

## **Allen County Department of Job and Family Services Prevention, Retention and Contingency Plan**

Effective April 1, 2007

The Allen County Department of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS) Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Program is designed to help families overcome immediate barriers to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. PRC assistance will be authorized with the expectation that the Assistance Group (AG) will then be able to function without ongoing cash assistance from the agency. Services are provided to **prevent** an AG from reliance on Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance. PRC services are also provided to help people **retain** employment. **Contingency** services are provided to meet a presenting need which, if not satisfied, threatens the safety, health or well being of one or more minor members of the AG. Assistance is limited to the amount and type of services actually required, not to exceed the parameters established herein.

Every effort must be made to explore the availability of community resources prior to the authorization of PRC. An applicant is required to apply for and utilize any program, benefit, or support system that may reduce or eliminate the request for financial assistance and/or services. This may include a requirement to attend budget counseling, make contacts or keep appointments with another agency prior to approval of services. County personnel determining eligibility for PRC are aware of resources that may be contracted for, or otherwise utilized, to help meet the need. If such a resource exists, county personnel shall direct the applicant to seek such assistance. Any applicant who refuses to explore or utilize available resources shall have its application for PRC services denied.

### Eligibility and Application

Eligibility for PRC is dependent on the applicant's demonstration and verification of the need for financial assistance and/or services. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen or a "qualified alien", an Allen County resident and be part of an AG which:

- Includes a minor child who resides with a parent, caretaker, relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian (as defined in O.R.C. 5107) or:
- A pregnant individual with no other children (a single pregnant woman, with no other individuals in the assistance group will be considered a AG of two) or:
- A non-custodial parent who lives in the county whose child resides in Ohio (for prevention and retention only).
- For purposes of the Help Me Grow Program, those on Child Only OWF, Learning Earning and Parenting (LEAP), Pregnancy related services (PRS) cases, and Children Services cases shall be considered an assistance group.
- Note: A child may be considered in the home if temporarily absent from the home and the absence meets the requirements of OAC 5101:1-3-04 as verified by CSB.

Applicants who are ineligible for PRC are:

- fugitive felons and probation and parole violators
- individuals with outstanding OWF or PRC fraud overpayment balance
- individuals ineligible for other programs due to deliberate non-compliance with the terms of their assistance, including LEAP, are ineligible for **Contingency services only**

- AGs who are under a sanction in the OWF or FSET programs are ineligible for **Contingency services only**
- unmarried, non-graduated parent under 18 years of age, not attending high school or equivalent
- unmarried parent under 18 years of age not living in an adult supervised setting
- person found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states is ineligible for ten years
- an applicant who has received Contingency services from another county that is equal to or more than what the applicant qualifies for in Allen County
- applicant refuses to use available resources or excess income to help meet their need
- applicant or assistance group member is on strike\*
- applicant is not a U. S. Citizen or a qualified alien or a resident of Allen County
- applicant or AG member is not cooperating with establishment of paternity and/or child support.\*
- Applicant or AG member is not cooperating with children services.
- non-compliance with these will not make an applicant ineligible for services through the Allen County CSB.

The ACDJFS reserves the right to deny PRC services to any applicant who has demonstrated a pattern of PRC actual or attempted misuse or abuse. All PRC overpayments shall be subject to the same rules and regulations as TANF overpayments as outlined in the OAC section 5101:1-23-70. No medical expenses can be paid using PRC funds except pre-pregnancy and family planning services.

Applicants must complete an appropriate ACDJFS application form to request PRC. ACDJFS reserves the right to determine the appropriate application form for each service, or may designate multiple forms of applications acceptable for each service. AG's approved for Day Care, OWF cash assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, free and reduced lunches through the schools, Title XX, and/or meeting the income criteria for Head Start shall automatically be income eligible for PRC. ACDJFS may, at its discretion, elect to use the applications for these programs as the PRC application. A direct certification of free or reduced meals may also be used as an application, but must be signed and dated by the parent. An applicant not applying through a school and claiming free and reduced lunch as verification of income shall be responsible to verify approval of the free and reduced lunch program

Applications may not be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date service is to begin. Eligibility criteria will be based on the PRC plan in effect at the time of application as indicated by the date of the applicant's signature. In order to be financially eligible for PRC, the assistance group's gross combined incomes, both earned and unearned, shall be considered. The earned income of all minor children in the AG who are attending school (twelfth grade or lower) full-time shall be disregarded income to the AG. For Seek Work services only, the earned income of a current spouse/significant other of a non-custodial parent shall be disregarded income to the AG. At the time of application, the ACDJFS voter registration application will be made available to the applicant. If the applicant does not want to register, a waiver will be signed.

In order for the eligibility of the AG to be determined, the gross earned and unearned income of the AG must be determined and must meet the standard for that service.

Gross earned income examples include, but are not limited to:

- Earnings from work as an employee
- Earnings from self-employment, less the cost of doing business
- Strike benefits
- Training allowance

Gross unearned income examples include, but are not limited to:

- RSDI benefits
- Alimony and child support
- Veteran Administration Benefits
- Workers' Compensation
- Unemployment Benefits
- OWF and SSI payments

The ACDJFS is responsible for determining, using its best judgment, whether income available to the applicant should be, or should have been, used to pay for the need. All gross income of the adult AG members received during the previous month will be used in the computation of financial eligibility. This includes all income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for OWF, Food Stamps or DA. For **Contingency** services only, the income of **all household members** will be considered with the exception of minor children attending secondary school fulltime.

The applicant is responsible for providing all written or verbal verifications. For any verification obtained by phone, there must be clear documentation in the ACDJFS record concerning the name, position of the supplier of the information, the date verification was obtained, the amount of the verified income or asset and the name of the individual who obtained the verification. At the discretion of the ACDJFS self-declaration of income may be used. The determination of all applications shall be made within five (5) working days after all verifications are received. If all verifications are not received within five (5) working days of the application, the application may be denied. No application shall remain pending more than 30 days from the date the application is signed for lack of documentation unless the client has been given additional time to provide the documentation.

Any member of a AG who has received Contingency services from another Ohio County prior to moving to Allen County will have the benefits received from the other county compared to the benefits available under Allen County's Contingency services program. If the AG received Contingency services from the other county which were of less value than Allen County's plan offers, the AG may be eligible to receive only the difference between the other county's level and Allen County's, provided all other eligibility factors of Allen County's program are met.

AGs with more than one adult member will have their PRC tracked based upon the children who are members of the AG. If the adults later decide to live in separate AGs, only the adult who lives in the same AG as the children shall be eligible for any remaining PRC funds not used prior to the AG dividing. If the adults each take children to live in their homes, each new AG will

only be eligible for the balance of any PRC payments not used by the former combined AG. All other time limits and benefit amounts will be applicable to both “new” AGs.

An assistance group may apply for **Prevention** and **Retention** services more than one time per year, as long as the maximum dollar amount for those services has not been reached. All assistance groups approved for PRC services longer than 4 months shall have their case reviewed no later than four months from the date of application. This review shall determine if progress is being made and there is a continuing need for services. The review process may require an assistance group member to set goals in writing showing how the recipient will become self-sufficient and terminate the need for the service(s). If during the review process, ACDJFS determines that the client is not adhering to their plan to reaching self-sufficiency, the service may be terminated unless it is out of the client’s control. Unemployed participants who are not receiving cash assistance are not eligible for hard services (including transportation) for more than four months. For purposes of this plan, an employed person shall be defined as anyone who works during the month of service and is monetarily compensated for that work. Redetermination of eligibility for PRC ongoing services will be completed on an annual basis.

#### Amount and Types of Assistance

For Prevention and Retention Services including Children Services, the AG must have a combined gross monthly income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) updated annually. To serve families with multi-need children, services offered under the ABC initiative will also be covered up to 200% of poverty. The Lima City Schools ABC School-Community Partnership includes service coordination, assessments and direct service. For Help Me Grow Services, the AG must have a combined gross monthly income at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) updated annually. Pregnancy prevention services shall be without regard to income. For Contingency Services, the income will be based on all household members excluding the income of minors in secondary school and must be at or below 200% of the FPG. The following table shows the types of services, amounts and time limits available under the PRC program as well as any additional eligibility provisions. Purchases will be made from approved vendors only.

All assistance group members will be treated as a unit for the purpose of determining eligibility for the PRC program. Receipt of services by one PRC Assistance Group does not preclude providing help to another PRC Assistance Group even if they both contain the same child. A non-custodial parent receiving Prevention and Retention services, for example, will not affect the custodial parent’s receipt of PRC benefits. Once an application has been approved and a customer begins receiving Prevention or Retention services, the customer may finish the program (as determined by the end date of service on the approval/denial notice and/or on the service plan) regardless of continued eligibility. However, should the customer apply for other PRC services, eligibility must be determined based on current eligibility criteria. An adult child with minor children that was formerly a part of another assistance group will be considered a new assistance group once they have established a residence of their own and would be eligible for PRC if all other criteria are met. The County is responsible for approving or denying the application in a fair and equitable manner.

Child Support Seek Work services are services for non-custodial parents seeking work and retaining employment as approved by the agency. Seek Work includes such services as transportation to attend Skill Shop, for job search, job interviews and to and from employment

for up to 90 days, as needed and approved by the agency. With verification of employment, other supportive services such as uniforms may be approved. If employment is obtained while in the seek work program, the applicant is eligible for short-term services related to their employment as approved by the agency. The non-custodial parent shall not be considered a member of the custodial parent's assistance group, however, the non-custodial parent's children may be considered a part of the non-custodial parent's assistance group for seek work eligibility purposes, so long as the child resides in the State of Ohio.

	Prevention and Retention Services		Contingency
Types of services	<p><b>Short term expenses such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job related expenses: uniforms not to exceed \$100.00/year, tools and safety equipment (i.e. safety glasses, steel toed work boots, hard hats) not to exceed \$400.00/year, (Phone installation and one month of basic services, only for employment necessity and with verification by the employer of the necessity)</li> <li>• Identification materials (i.e. drivers license, state identification, birth certificates).</li> <li>• Automobile repairs* or car insurance deductible. Applicant must have been employed 45days, reimbursement not to exceed the presenting need with maximum agency contribution of \$400.00 per year, client must show ability to pay balance on their own.</li> <li>• Car payment* applicant must have been employed 45 days, PRC will pay for no more than one month of the actual payment not to exceed \$400.00, and no more than one payment per year, applicant must show ability to pay succeeding months. If applicant is unable to show the ability to pay succeeding months, the application will be denied.</li> <li>• Car insurance* applicant must have been employed 45 days. PRC will</li> </ul>	<p><b>On-going services such as: **</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-employment preparation, including literacy and GED programs, and job readiness classes, as approved by the agency.</li> <li>• Job search/Job placement</li> <li>• Employment, job search or training related transportation expenses (not to exceed 4 months if unemployed and not on cash assistance, may include transportation to and from day care)</li> <li>• Job shadowing</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Job retention</li> <li>• Diversion from cash assistance</li> <li>• Financial budgeting</li> <li>• On the job training (OJT) services; \$500.00/ month to employer for up to 3 months to cover training. (With the exception of the amount paid, OJT services shall mirror SEP regulations in effect on August 31, 2000.)</li> <li>• Training expenses(over 10 weeks), provided the educational institution has a contract with ACDJFS to provide these services.* these services are not to exceed two (2) quarters/ sessions/semesters or equivalent and exclude four (4) year degrees and post graduate work, and shall meet all WIA regulations.</li> <li>• Help Me Grow services to three years</li> </ul>	<p><b>One time emergent need such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent, mortgage and/or deposits</li> <li>• Utilities (phone installation and basic service only and if verified as a medical necessity, excluding Cable TV)</li> <li>• Home repairs</li> <li>• Emergency shelter</li> <li>• Purchase of a stove <b>OR</b> a refrigerator limited to the amount actually required not to exceed \$400.00. Used appliances are to be purchased first, when not available lowest price available to meet the need. Disaster services, to assist with damage or loss sustained as a result of natural disaster upon declaration by the governor (will not duplicate other federal disaster relief. Will only be provided if additional State funding is received specifically for disaster relief. If an applicant receives disaster services, they cannot be duplicated for other contingency services.)</li> </ul>

	Prevention and Retention Services	Contingency
	<p>pay for no more than a quarter of a year at state minimums and no more than one payment per year not to exceed \$400.00/qtr., applicant must show ability to pay succeeding months if applicant is unable to show the ability to pay succeeding months, the application will be denied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• License plates for vehicles*</li> <li>• Down payment for a vehicle* - applicant must have been employed 90 days, PRC will match 100% of applicant's down payment up to a maximum of \$500.00, once per life time.(Cost of the vehicle not to exceed the value of the car as determined by the ACDJFS) Applicant must also show ability to pay succeeding months of car payments and insurance. If applicant is unable to show the ability to pay succeeding months, the application will be denied.</li> <li>• Driver's Education</li> <li>• Maximum of four months transportation to and from an education/training site for those who are unemployed. (may include transportation to and from day care)</li> <li>• Short-term(10 weeks or less) education expenses for tuition, books, lab fees, and uniforms/clothing as required by educational institution (only if</li> </ul>	<p>of age per contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring</li> <li>• Child welfare protective services per contract</li> <li>• Opportunities for Parenting Teens (OPT) Services as per contract</li> <li>• Services for homeless children and families provided through Family Resource Center per contract</li> <li>• ABC program at Freedom Elementary School</li> <li>• Classroom training, provided the educational institution has a contract with ACDJFS to provide these services. * these services are not to exceed two (2) quarters/sessions/semesters or equivalent and exclude four (4) year degrees and post graduate work, and shall meet all WIA regulations and the client meets other requirements that will ensure a reasonable expectation of employment in the occupation.</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Unpaid work experience</li> <li>• Child Support Seekwork services</li> <li>• Other services as deemed appropriate by the ACDJFS</li> </ul> <p>*If the provider is an authorized state eligible training provider (ETP) for WIA, a contract with the county is not necessary.</p>

	Prevention and Retention Services	Contingency
	<p>participant is not eligible for other forms of financial assistance, e.g. loans or grants.) Education must lead to an occupation for which there is a local demand and the client meets other requirements that will ensure a reasonable expectation of employment in the occupation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing/certification and licensing fees</li> <li>• Pre-pregnancy and family planning services</li> <li>• School uniforms for public schools, if required by the school. (No more than one time per school year, not to exceed \$60.00 per child for children's sizes, \$75.00 per child for adult sizes.)</li> <li>• Other items as deemed appropriate by the ACDJFS</li> </ul>	
ACDJFS payment cannot exceed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$1,000.00 (with the exception of short term training) per consecutive 12-month period not to exceed the amount actually required to meet the presenting need or the amount listed above for that service.</li> <li>• \$5,000.00 per consecutive 12-month period for short-term training.</li> <li>• If the application is approved, the consecutive 12-month period shall begin the day the application was signed.</li> <li>• Contracts between ACDJFS and service providers may exceed caps.</li> </ul>	<p>\$10,000 per consecutive 12-month period not to exceed the amount actually required to meet the presenting need. (Under special circumstances, this amount can be exceeded with the approval of the Director/Designee.) If the application is approved, the consecutive 12-month period shall begin the day the application was signed. No cap on Help Me Grow, Lima City Schools ABC School-Community Partnerships, FRC Homelessness Services, OPT Services, and child welfare services. Contracts between ACDJFS and service providers may exceed caps</p> <p>A single payment not to exceed \$400.00 per consecutive 36-month period, but not to exceed the amount actually required to meet the presenting need. If the application is approved, the consecutive 36-month period shall begin the day the application was signed. Disaster services will only be provided if additional State funding is received specifically for disaster relief. If the state does not establish a cap then it shall be \$2,000/disaster not to exceed the amount actually required to meet the presenting need.</p>

	Prevention and Retention Services	Contingency
Eligibility requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete application and provide verification</li> <li>• The assistance group's combined gross incomes must not exceed 200% poverty,</li> <li>• All income received by the AG members, except earned income of minors (refer to page two and three for definition) within one month prior to the application date shall be considered when determining eligibility.</li> <li>• Must not meet any of the criteria of ineligibility as defined on pages one and two of this plan.</li> <li>• May reapply any number of times during a 12-month period as long as maximum dollar amount has not been exceeded.</li> <li>• Where required, must complete a budget with ACDJFS workers to document ability to make ongoing payments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete application and provide verification</li> <li>• The combined gross income of ALL household members for the month prior to application, whether or not those members are a part of the AG except earned income of minors (refer to page 2 for definition).</li> <li>• Must not exceed 200% poverty.</li> <li>• Must not meet any of the criteria of ineligibility as defined on pages one and two of this plan.</li> <li>• All liquid assets must be verified and used, before the household is eligible for PRC contingency services. Liquid assets may include: cash, checking and savings accounts (including credit union accounts, Christmas and vacation clubs), dividends and interests, savings certificates (including Certificates of Deposit), trust funds or estates, mutual funds, stocks and bonds, that are available.</li> <li>• where required, must complete a budget with ACDJFS workers to document ability to make ongoing payments</li> </ul>

\*Applicant must be employed at least 45 days for car repairs, insurance, license plates and 90 days for car down payments. The Applicant must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance for car repairs, down payments and license plates. PRC services can not be used for fines. If an applicant is requesting services for a down payment on a vehicle, the applicant must demonstrate that he/she will have adequate income to make monthly car payments and insurance. If the applicant cannot show the ability to make car payments and insurance, the application will be denied.

\*\*Services are those provided by contract or other agreement with the ACDJFS. Direct services shall fall under RMS and shall not be capped.

For **Contingency services**, the applicant must also demonstrate a verifiable personal or economic crisis which occurred in the previous month, and which resulted in the need for Contingency services. If this crisis was the result of the theft of such items as checks, cash or necessary AG goods, the applicant must furnish a police report made within 24 hours of the alleged theft. The only exception to the "crisis" requirement will be cases in which the applicant is seeking assistance to pay a deposit in order to move into subsidized housing for the first time. If the member of the assistance group who is applying for Contingency services was serving an OWF sanction within the thirty (30) day period immediately preceding the application for Contingency services, the assistance group shall be ineligible for Contingency services. The PRC program is developed to assist people in becoming self-sufficient and responsible. Therefore, applicants applying for Contingency services must demonstrate verifiable income and/or resources to support the AG once the crisis is over.

#### Notice of Approval or Denial

If an application for PRC is approved, the ACDJFS shall mail or otherwise deliver the ACDJFS PRC 703 "Notice of Approval of your Application for Assistance." If an application for PRC is denied, the ACDJFS shall mail or otherwise deliver the ODJFS 7334, "Notice of Denial of your Application for Assistance."

#### Authorization and Payment

Once eligibility for PRC is established, the ACDJFS director/designee will authorize and generate payment for the assistance, goods, and/or services. The item will be purchased from the vendor with the lowest and best price in accordance with ACDJFS procurement policy. Authorization may occur at any time during a period beginning on the date PRC is approved. As long as payment is authorized within the appropriate period, actual payment may be made to vendors according to the procedures in place at the ACDJFS. All PRC payments are made by the ACDJFS to the vendor. The county ensures that its policies meet all auditing requirements.

The Allen County Department of Job and Family Services reserves the right to close PRC program enrollment at any time when it is no longer fiscally prudent to fund the program. Fiscal accountability and planning for PRC usage will be based upon fiscal standards set by the ACDJFS fiscal officer and director.

Allen County Department of Job and Family Services agrees to implement the PRC County Program as written above. This plan becomes effective on April 1, 2007, and shall remain in effect until otherwise modified or terminated.

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Lynn Shock, MPA Director

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Date