

GEAUGA COUNTY
PREVENTION, RETENTION AND CONTINGENCY PLAN
Effective October 01, 2015

The Geauga County Prevention, Retention and Contingency Plan will be reviewed by the Family Services Planning Committee on an annual basis and changes and modifications to the plan will be made as deemed necessary pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code. Operating procedures to implement the Geauga County PRC plan will be developed by Geauga County Job and Family Services.

The Geauga County Prevention, Retention and Contingency Plan recognizes that barriers to obtaining or maintaining employment may be immediate in nature or may be fundamental to the ability of an individual or family to function in a manner conducive to long term, meaningful employment and self-sufficiency. The Geauga County Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Plan is intended to address the needs of the individual as well as the family, recognizing that in order for an adult family member to be successfully employed, the home environment must be stable.

The goals of the Geauga County PRC plan are:

- To enable clients to obtain a job, maintain a job, or advance to a better job in order to meet the basic needs of the family.
- To provide services to families that are of value to the goals of employers, educators, and the courts.
- To place an emphasis on the family unit as a positive force in self-sufficiency.
- To provide flexible, appropriate solutions for clients, case managers, counselors, teachers, and employers based upon the needs of the client and his or her family.
- To provide fair, accessible and meaningful assistance to eligible clients given the resources available to GCJFS.
- To prevent reliance on and divert eligible clients from ongoing cash assistance.

The PRC program is designed to provide benefits and services to needy families and low-income employed families who are in need of help with essential supports to move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These supports include non-recurrent, short-term, crisis-oriented benefits and ongoing services that are related to self-sufficiency which do not meet the federal definition of assistance. Non-recurrent, short-term assistance addresses discrete crisis situations which do not provide for needs extending beyond four months. These non-recurrent benefits and services may encompass more than one payment a year, as long as the payment provides short-term relief and addresses a discrete crisis situation rather than meeting ongoing or recurrent needs. These benefits and services are consistent with the federal definition of “non-assistance” which includes, but is not limited to:

- Non-recurrent, short-term benefits that:
 1. are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;
 2. are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs;
 3. will not extend beyond four months.
- Work Subsidies
- Supportive services such as transportation provided to families who are employed

- Services such as counseling, case management, peer support, information and referral, transitional services, job retention, job advancement, and other employment related services that do not provide basic income support.

Services and benefits shall be provided which directly lead to, or can be expected to lead to the Assistance Group becoming self-sufficient by accomplishing one or more of the four purposes of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):

- Purpose 1 *Providing assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own home, or in the homes of relatives.*
- Purpose 2 *Ending the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.*
- Purpose 3 *Preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies.*
- Purpose 4 *Encouraging the formation and maintenance of two parent families.*

ASSISTANCE GROUP (AG) COMPOSITION

At a minimum, an eligible AG must consist of a minor child who resides with a parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian or legal custodian (unless otherwise determined by federal statute) or consist of an individual in the third trimester of pregnancy. No family is eligible for PRC assistance unless the AG includes a minor child who resides with the parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian.

A child may be “temporarily absent” from the home and still qualify for PRC as defined by Section 5101:1-3-04 of the Ohio Administrative Code and section 5107.10(E) of the Ohio Revised Code. During the period of temporary absence the child is considered to be residing with the parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian. An eligible AG may also consist of a minor child residing with a parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian and other members of the household (who may or may not be related to the minor child) who may significantly enhance the family’s ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency, provided that they have been a household member for at least 60 days.

Some PRC benefits and services may also be available to the non-custodial parent of a minor child who lives in the county and does not live in the same household as the minor child.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for PRC is dependent upon the AG's demonstration and verification of need for financial assistance and/or services. 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 and must be equal to or less than the standard (unless otherwise specified in the scope of coverage.) The economic need standards are based upon current federal poverty guideline measures as updated and published by ODJFS periodically. With the exception of Early Childhood Development and Home Visitation Services, eligibility must be determined PRIOR to service delivery in order for an application to be considered. Geauga County Job and Family Services will be the final authority for all decisions regarding eligibility for PRC programs and services and for the allocation of funds to support PRC programs and services.

Income

The total gross income, both earned and unearned, of all members of the PRC AG shall be counted except for the gross earnings of a minor child. This includes all income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for assistance programs such as Ohio Works First (OWF). All income which is received or expected to be received during the thirty (30) day budget period is considered when determining economic need. The 30 day budget period begins 30 days projected forward from the date of the PRC application unless the period would not accurately reflect expected income. In this instance, income received 30 days prior to the date of application may be utilized.

For cases in which satisfactory income verification cannot be obtained, the implementation of verification practices that are reasonable and prudent should occur when determining countable income. A signed JFS 7341 form ("Applicant/Recipient Authorization of Release Form") or other similar release should be obtained from the applicant for an inquiry. Verification may be obtained by phone. Verifications received by verbal report will be clearly documented in the AG's PRC record, including the name, position or relationship to the AG of the supplier of the information, the date the information was received, the amount of the verified income, and the name of the GCJFS worker obtaining the information. Customer self-declaration of income may be accepted by GCJFS for certain benefits/services, in accordance with GCJFS procedures.

The following are examples of unearned income which must be counted. (These are examples only and are not intended to be an all-inclusive list):

Unearned Income

- RSDI benefits
- Alimony and Child Support
- Veteran Administration benefits
- Worker's Compensation benefits
- Lump sum payments (including tax refunds)
- Unemployment Compensation
- Pension and retirement benefits

- Strike benefits
- Investment income
- Rental income
- OWF or SSI payments

Earned Income

Earned income is income for which the AG member must perform some type of labor or service.

- Earnings from employment
- Earnings from self-employment
- Strike benefits if striker is performing services
- Training allowances

Residence

PRC benefits and services are available to residents of the county in which they reside. Residence is established by living in the county voluntarily with the intent to remain permanently or for an indefinite period. Residence is also established by an applicant who is not receiving assistance from another county and has entered the county with a job commitment or seeking employment, whether or not currently employed.

If an AG that contains a minor child who has been adjudicated abused, neglected or dependent in the Geauga County Juvenile Court moves out of Geauga County, but Geauga County JFS maintains protective supervision over the adjudicated child, the AG may still be considered eligible for certain PRC services. Section 5101:1-3-04 of the Ohio Administrative Code provides guidance as to residence in light of temporary absence of one or more members of the AG.

Demonstration of Need

Eligibility for PRC benefits is dependent upon the demonstration and verification of need, and determination by Geauga County Job and Family Services that provision of the PRC benefit will satisfy the need and is in furtherance of the following goals:

- Prevent the AG from reliance on or divert them from ongoing cash assistance and guide them to self-sufficiency by helping them through the presenting crisis.
- Help the AG members retain employment and thereby achieve or maintain self-sufficiency.
- Meet a contingent need which, if not satisfied, threatens the health, safety or well-being of one or more AG members.

Satisfaction of the above criteria will be determined exclusively by Geauga County Job and Family Services.

Ineligible Family Assistance Groups

Federal and State law shall be adhered to when providing PRC benefits and services. Listed below are federal and state prohibitions based upon 42 U.S.C.608, section 431 of PRWORA (as amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997) and the 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 pre-pregnancy 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 to families that fraudulently receive assistance under the OWF or PRC programs until repayment occurs. (See ORC §5101.83).

Families who are under sanction due to non-cooperation with OWF regulations will not be eligible for PRC benefits or services. Sanctioned families will remain eligible for Job Preparation and Retention Services and/or Early Childhood Development and Home Visitation Services provided that the services will assist the family in reaching self-sufficiency.

PROGRAM OPERATION

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of families applying for PRC, the program shall be continuously in operation according to the standards of policy and procedure as set forth within this document and other GCJFS procedure. The covered benefits or services or the amounts specified for the benefits and services listed in the schedule of coverage may not be reduced, limited, or restricted unless the program is amended or unless otherwise stated within this GCJFS PRC plan. The operation of the Geauga County PRC program is contingent upon the availability of funding from the State of Ohio and the Federal Government.

SCHEDULE OF BENEFITS AND SERVICES

Attachment 2 of this plan contains the schedule of benefits and services provided under this Geauga County PRC plan and the detail which relates to each specific benefit.

STANDARD OF PROMPTNESS

The focus of the program is to provide and authorize benefits and services within ten (10) days of the 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.

In the event of unavoidable delay, the denial of an application due solely to the expiration of the ten day period is not an acceptable eligibility determination practice. The AG record should contain sufficient documentation of the case activity on a PRC application, including an explanation of unexpected or unavoidable delays in the processing of an application.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The availability of resources within the community should be explored prior to the authorization of PRC. A PRC AG should apply for and utilize any program, benefit, or supportive service which may reduce or eliminate the presenting need. Personnel authorizing PRC should be aware of any community resources that could assist a family in need of immediate services.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

An applicant for PRC is responsible for completing all requested necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information and cooperating in the eligibility determination process. An applicant must utilize available income and resources to meet the presenting need. This includes on-going assistance programs such as OWF, SSI, food assistance, as well as unemployment compensation, social security, and energy assistance programs. Applicants who are unemployed, or underemployed, are encouraged, and in some instances required, to take advantage of the One-Stop Center to assist with employment needs. There is no PRC eligibility if the AG fails to make use of available income or resources, for which the AG may be eligible, that are in an amount sufficient to meet a portion of, or the entire amount of the presenting need.

APPLICATION

The Geauga County PRC application process has been developed for use when a family is applying for PRC benefits or services. The application (JFS form 3800) and other information gathered during the eligibility determination process will be incorporated in the ongoing OWF, Medicaid, and/or Food Stamp AG record. If the AG is not in receipt of ongoing assistance, record will be maintained for the PRC application and related verifications. Electronic document imaging will be utilized to record and file PRC applications and verifications. PRC benefits and services provided to non-custodial parents will be maintained in a record separate from the record of the AG containing the custodial parent and child(ren), if such record exists. All PRC applicants will receive a Voter Registration Form along with a Voter Registration Notice of Rights and Declination. Registering to vote or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance provided by GCJFS. GCJFS will assist any applicant wishing to register to vote if requested.

For services Pregnancy Prevention Services a JFS form 3800 will not be required as application. For that program no application will be necessary.

For certain benefits/services, as specified in GCJFS procedures, the JFS 3800 PRC application will serve as a self-declaration for income eligibility and no other verification will be required. PRC applicants who are recipients (not under sanction) of FAP or OWF benefits at the time of PRC application and continuing through the time of eligibility determination on that PRC application will be deemed to be income eligible without further income verification documentation required.

Eligibility factors, time restraints and funding available to pay for various benefits and services covered will be explained to the applicant. All applicants for PRC services must receive appropriate information about, or referrals to, Medicaid, Food Assistance, child care assistance, and other programs that provide benefits that may help successful transitions to self-sufficiency.

The PRC application must be received and approved prior to any services being performed under the PRC program. With the exception of Early Childhood Development and Home Visitation Services, PRC applications for services that have already been provided or completed will not be considered for PRC authorization.

AGs receiving cash assistance through Ohio Works First that are required to participate in work activities will be deemed eligible for the PRC Enhanced Employment and Training Program (Employment, Training and Job Readiness support services) by virtue of the AG's demonstration and verified need of Ohio Works First assistance. Enhanced Employment and Training services provided through this provision including post-placement follow-along will be considered needed to assist the AG in reaching and maintaining self-sufficiency pursuant to ORC 5107.66. AGs receiving cash assistance through Ohio Works First will be required to submit a PRC application for all other benefits and services provided through this plan.

NOTICE OF APPROVAL/DENIAL

If it is determined that an application for PRC benefits is approved, the JFS form 4074 ("Notice of Approval of your Application for Assistance") will be mailed or otherwise delivered to the applicant. If it is determined that an application for PRC is denied, the JFS form 7334 ("Notice of Denial of your Application for Assistance") will be mailed or otherwise delivered. Notices of approval or denial shall comply with applicable regulation including OAC §§5101:6-2-02 and 5101: 6-2-03.

ATTACHMENT 1

The following provision concerning temporary absence of a child is hereby adopted for the purposes of the GCJFS PRC plan:

ORC §5107.10:

- (E) An assistance group may continue to participate in Ohio works first even though a public children services agency removes the assistance group's minor children from the assistance group's home due to abuse, neglect, or dependency if the agency does both of the following:
 - (a) Notifies the county department of job and family services at the time the agency removes the children that it believes the children will be able to return to the assistance group within six months;
 - (b) Informs the county department at the end of each of the first five months after the agency removes the children that the parent, guardian, custodian, or specified relative of the children is cooperating with the case plans prepared for the children under section 2151.412 of the Revised Code and that the agency is making reasonable efforts to return the children to the assistance group.
- (2) An assistance group may continue to participate in Ohio works first pursuant to division (E)(1) of this section for not more than six payment months. This division does not affect the eligibility of an assistance group that includes a woman at least six months pregnant.

The following definition of specified relatives is hereby adopted for the purpose of the GCJFS PRC plan:

ORC § 5107.02:

- (K) "Specified relative" means the following individuals who are age eighteen or older:
 - (1) The following individuals related by blood or adoption:
 - (a) Grandparents, including grandparents with the prefix "great," "great-great," or "great-great-great";
 - (b) Siblings;
 - (c) Aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces, including such relatives with the prefix "great," "great-great," "grand," or "great-grand";
 - (d) First cousins and first cousins once removed.
 - (2) Stepparents and stepsiblings;
 - (3) Spouses and former spouses of individuals named in division (K)(1) or (2) of this section.

ATTACHMENT 2

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGE

Benefits and Services

Geauga County Job and Family Services PRC plan

Services that may be provided under the PRC plan are:

JOB PREPARATION AND RETENTION SERVICES					
Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
<p>Purpose of all job preparation and retention services:</p> <p>Services and benefits which assist applicants in gaining employment, retaining employment, and becoming self sufficient</p>	<p>For all Job Preparation and retention services/ benefits:</p> <p>TANF Purpose 1 and 2</p>		<p>For all Job Preparation and retention services/ benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parents with minor children -Specified relatives with minor children -Noncustodial parents residing in Geauga County with Court ordered child support 		<p>For all Job Preparation and Retention Services/ Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Households with at least one employed adult member -Households with at least one adult member who is an active participant of <i>Ohio Means Jobs-Geauga County</i>. - OWF/FAET Participants in compliance with <i>Work Activity</i> requirements
Job readiness assessments		\$500.00 per 12 month period		150% FPL	
Testing for licenses etc.		\$500.00 per 12 month period		150% FPL	
Employment, training, and job readiness support services		No individual cap		150% FPL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Adult basic education -GED preparation -Occupational training -Education related expenses (for example, books, fees, testing) 		Up to \$4000.00 per 12 month period, not to exceed \$8000.00 in a five year period		175% FPL	*Note: Must support an in-demand occupation as recognized by ODJFS Labor Market Information or verified pending employment.
Short term subsidized employment		Not to exceed 6 months or a total of \$2160.00, whichever is less		150% FPL	

JOB PREPARATION AND RETENTION SERVICES (continued)

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
Uniforms/clothing		Actual cost: Limited interview clothing - one outfit, must be recommended by employment, training and job readiness case manager or Workplace staff		150% FPL	
TANF Summer Youth Employment Program (Dates determined annually by ODJFS.)	TANF Purpose: 1 and 2	No individual cap. Wage reimbursement no higher than \$10.00 per hour.	Youth ages 14-17, as long as the youth is a minor child in a needy family and is in school. (Youth may be age 18 if they are a full time student in a secondary school.) Youth ages 18-24 as long as they are in a needy family that also has a minor child. Youth ages 18-24 that have a minor child and are considered needy. Youth ages 18-24 that are non-custodial parents and are considered needy.	200% FPL	Employed Youth Unemployed Youth Youth needing work experience

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
<p>Transportation benefit purpose:</p> <p>Short term transportation which will enable applicants to travel to and from sites where they may gain employment, retain employment and become self sufficient</p>	<p>For all Transportation benefits:</p> <p>TANF purpose 1 and 2</p>		<p>For all Transportation benefits:</p> <p>Parents with minor children</p> <p>Specified relatives with minor children</p>		<p>For all Transportation benefits:</p> <p>-Households with at least one employed adult member or adult member with a specific verified pending employment which will commence within one week of PRC approval</p> <p>- OWF/FAET Participants in compliance with <i>Work Activity</i> requirements</p>
Transit passes		Limited to \$100.00 in a calendar year		150% FPL	
Auto insurance		Limited to \$250.00 in a calendar year		150% FPL	
Individual gas vouchers		Vouchers up to \$30.00 per voucher, limited to \$150.00 total per year, issued no more than one voucher at a time		150% FPL	
Auto repair		Up to \$500.00 per instance, not to exceed \$1000.00 in a 12- month period		150% FPL Applicant to apply applicant resources in excess of \$500	

CONTINGENCY BENEFITS

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
Contingency benefits purpose: Emergency needs threatening health, safety, decent living arrangement (Air conditioners are not included unless required as evidenced in a medical statement)	TANF purpose for all Contingency benefits: 1, 2, and 4	See benefit	Assistance Group for all contingency benefits: Parents with minor children Specified relatives (as defined in ORC §5107.02(K)) with minor children (See attachment 1)		For all contingency benefits: -Households with at least one employed adult member -Households without an employed adult member when the adult member agrees to participate in <i>Ohio Means Jobs-Geauga County</i> . - OWF/FAET Participants in compliance with <i>Work Activity</i> requirements - Families with children at risk for abuse or neglect - Victims of Domestic Violence
Utility shutoff Bulk fuel for heat Rent/mortgage past due at least 30 days		Actual amount per episode up to \$500 in 12 month period per assistance group ("AG")		150% FPL	Electric and Gas customers MUST enroll in PIPP Plus, if eligible, to receive assistance. <i>Note:</i> Customers enrolled in PIPP Plus who fail to make their PIPP Plus payments are not eligible for utility assistance.
Personal expenses: Examples include but are not limited to: Child restraint seats, Winter coats and other items related to health and safety		\$200 in a 12month period		150% FPL	
Basic structure home repairs: Examples include but are not limited to roof, wall, plumbing, etc.		Up to \$500, limited to one time in 12 month period		150% FPL	

CONTINGENCY BENEFITS (continued)

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
Repair/purchase of major appliance(s)		Up to \$500 limited to one time in a 12 month period		150% FPL	
Purchases of bed frame, mattress, box spring, youth beds, cribs.		Up to \$500 limited to one time in a 12-month period		150% FPL	
Relocation benefit- Moving expense to relocate limited to: those individuals who have secured employment who are required to move out of state as a result OR..... those who are victims of domestic violence		Actual cost up to \$2000 one time only		150% FPL	
Emergency Food distributed through Food Pantries	TANF purpose - 1	Up to four pantry visits in a 12 month period.	Parents with minor children, Specified relatives with minor children.	based on FPL level established by the pantry, not to exceed 200%	Employed individuals, under employed individuals, unemployed individuals, Families with children at risk for abuse or neglect, Victims of domestic violence.

CHILD WELFARE KINSHIP NAVIGATOR SERVICES

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
<p>Fiscal incentive supports for permanent kinship families accepting judicial custody of children. As established by rule by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.</p> <p>-Training, respite care, kinship placement approval, kinship home study, evaluations, family stability</p>	TANF purpose for all Child Welfare Kinship Navigator Services: 1	<p>Cap for all child welfare Kinship Navigator Services:</p> <p>Limited to amount of actual need per episode, not to exceed \$1000 per AG in a 12 month period</p> <p>Cap as established by ODJFS rule</p>	<p>Assistance group for all child welfare Kinship Navigator Services:</p> <p>Specified relatives (see definition in Attachment 1) with a child other than their own residing in their home</p>	200% FPL	Target group is defined to include those persons listed in ORC 5107.02(K)
<p>Medical services are excluded (Medical services are defined as those services which are Medicaid reimbursable without regard to AG status as to Medicaid or provider status as to Medicaid)</p> <p>Day care is excluded</p>					

PREGNANCY PREVENTION SERVICES

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
<p>Outreach and public awareness services through the school system</p>	TANF purpose: 3	None	AG not relevant	Without regard to income	Target group: Children and adolescents enrolled in elementary or secondary school

FAMILY STABILITY/CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Service/benefit	TANF Purpose	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Group	Target Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Family Counseling -Vocational and Educational Counseling -Independent Living Skills -Wrap-Around Programs -Family Preservation and Reunification Services -Respite Care -Case Management Services -Child Welfare -Contingency Benefits <p><i>CANNOT USE PRC FUNDS FOR MEDICAL SERVICES</i></p>	TANF purpose: 1	\$2,000.00 per 12 month period. Contingency benefits capped at \$1,000.00 in a 12 month period. Or as limited by PCSA Kinship policy.	Parents with minor children Specified relatives and/or kinship families with minor children	200% FPL	Families engaged through Alternative Response with the PCSA. Families engaged through Traditional Response with the PCSA when prevention is the primary goal. Families engaged through Traditional Response with the PCSA when the child/children are temporarily absent from the home and reunification is the primary goal.