# SHELBY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES
# PRC PLAN

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 1, 2015 (Biennial Review)

## INTRODUCTION

The Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) was established in Shelby County to help families overcome barriers to achieving or maintaining self-sufficiency. The program is designed to provide benefits and services to families who are in need of help with essential supports to move out of poverty, become self-sufficient, maintain/reunite their family, or receive special Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funded designated services.

All services must meet one of the four purposes of TANF which are:

1. Assistance so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the home of relatives;
2. End the dependence of families on governmental benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and,
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

PRC, by design, has been developed to provide benefits and services that are NOT considered "assistance". When a benefit or service falls within the definition of "assistance", there is a set of consequences for the family, including time limits, child support assignment, and data reporting requirements. The following benefits and services do not constitute "assistance" and are, therefore, allowable under the PRC program:

1. Non-recurrent, short-term financial related benefits that
   - Are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode;
   - Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and
   - Will not extend beyond four months.

2. Employment retention services, including transportation, case management, equipment, uniforms, tools, training, that enable families to become or maintain economic self-sufficiency.

3. Services that enable families to;
   - maintain their children in their homes;
   - maintain children in a home of a relative; or
   - meet special needs of their children with designated TANF services, i.e. Help Me Grow.

## ASSISTANCE GROUP (AG) COMPOSITION

For PRC benefits or services to be authorized an AG must include:

1. a minor child who resides with a parent, kinship relative, legal guardian or legal custodian;
   *NOTE: An AG with a child "temporarily absent" from the home may still be eligible for PRC benefits/services. Please see the Cash Assistance Manual for definition for a temporary absence.*
2. a pregnant individual with no other minor children; or
3. a non-custodial parent living in Shelby County in need of services in order to adequately financially support a child who also resides in Shelby County. Services may include employment-related expenses, financial management services, job search, job placement, education, and job training services.

***An assistance group is defined as all household members and must include one of the above (#1, #2, or #3)***

## ELIGIBILITY

In order to receive PRC benefits and services a member of the AG must be:

1. a citizen of the United States; or
2. a qualified alien; and
3. a resident of Shelby County.

Eligibility for PRC benefits and services is contingent upon the AG meeting the financial and service eligibility requirements as determined the SCDJFS. All eligibility conditions are set forth in the section entitled **ELIGIBILITY/SCOPE OF BENEFITS/SERVICES.** Based upon different benefits/services, eligibility conditions will vary from situation to situation. All eligibility is based upon some financial criteria. Eligibility for benefits/services will range from 90% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) based on family size (see Attachment 1 for current FPL standards). Additionally, determination of financial eligibility for benefits/service will vary from verification to AG declaration.

### Countable Income

1. The total gross monthly income, both earned and unearned, of all members of the AG shall be counted, except for excluded income listed below. Earned income is cash received as part of employment, whether it is self-employed or thru an employer. Unearned income includes Social Security, Child Support, Unemployment Compensation, Retirement, etc.
2. All countable income is calculated based upon a thirty-day budget period which begins on the date of the PRC application. If this does not accurately reflect expected income, the SCDJFS may, at its discretion, use the 30-day income prior to the PRC application.
3. If the PRC applicant is unable to provide income verification, the SCDJFS must have a signed/dated Release of Information to contact the parties necessary to obtain verification. Failure of the applicant to sign such a release will result in denial of services/benefits.

### Excluded Income

1. Child Support payments assigned to the State of Ohio.
2. All income that is federally excluded in the determination of eligibility for federal needs-based programs, such as SSI.
3. Gross earnings of a minor child.
4. Drug discounts and transitional assistance received under the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act at Section 1860D-31 of the Social Security Act.

**Residence**

PRC benefits/services are available to residents of Shelby County. Residence is established by living voluntarily with the intent to remain permanently or for an indefinite period. Persons residing in a Domestic Violence Shelter are considered to be residents of the county.

## INELIGIBLE AG'S/INDIVIDUALS

The following AG's and/or individuals are ineligible for PRC benefits/services:

1. AG's without a minor child.
2. Single individuals who are not pregnant.
3. AG's requesting medical or child care services.
4. AG's requesting payment of out-of-the-home child placement costs.
5. Non-citizens or non-qualified aliens.
6. Any household member who is under a current OWF sanction or Food Stamp sanction (contingency services only).
7. AG's who have an outstanding fraudulent OWF/PRC overpayment are ineligible until entire overpayment is paid in full.
8. AG's who, at the determination of the SCDJFS, so formulate their spending habits so as to constitute need or financial eligibility.
9. AG's applying for benefits/services when available PRC services/benefits will not eliminate/reduce the need, i.e. partial payment of rent will not forestall eviction. Such determination is at the sole discretion of the SCDJFS.

## PRC FRAUD/OVERPAYMENTS

PRC Fraud and overpayment procedures will mirror the section of the Cash Assistance Manual that regulates the same issues for OWF assistance.

## PROGRAM OPERATION

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of applicants, the SCDJFS shall continuously operate a PRC program during each fiscal year according to the standards contained in this plan. When necessary, due to reasons at the discretion of the SCDJFS, to reduce or eliminate certain benefits/services, the SCDJFS will amend this plan.

## STANDARD OF PROMPTNESS

It is the intent of the SCDJFS to authorize benefits/services within 15 (fifteen) days of the receipt of a completed PRC application. In some instances, this timeframe may not be met due to unavoidable delays on the part of the agency or applicant.

Applications will not be denied solely to the expiration of the 15 day period. Mitigating circumstance, i.e. waiting on income verification beyond the control of the applicant, will be documented in the case record.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The availability of resources within the community shall be explored prior to the authorization of PRC benefits/services.

## APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

PRC applicants are responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all required information, and cooperating in the eligibility determination process. Failure to cooperate constitutes conditions for denial of the application. Such failure shall be documented in the case record.

## APPLICATION

The SCDJFS shall use an appropriate application for PRC services. Once an application has been approved and a customer begins receiving Prevention or Retention services, the customer may finish the program, as stated on the approval form, regardless of continued eligibility. However, should the customer apply for other PRC services, eligibility must be determined based on current eligibility criteria.

At the time of application, the voter registration application is available as part of the application packet to persons applying for PRC services.

All applicants will be advised of their right to a state hearing regarding their eligibility for PRC benefits/services. All applicants will be given a copy of the ODHS 4059 Explanation of State Hearing Procedures.

## FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION SERVICES

The PRC Program can be used to provide assistance to a family or to a child who is at risk of becoming involved with the child protective services system. A county may design its program to help alleviate a family crisis that could lead to the removal of children from their home, or to help a family so that the children can be safely returned to their family.

Also included as part of these services is the Juvenile Court Liaison program. This program provides a link between juvenile court and the school system for youth on probation or at risk of being on probation. It provides a communication system between youth, families, and schools for youth experiencing truant and/or criminal or behavioral problems. Services include case management, academic services, and support services.

Application for PRC or Family Preservation and Reunification services may be made by an adult family member, his designee, a contracting agency, or a Public Children Service Agency representative applying on behalf of a child in or being placed in an emergency shelter setting which may include a foster home, group home.

Pursuant to ORC rule 3101:2-39-06 and 07 the Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services may provide the following family preservation and reunification services to a child and his parent, guardian or custodian as the AGENCY determines NECESSARY and subject to the availability of unencumbered funds:

Kinship/Relative Supportive Services (rent and utility assistance, bedding, clothing, car seats, etc.)
Case Management, including custody and non-custody cases
Diagnostic Services
Transportation Services
Mentoring
Emergency Shelter
Parent Education
Homemaker/Home Health Aide/Family Coaching
Respite Care (Max. of 30 days)
Short Term out of home care in foster family home or group home (Max. of 30 days)
Rent and Utility Assistance

***Other services, which in the judgment of Shelby County DJFS staff, will prevent the need to permanently remove a child from his or her home or to facilitate reunification of a child to his or her home.***

The PRC Program may also be used to provide Community Outreach to the residents of Shelby County and may be designed to prevent problems or at least prevent community and individual conditions from becoming more severe. Activities may include the use of billboards, print, and broadcast media, and other general community information/awareness activities designed to inform a general or targeted population about community needs and available services.

# PREVENTION SERVICES

Prevention services are provided to help accomplish the following TANF/PRC Program purposes:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
- To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

# ELIGIBILITY/SCOPE OF BENEFITS

| Service/Benefit | Conditions | Eligibility | Cost Cap | Need Standard | Time Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family Preservation (see previous page for details) | SCDJFS Discretion | Declaration | SCDJFS Discretion | 200% FPL | As determined by SCDJFS |
| Family Reunification (see previous page for details | SCDJFS Discretion | Declaration | SCDJFS Discretion | 200% FPL | As determined by SCDJFS |
| Community Outreach | SCDJFS Discretion | As determined by the SCDJFS | SCDJFS Discretion | As determined by the SCDJFS | As determined by SCDJFS |
| Diversion | Able-Bodied Applicants for TANF and/or Food Stamps | Declaration | Agency Direct Services | 200% FPL | 60 days in 12 month period |
| Training, Employment, & Career Advancement Services | Adults seeking assistance with employment and/or training-related services, including non-custodial parents | Declaration | Agency Direct Services and/or SCDJFS Discretion | 200% FPL | As determined by SCDJFS |
| Youth Education and Employment Programs | Youth in Transition | Declaration | SCDJFS Discretion | 200% FPL | As determined by SCDJFS |

# CONTINGENCY SERVICES

Contingency services are provided to help accomplish the following TANF/PRC Program purpose:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

# ELIGIBILITY/SCOPE OF BENEFITS

| Service/Benefit | Conditions | Eligibility | Cost Cap | Need Standard | Time Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rent | AG must have an eviction notice or have emergency need for housing as verified by SCDJFS (phone call, etc.). Payment must stop eviction for at least 60 days. Benefits are not available for AG's under an OWF or FSET sanction. Can be used for deposits. | Verification | $500.00 | 200% | once in a 12 month period |
| Utilities | AG must have a shut off notice & payment must prevent shut-off or return service for at least 60 days. Will use agency discretion when bill is not in household member's name (only with supervisory approval). Deposits and/or reconnect fees can be authorized. | Verification | $500.00 | 200% | once in a 12 month period |

## CONTINGENCY SERVICES CONTINUED

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Emergency Shelter | AG must be residents of Shelby County and in need of emergency shelter due to circumstances beyond the AG's control; or leaving a Domestic Violence Shelter. | Declaration at the discretion of the SCDJFS | $500.00 | 200% | once in a 12 month period |

# RETENTION SERVICES

Retention services are provided to help accomplish the following TANF/PRC Program purposes:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

# ELIGIBILITY/SCOPE OF BENEFITS

| Service/Benefit | Conditions | Eligibility | Cost Cap | Need Standard | Time Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Services/items determined necessary by the SCDJFS for an applicant to enter or maintain employment which includes, but is not limited to tools, clothing shoes or transportation. Transportation reimbursement rate will mirror the rate used for Medicaid Transportation in our agency. (See current rates.) For Retention Services, the applicant must have participated in a SCDJFS Employment & Training Program within the previous three (3) months. | SCDJFS Discretion | Declaration | $250.00 over a 3 month period | 150% FPL | over a 3 month period. Individuals may receive Contingency Services in addition to Retention Services within the same 12 months. Individuals may receive Retention Services once in a 12 month period. |

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

TANF Youth Employment services are provided to help accomplish the following TANF/PRC Program purposes:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

The Youth Employment Program will provide services and activities that will assist eligible youth in finding and maintaining employment. Services and activities may include, but are not limited to, job readiness (soft skills) training, job placement, job coaching, mentoring, and case management.

## ELIGIBILITY/SCOPE OF BENEFITS

| Service/Benefit | Conditions | Eligibility | Cost Cap | Need Standard | Time Limit |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enable low income TANF-eligible youth to gain valuable work experience while earning a paycheck to help meet basic needs. | Conditions will follow eligibility criteria established by the state | Declaration | Wage/hour per state guidance | 200% | Timeline established by the state |

The Shelby County Department of Job and Family Services reserves the right to authorize PRC benefits/services costs solely at its discretion, based upon determination of need. This amendment to the PRC Plan is effective October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017.

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