

Allen County Department of Job and Family Services
Prevention, Retention and Contingency Plan
Effective October 1, 2009

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 Seekwork Services only).
- 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.

*(G) "Minor child" means either of the following:

- (1) An individual who has not attained age eighteen;
- (2) An individual who has not attained age nineteen and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.

Applicants who are ineligible for PRC are:

- fugitive felons and probation and parole violators

- individuals with outstanding OWF or PRC fraud overpayment balance. A PRC AG that is discovered to have fraudulently received or improperly disposed of PRC benefits or services will be required to reimburse the ACDJFS the full cost of the benefits or service and may be subject to prosecution.
- individuals ineligible for other programs due to deliberate non-compliance with the terms of their assistance, including LEAP, (CSEA non-compliance is excluded) are ineligible for **Contingency services only**
- AGs who are under a sanction in the OWF or FSET programs are ineligible for **Contingency services only**
- An unmarried, non-graduated parent under 18 years of age, not attending high school or equivalent
- An unmarried parent under 18 years of age not living in an adult supervised setting
- A 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
- An applicant refuses to use available resources or excess income to help meet their need
- An applicant or assistance group member is on strike
- An applicant is not a U. S. Citizen or a qualified alien or a resident of Allen County
- An 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. ACDJFS reserves the right to terminate PRC services to any individual that does not follow the program's policies and procedures and appropriately participate in that program. 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, or food stamps, shall automatically be income eligible for PRC. ACDJFS may, at its discretion, elect to use the applications for these programs as the PRC application, using the most recent application for those services.

Generally, those applying for PRC benefits must provide the social security numbers only of those persons for whom they are seeking benefits. However, there may be instances where the social security numbers of other members of the household may be needed to verify income or other eligibility criteria to determine eligibility even though they are not seeking benefits themselves. ACDJFS may decide that certain members of the assistance group are not eligible for PRC because, for example, they do not have the right immigration status. If that happens, other family members may still be eligible for PRC if they are otherwise eligible.

Social Security numbers may be used when contacting appropriate persons or agencies to determine eligibility and verifying information given for PRC; for example, income, disability benefits or other similar benefits and programs. Such information may affect the household's eligibility for PRC.

Applications may not be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date service is to begin, unless it is necessary to take the application earlier to ensure the applicant can receive the service. 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 will make a voter registration application available to the applicant.

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
- Training allowance
- Commission

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

- Income as stated in OAC 5101:1-24
- 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. The application and all information gathered during the determination process will be kept in a PRC file for the AG. Any subsequent PRC applications for that AG will be added to that file unless it has been purged and destroyed according to record destruction policies.

Any member of an 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 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.

Unless specifically listed otherwise, 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 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. Re-determination of eligibility for PRC ongoing services will be completed on an annual basis.

Amount and Types of Assistance

For Prevention and Retention Services excluding Children Services, the AG must have a combined gross monthly income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) updated annually. Children Services Programs will be at or below 200% FPG. 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 150% 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. 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 30 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.

Please note that the TANF purpose(s) for each service is listed at the beginning of each service.

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

#2 – To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

#3 – To prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.

#4 – To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

	Prevention and Retention Services		Contingency
Types of services	<p>Short term expenses such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #2 - Job related expenses: uniforms not to exceed \$150.00/year, tools and safety equipment (i.e. safety glasses, steel toed work boots, hard hats) not to exceed \$300.00/year, (Phone installation and one month of basic services, only for employment necessity and with verification by the employer of the necessity). This will allow a needy parent to obtain employment to support their family. • #2 - Identification materials (i.e. drivers license, state identification, birth certificates). To allow a parent to obtain employment and or training that leads to employment to support their family. • #2 Automobile repairs* or car insurance deductible. Applicant must have been employed 45days, reimbursement not to exceed the presenting need with maximum agency contribution of \$300.00, client must show ability to pay balance on their own. Payable one time in 36 months. To allow a parent to retain employment to support their family. • #2 - 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 \$300.00, applicant must show ability 	<p>On-going services such as: **</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #2 - Pre-employment preparation, including literacy and GED programs, and job readiness classes, as approved by the agency. This will allow parents to have the skills necessary to obtain employment to support their families. • # 2 - Job search/Job placement for Seek Work and OWF applicants. This will allow parents to have the skills necessary to obtain employment to support their families. • #2 - Employment, job search related transportation expenses for 4 months in any rolling calendar year. A month is defined as being eligible for services for that month including the RST period. Service may continue until the last day of the 4th month. The individual is not eligible for 12 months after the last month of service (may include transportation to and from day care) (If a client has been barred for life from getting a driver's license, an exception may be made and service continued.) An AG that includes more than one employed individual, each individual may be eligible for 4 months. <p>This will allow parents to continue to support their families or obtain the skills necessary to obtain employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • #2 - Job retention. This will allow 	<p>One time emergent need such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities: Water bills and Phone service only(phone installation and basic service only and must be verified as a medical necessity. • #1 - Emergency shelter • #1 - Purchase of a stove OR a refrigerator limited to the amount actually required not to exceed \$350.00. 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.) <p>Each of these services will allow needy families to be able to feed and provide housing for their families.</p>

	Prevention and Retention Services	Contingency	
	<p>to pay succeeding months. If applicant is unable to show the ability to pay succeeding months, the application will be denied. Payable one time in 36 months. To allow a parent to retain employment to support their family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● #2 - Car insurance* applicant must have been employed 45 days. PRC will pay for no more than a quarter of a year at state minimums and not to exceed \$300.00/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. Payable one time in 36 months. This will allow a parent to retain transportation to employment to support their family. ● #2 - License plates for vehicles* This will allow a parent to obtain or retain transportation to employment to support their family. ● #2 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 \$400.00, 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 	<p>parents to retain employment to support their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● #2 - Diversion from cash assistance. This will give parents the information and services they need to end their dependence on this benefit. ● #1 - Child welfare protective services per contract. This will allow children to obtain the services they need so they can remain in their homes with family. ● #1 and #2 - Case management – This will allow families to receive services they need to allow children to stay in their homes with family and parents to obtain the services needed to obtain/retain employment to support their families. ● #1 and #2 - Child Support Seekwork services. This will allow non-custodial parents to obtain employment/training so they can begin to pay child support payments so that children can stay in their homes with family. ● #1 - Healthy Start/Healthy Families applications per contract. Will aid parents in being able to support their families in their homes. ● Other services as deemed appropriate by the ACDJFS 	

	Prevention and Retention Services		Contingency
	<p>applicant is unable to show the ability to pay succeeding months, the application will be denied. This will allow a parent to retain transportation to employment to support their family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # 2 - Driver's Education - To allow a parent to obtain a Driver's license so they have transportation to obtain/retain employment that leads to employment to support their family. • #2 - Testing/certification and licensing fees. To allow a parent to obtain the license/certification required for employment so they can obtain/retain employment to support their family. • #3 - Pre-pregnancy and family planning services. This will allow clients to obtain services and information that may reduce pregnancies. • Other items as deemed appropriate by the ACDJFS 		
ACDJFS payment cannot exceed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750.00 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. • If the application is approved, the consecutive 12-month period shall begin the day the application was signed. 	\$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 child welfare services. Contracts between	A single payment not to exceed \$350.00 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

	Prevention and Retention Services		Contingency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contracts between ACDJFS and service providers may exceed caps. 	ACDJFS and service providers may exceed caps.	state does not establish a cap then it shall be \$1,500/disaster not to exceed the amount actually required to meet the presenting need.
Eligibility requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete application and provide verifications (if applicable) The assistance group's combined gross incomes must not exceed 150% poverty, 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. Must not meet any of the criteria of ineligibility as defined on pages one and two of this plan. May reapply any number of times during a 12-month period as long as maximum dollar amount has not been exceeded. Where required, must complete a budget with ACDJFS workers to document ability to make ongoing payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete application and provide verification (if applicable) The assistance group's combined gross incomes must not exceed 150% of poverty. All income received by the AG members, except earned income of minors (refer to page 2 and three for definition), within one month prior to the application date shall be considered when determining eligibility. (Exclusion: for Seek Work services, the earned income of a current spouse/significant other shall be disregarded income to the AG) Must not meet any of the criteria of ineligibility as defined on pages one and two of this plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete application and provide verifications (if applicable) 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). Must not exceed 150% poverty. Must not meet any of the criteria of ineligibility as defined on pages one and two of this plan. 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. Must complete a budget with ACDJFS workers to document ability to make ongoing payments.

*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.

An AG that objects to a faith-based provider will be provided with an alternative provider of services within a reasonable period of time. The alternative provider will be reasonably accessible and provide comparable services. AG's will be given notice of their right to request an alternative provider.

All Ag's will receive a copy of the Information regarding PRC Benefits (Form 1006), which includes information on use of Social Security Card, Fraudulent Assistance, Charitable Choice and Voter Registration.

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 October 1, 2009, and shall remain in effect until otherwise modified or terminated.

Lynn Shock, MPA Director

Date