ORC Chapter 5108.

Signature