

**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
JOB & FAMILY SERVICES**

PREVENTION, RETENTION AND CONTINGENCY PROGRAM PLAN

Revised 12/2008

House Bill 408, **O**hio **W**orks **F**irst (OWF), and O.R.C. Sec.5108, mandates development of a program called “**P**revention, **R**etention and **C**ontingency” (PRC). The PRC program is designed to assist families in overcoming immediate barriers that prevent the achievement of self-sufficiency by promoting work and personal responsibility. The program is funded from the Title IV-A federal block grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

There are three separate categories of the PRC program:

PREVENTION: Services are employment-driven, designed to divert the PRC assistance group from any type of cash assistance, initial or on-going, and direct them toward self sufficiency.

RETENTION: Services are employment-driven, designed to allow the PRC assistance group to obtain or maintain employment for those assistance groups (AG’s) currently receiving cash assistance.

CONTINGENCY: Services are provided to a PRC assistance group to meet an emergent need that threatens the health or well-being of one or more assistance group members.

The PRC program provides flexibility for funding a wide variety of employment and training activities, supportive services, and benefits that will enable individuals to get a job, keep a job, and improve their economic circumstances. PRC funds must be to meet one of the four purposes of TANF (Reference 45 C.F.R. 260.20) which are:

- To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own home or in the homes of relatives;
- End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and,
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

PRC services are not considered ‘assistance’ and so does not count toward a family’s OWF time limit, unless services exceed four months. The PRC services are not intended to meet ongoing or recurrent needs. Department of Job and Family Services staff may deny service requests determined to be ongoing or recurrent unless good cause is proven.

PRC non-cash assistance is limited to the amount actually required to meet or resolve the presenting need, up to \$750 per eighteen consecutive month period per assistance group. Any PRC assistance received by any member of that assistance group during that period will count toward the total

eighteen-month cap for the entire assistance group. This program is made of three distinct components, each addressing a family or assistance groups self-sufficiency. The attached exhibit will give more detail on the services available through these components, and any limits that apply.

Eligible Assistance Groups

Self-sufficiency for the entire assistance group is the goal of this program. A PRC assistance group is defined as one of the following: an 18 year old or older who is pregnant (the unborn counts as an assistance group member); or a minor child living with a birth or adoptive parent, specified relative as defined by OWF rules, or legal guardian, non-custodial parent (as defined in Exhibit I), and treated as one unit for the purpose of determining eligibility. Should a member of a PRC assistance group leave that unit and join a new PRC assistance group or become a separate PRC assistance group, the total amount of assistance they benefited from in a previous PRC assistance group, if within eighteen months of application, will be counted toward their current PRC assistance group cap.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

Eligibility for PRC is dependent upon the PRC assistance groups demonstration and verification of the need for financial assistance and/or services, and whether the county determines that provision of PRC will satisfy that need. A PRC assistance group may apply for and be eligible for up to \$750 per 18-month period. If an assistance group finds that they need to apply for additional assistance within that 18 month period, the application will go through the agency hardship committee review (see section Services, Definitions and Amount Limits).

In order for the PRC assistance group to be found eligible, the PRC assistance groups income must be at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) for that size unit on date of application for PRC non-cash. Effective date for revision to FPG will be date received by this county from ODJFS. Specialized soft skill services means test may vary by service. Approval of any PRC funded soft services (i.e. Help Me Grow, Groups, etc.) does not automatically qualify an assistance group for PRC Cash or Non-Cash assistance. PRC non-cash assistance is only available to members who have not received PRC non-cash assistance above the monetary cap from any county, during the previous 18 consecutive months. Families receiving assistance under another program may receive PRC assistance. The fact that an ongoing Medicaid, OWF, or disability medical or financial assistance group is active is not a limiting factor in the consideration of eligibility for the PRC non-cash component, but may be a factor in determining eligibility for PRC cash-assistance component. In addition, the Department of Job and Family Services will inform individuals about other programs (i.e., Medicaid and Food Stamps) that are available and hearing rights that are applicable.

The Department of Job and Family Services will use objective criteria when determining eligibility and approving or denying the completed application within ten (10) business days after its receipt. (Application will be considered complete when both the application and budget worksheet have been finished, and the application has been signed by all assistance group members age 18 or older). Eligibility will be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Immediate needs and whether or not the PRC Program can be of benefit will be determined by the Department of Job and Family Services through discussion with the assistance group. Factors considered in that determination will include (but not be limited to) the assistance group ability to meet ongoing costs, any good cause statement, past work history, past payment history, etc. If a family is requesting assistance through

PRC, but cannot show they have made a good faith effort to resolve the problem on their own, PRC may be denied. All PRC applications will be screened through CRISE for prior authorizations. All PRC recipients/applicants must follow their responsibilities as outlined in their PRC plan.

All income which has been received by any member of the PRC AG during the preceding 30-day budget period is considered when determining financial need for the PRC-non cash component. The 30-day period begins 30 days prior to the date of application and ends on the application date. The income received during this period is used in the computation of financial eligibility. The only exception to this is those AG's falling under the family stability portion of the PRC program.

The total gross income, both earned and unearned of all the PRC assistance group members, must be counted. Court ordered child support costs, if being paid, are the only deductions or exclusions allowed from any type of countable gross income. Written or verbal verification of income source is required. For any verification that is obtained by phone, there must be clear documentation in the PRC assistance group record concerning the name and position of the supplier of the information, the date the verification was obtained, the amount of the verified income, and the name of the individual who obtained the verification.

For the PRC eligibility, the gross amount of the PRC assistance groups total countable income is compared to 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines amount for that PRC assistance group size. If the total PRC assistance group income is equal to or less than 150% of the FPG amount for the applicable PRC assistance group size, the PRC assistance group meets the income requirement. Once the PRC assistance group has met the income means test, the following additional eligibility requirements must be met:

1. Assistance group must include a minor child, unless they meet non-custodial parent requirements.
2. An unmarried, non-graduate parent under 18 not attending high school or equivalent is ineligible.
4. An unmarried parent under 18 not living in an adult-supervised setting is ineligible.
5. PRC assistance group must be a resident of Champaign County and a U.S. citizen or qualified alien.
6. PRC assistance group must not have any member who voluntarily quit employment or took action to cause their termination within the last 60 days without good cause (as defined by the agency).
- * 7. PRC assistance group must agree to use personal resources/income to help meet their need.
8. Any PRC assistance group with a member who has committed fraud or demonstrated "intent to fraud" for purposes of receiving OWF/PRC or food stamps is ineligible until paid in full.
9. Anyone under an OWF or FS sanction cannot receive PRC funds while under this sanction.
- *10. If a PRC assistance group has not followed responsibilities from a previous PRC approval, they must comply with those responsibilities before being eligible again.

** These eligibility requirements may be waived by Director or designee with good cause.*

Exploring Resources

Every effort will be made to explore the availability of resources within the local community prior to the authorization of PRC as PRC dollars will be considered the 'funding of last resort'. For the

purposes of PRC, the ‘community’ is defined to also include areas beyond the county's boundaries. A PRC assistance group is required to apply for and utilize any program, benefit, or support system that may reduce or eliminate the presenting need. County personnel determining eligibility for PRC will be aware of community resources that may be contracted for or otherwise utilized to help meet the need. The PRC application provides a section for written documentation of the agency’s attempt to locate and utilize community resources, including exploration of any PRC assistance group required co-payment.

Assistance Group Responsibilities

The PRC program, like Ohio Works First, is designed to enable the assistance group to become independent of these programs and self-sufficient. Once income eligibility is established, the agency staff and assistance group must jointly agree on the assistance groups responsibilities to prevent a reoccurrence of need. Responsibilities of the assistance group should be case specific and may be required to be met prior to authorization of funds. The agency assumes responsibility to help assistance groups link/connect with the agreed-upon services if requested.

Services, Definitions and Amount Limits

Authorized services, definitions and limits are detailed in Exhibit I of this plan. Voucher payment(s) may be made for services at one time throughout the eighteen-month period. Assistance may be requested for a second time during a consecutive 18-month period provided:

- 1) eligibility is established and new application is filed at each new request;
- 2) overall cap for PRC assistance group member has not been reached within the previous eighteen continuous months;
- 3) PRC assistance group met or continues to meet self-sufficiency activities as detailed in most recent PRC application/plan, and;
- 4) an agency ‘hardship’ committee will review the application for determination of approval of the additional request. (Committee will consist of at a minimum an administrator, supervisor and three staff members, including the member in receipt of the application).

To cure a failure to meet a previous AG responsibility plan, the applicant must either comply with the previous plan or complete those activities listed in a new PRC plan prior to authorization of PRC payment.

PRC Process

Once eligibility for PRC is established, the director or designee will authorize and generate payment for the assistance, goods, and/or services. Authorization may occur at any time during a period beginning on the date that PRC is approved. As long as payment is authorized within the appropriate period, actual payment will be made to vendors according to the procedures in place within the Department of Job and Family Services. The county will ensure that its policies meet all auditing requirements.

NOTICE OF APPROVAL/DENIAL

If it is determined that an application for PRC is approved, the agency shall mail or otherwise deliver the Agency “Notice of Approval of Your Application for PRC”. If it is determined that an Application for PRC is denied, the agency shall mail or otherwise deliver the agency “Notice of Denial of Your Application for PRC”.

If PRC assistance group and the Champaign County Department of Job and Family Services staff are not able to agree upon appropriate services, the agency’s Consumer Grievance Review procedure

shall be followed. This does not limit the consumers right to request a state hearing should the PRC application/request be denied.

AMENDMENTS

This PRC Plan may be amended at any time. Significant changes require:

- 1) a notice has been posted within the Department of Job and Family Services prior to effective date;
- 2) Public Notice is submitted to the Urbana Citizen to run for three (3) consecutive days prior to the effective date; and
- 3) Champaign County Department of Job and Family Services will notify as many social services systems as possible prior to the effective date. Each notice shall contain the significant changes to be made and rationale for each change.

The Champaign County Department of Job & Family Services agrees to implement this PRC plan, in compliance with O.R.C. Sec. 5108, effective January 1, 2009.

Director

Date

President, County Commissioners

Date

EXHIBIT I

Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) components are authorized with the expectation that the services provided to the assistance group will prevent them from reliance on, divert them from on-going cash assistance, and guide them to self-sufficiency by helping the applicant through the present crisis.

The following services and definitions are to be used as guidelines in assessing what needs the PRC assistance group must have met to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency. The PRC assistance group must complete the required application and include a brief explanation of the need for which they are applying. Also included in the application will be a plan of action agreed upon by the PRC assistance group intended to preclude a reoccurrence of the same need.

Unless specifically indicated, each listed service may, independently or in combination, equal the PRC assistance group maximum amount per each eighteen-month period.

Shelter expenses must be listed in PRC assistance groups name or, if in the name of a non-PRC assistance group member, PRC assistance group must show written verification that the services being requested will directly benefit their family members.

CONTINGENCY RELATED SERVICES

Should non-PRC assistance group members reside in the same home, all shelter expenses will be pro-rated by PRC assistance group size, and non-PRC assistance group members' share must be paid prior to authorization.

Rent:

Rent can be approved only when there is a legal court-ordered eviction pending, a family is homeless with no alternative living arrangement available, relocation is necessary due to a bona fide offer of employment, or the move is required to protect a Domestic Violence victim. In addition, PRC can be approved for situations of over-crowding or uninhabitable living conditions (as determined by CCDJFS staff). Deposits are not a covered service.

*An assistance group may be required to complete "Housing Walk-through Checklist" prior to approval

Home Maintenance/Repair:

A PRC assistance group must own the home for which the repairs are needed and payment from the homeowners insurance must be explored prior to approval of any funds. Repair or replacement of items affecting the basic structure of the home may be explored (including a wall, roof, flooring, plumbing, electric, heating supply, and water/sewage system). Two estimates from certified/bonded individuals or companies are required. In a severe emergent situation where repairs/replacement occurred prior to the application for PRC, the application will be considered if received within 5 days of the service.

Utilities/Heating Fuel:

Utilities or heating fuel assistance can be approved during the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provided AG has applied for and been denied those HEAP benefits.

The PRC funds issued, in combination with other resources available, must be sufficient to forestall the disconnect, restore or initiate services. The PRC AG does not need to agree to explore Percentage of Income Payment plan, but must agree to sign up and comply with some type of payment plan offered by the heat fuel supplier.

Cooking Fuel/Water or Sewage:

The cooking fuel must be a separate verifiable source from the heating fuel or utility. The amount issued in combination with other resources available must be sufficient to forestall or restore cooking fuel, water or sewage service.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICE RELATED EXPENSES

Counseling

Counseling services requested by potential or current employer, not covered through them or Medicaid, and not provided by a physician, for one month of service, maximum amount to be PRC AG share of sliding fee scale for that counseling program. Two estimates required.

Family Stability

Families actively involved with domestic violence, Children’s Protective Services case managers or a Social Services case manager may access the PRC Program in order to prevent or alleviate a crisis. The goal here is to:

- Help alleviate a family crisis that could lead to the removal of children from their home
- Help a family member so the children can safely remain in their home or be returned to a family member from out-of-home immediate non-relative care.

The applicant must meet all eligibility requirements listed on page 3 of the main plan, be at or below 200% of Federal Poverty and have not failed any previous PRC self sufficiency plans. A team review involving applicable team members from CCDJFS, with input from Domestic Violence or Children Protective Services case manager, will meet to approve expenditures in excess of regular PRC guidelines. Services covered may include but are not limited to: Diagnostic Services and Therapeutic Counseling (if not covered by Medicaid), Emergency Shelter, Parent Education, Homemaker Services, Respite Care, Case Management, Home Health Aide and Environmental Services.

Domestic Violence case management will encompass any person who has been the subject of a Domestic Violence report to law enforcement within the past 60 days or who is known to the Domestic Violence case manager as a victim. Services will be authorized for up to 90 days unless extended by a team review process (based on recommendation of domestic violence counselor).

Services provided under Family Stability also requires a self-sufficiency plan be signed by the assistance group. Applications may be denied if the team finds no evidence the family has attempted to avoid the crisis.

PREVENTION/RETENTION SERVICES

All purchases/repairs/services must be needed in order for PRC assistance group adults to accept bona fide offer of employment or to retain current employment. For any PRC vehicle services

authorized, a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and credible work or training history is required.

Non-custodial Parents

A PRC AG can consist of a non-custodial (or non-residential) parent, living in Champaign County, with a child that resides in Ohio. Consumers who fit under this category can participate under the group umbrella or as an individual AG. A non-custodial parent may be eligible for assistance through PRC if they meet program eligibility as well as the following conditions:

- Are currently cooperating with child support enforcement agency
- Have made child support payments within the past 30 days

The AG is subject to the same time and money limits as any other PRC AG. This activity does not affect program eligibility for custodial AG parent.

Vehicle Payment

One monthly vehicle payment made on behalf of the PRC assistance group if the lending institution has started processing to repossess the vehicle. Applicant must have shown effort to make payments prior to emergent need.

Fees

Reinstatement fees for a previous licensed driver. Fee statement from license bureau stating reason for loss of license is required (possible counseling needed – DUI). No payment may be authorized for any court fines issued.

Help Me Grow Program

Help Me Grow is a program administered by the Ohio Department of Health through which services are provided to children who are at risk for developmental delays, and provided to families with children birth to three years of age, and pregnant women. Many OWF children in Champaign County may be eligible for services through Help Me Grow, the cost of which is reimbursable through the TANF program.

Families with children under the age of three who are participating in the Champaign County Help Me Grow program and who are receiving OWF cash assistance at the time of enrollment may continue to receive Help Me Grow services until the youngest child reaches age three (3). Families with children under the age of three who are not receiving OWF cash assistance and who are at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Guideline may receive Help Me Grow services under the PRC program. Benefit limitations shall not apply for these services. While the completion of a PRC application at the Department of Job and Family Services is not required, the agency providing Help Me Grow services must complete a separate application form on the client's behalf. Continued receipt of Help Me Grow services does not prohibit the family from making a separate application for other services or assistance that may be available through PRC. The receipt of Help Me Grow services will not count toward the family's eligibility limit for PRC assistance. OWF sanctions are waived for this program.

For determining eligibility for Help Me Grow services, a PRC household is a group of individuals living at the same address in Champaign County and containing at least one child under the age of three. When assistance is sought, only the income of the Assistance Group (as

defined in Section 4150 of the Public Assistance Manual) will be utilized in determining eligibility, not the income of the entire household.

Families with children under the age of three who are enrolled in the Champaign County Help Me Grow program are eligible for all PRC services provided through the Help Me Grow program, including, but not limited to the following: home visits, transportation (non-cash payments), services coordination, information and referral, parenting services, group activities to enhance parenting skills and build support systems, and child development screening. Help Me Grow is voluntary and free to the participating family. Help Me Grow services are limited to availability of Help Me Grow program funds.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group activities can be paid by the PRC program as long as the activity will meet one or more of the PRC program goals. Every participant must file a PRC application that includes, at a minimum, the names of the assistance group members, financial verifications and the individual's responsibility to prevent a recurrence of the need. Any moneys spent for this type of service will not count toward an individual's time or money caps for the PRC program. The following is a list of the group activities that the PRC program will cover. The means test for these services will be 200% of Federal Poverty. Use of Medicaid, Free/Reduced Lunch or Food Stamp applications may be accepted in lieu of PRC group application.

Education Related

- Parent education classes or parenting classes
- Family nutrition education
- Housing homeowner/maintenance
- "Primary Teacher" program and interactive literacy programs between parents and children
- Student Intervention Programs, to include, After School and Summer programs plus School Readiness Programs.

Other

- Provide appropriate counseling services (not covered by Medicaid and not provided by a physician) i.e., anger management
- School outreach (prevention services for at-risk students)(Community outreach- no means test)
- Family counseling and/or case management for families at risk of abuse or neglect
- Fatherhood initiatives to improve the capacity of needy fathers to provide financial and emotional support for their children (custodial and non-custodial)
- Counseling services to focus on out-of-wedlock teen pregnancy prevention
- Campaigns to encourage young people to delay parenting/teen pregnancy prevention
- Family preservation and reunification counseling/services including selection of and positive relationships with an adult assistance group partner
- Legal Aid
- Development and sharing of resources available for relatives caring for minor children (Kinship)