

Guernsey County Department of Job and
Family Services & Child Support
Enforcement Agency

*Prevention, Retention,
And
Contingency Program*

Purpose Statement

PREVENTION, RETENTION AND CONTINGENCY PROGRAM FOR GUERNSEY COUNTY

The Guernsey County PRC Program has been meeting the needs of the residents of Guernsey County since its inception in October 1997. In 1997, Ohio established a new paradigm of assistance for its residents. The new approach focused on short term assistance to help families through difficult times without creating a system of generational dependence.

The PRC Program and all of its components have grown and have been modified to meet the unique needs we all face in these times of economic change and uncertainty.

Services may be provided to a PRC household to help members retain employment and, thereby, to achieve or continue self-sufficiency. In addition, services may be provided to a PRC household that meets the four purposes of TANF:

- 1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives**
- 2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.**
- 3. 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. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.**

Questions concerning the Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program should be forwarded to the Director of the Guernsey County Department of Job and Family Services.

AMENDMENTS

10/01/11 New biennium plan submitted

A. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

1. **Minor Child** – up to age 19 if in school – up to age 18 if not in school
 - < Must have a minor child in the household or;
 - < Be financially responsible for a minor child outside of the household or,
 - < Be responsible for medical/health care for a minor child outside the household or,
 - < Have a medically verified pregnancy

2. **Household Income** – (applicant and all adults and children residing with the applicant) Total of all **gross household income** for necessary employment or non-employment related requests **cannot exceed 200% of the monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines** (FPG) in effect July 1 and updated annually based on household size. *Income will be self-declared. Reference OAC Rule 5101:1-24-20.*

A 30-day budget period will be used and begins 30 days prior to the date of application and ends on the date of application.

Court ordered child support, current arrearage and fee payments shall be excluded.

Income involuntarily terminated will not be counted.

Minor child's earned income will be excluded.

3. **Applicant Verification** – (applicant is the person that signs the application) Applicant must return needed verifications as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after a signed application is received by the agency.

Verifications required for PRC applications will vary according to the nature of the requested item or service. Verifications required for PRC may include, but are not limited to:

- < A statement from the provider of the requested service that details the amount needed and a description of the service to be provided (i.e., utility bill, landlord statement, etc.). Note: more than one estimate may be required (i.e., home repair, appliance purchase, etc.).
- < Social security numbers for the assistance group.
- < Identity for the person making the application.
- < Residency shall be verified except in unusual cases where verification of residency cannot reasonably be accomplished.
- < All other factors of eligibility prior to approval only if they are questionable and affect eligibility for a service or benefit.
- < W-9 form must be on file with the county for the provider of services.

Reporting of fraudulent information will result in referral to the prosecuting attorney for possible criminal action. Fraud occurs when a client knowingly and willfully provides false information about his/her circumstances in order to receive PRC for which he/she is not eligible.

4. **Repayment agreement** – Repayment agreement must be signed by the applicant prior to PRC issuance. Married individuals living together must both sign *the* repayment agreement. ~~\$3,000~~ ~~\$2,000~~ \$1,000 is the maximum amount that can be subject to repayment at any one time. Household must show the ability to repay.

- A. Repayment agreement does not apply when PRC is used for items listed in 9C, 9D, 9E and 9F.
 - B. Repayment agreement for items in 9C which were signed prior to July 1, 2001, have been waived.
 - C. Repayment amount must be at least \$5.00 a month.
 - D. Failure to adhere to the repayment agreement may result in a civil action being filed against the applicant who is delinquent on PRC.
 - E. The applicant may change the amount of future payments by signing a new repayment agreement. Failure to make payments on the PRC account balance consistent with the repayment agreement (signed for \$25.00 a month must have paid \$25.00 a month) in each of the 3 preceding calendar months results in ineligibility for additional PRC with repayment agreements.
(See Section 4 -A-4)
5. **Financial Need** – Eligibility for PRC is dependent upon household demonstration of need for financial assistance and/or services, and whether the county determines that provision of PRC will satisfy the need.
6. **Timelines/Other Restrictions** – PRC eligibility follows a 12 month period. No more than the maximum amounts established in this plan can be issued in any 12 month period. In addition, recipients of comparable benefits from another Ohio county or another state’s emergency assistance program, will be restricted from obtaining PRC assistance for a 12 month period including the month of application. If another Ohio county had repay conditions on receipt of their PRC benefits, those conditions will continue in Guernsey County, if known to the agency.

7. Tracking of receipt of PRC assistance – Non-repayment PRC - All adults residing in the household will be tracked for future PRC use. If persons move out of the household, the receipt of assistance follows all individuals. On repayment PRC's only those members that signed the repayment agreement will be tracked for receipt of assistance.
8. **Maximum Payment** – Maximum payment for PRC approved items will be determined by the following:
 - A. Items required are necessary. Not included are automobiles, computers, any legal obligations, license reinstatements or sales tax.
 - B. All yearly PRC participant payments are within the agency PRC budget.
 - C. For needs other than those listed in 9C, 9D, 9E and 9F households must show the ability to repay the PRC amount.

Maximum of ~~\$2,000~~ \$1,000 for PRC's requiring repayment agreements per eligible PRC assistance group at any one time. The applicant and all adults and children residing with the applicant will be tracked toward the maximum benefit level. If persons move out of the household, the tracking remains with the applicant and those living with the applicant. When married individuals separate the tracking follows each individual per the repayment agreements.

Maximum of ~~\$400~~ ~~\$200~~ \$400 per 12 consecutive month period can be utilized on the following homeowner, tenant, or utility services:

- < Natural gas
- < Propane gas
- < Electric service
- < Coal/wood
- < Heating fuel oil/kerosene
- < Trash removal service – property cleanup – not normal weekly pickup services

- < Water/sewer service
- < Telephone service – basic local services only – applicant must demonstrate the need and extenuating circumstances – there must be no other community resources available
- < Home mortgage
- < Homeowner insurance
- < Real Estate Taxes – must be residing in the home. Court action for foreclosure required.
- < Utility bill – disconnect notice and proof of extenuating circumstances required – address must be applicant’s place of residence, be incurred during period of residence and applicant must be responsible to pay the utility.
- < Rent/lease/security deposits for housing/utilities – court eviction notice is required or to move from unsubsidized to subsidized housing
- < Other utilities or related service charge – never includes cable

Note: Requests for the following three services are exempt from timeline and other restrictions.

- D. Employment related expenses including testing fees.
- E. Funeral Expenses – up to \$750. No repayment. Does not apply to year cap amount.
- F. Car Seats – No repayment. Does not apply to year cap amount.

9. **Presenting Need** - Eligibility will be determined on a case by case basis in consideration of the “presenting need” of the PRC household in a fair and equitable manner.

The Director or designee of the GCDJFS has discretion to waive eligibility requirements and covered service restrictions for extraordinary circumstances.

10. **Services from this program are not an entitlement** – Eligibility determination qualifies or disqualifies an AG for consideration of services. The requested service itself must also be determined to be appropriate and allowable as a complete solution to the presenting need. The determination as to appropriate and allowable services is solely the decision of the Guernsey County Department of Job and

Family Services. As such, this determination of appropriate and allowable services may only be appealed through the Guernsey County Department of Job and Family Services. The eligibility determination has full appeal rights through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

11. **Other state or federal programs** – If state or federal programs are available to meet participant needs (i.e. HEAP, etc,) participant must utilize those services before utilizing PRC.

Household or AG must utilize the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) while it is in operation before payment will be authorized for heating fuel.

Exceptions to this rule/clause:

- A. When a household or AG is over the income standard for HEAP or emergency HEAP, but otherwise eligible for PRC services and Household or AG has a primary heat source disconnect notice.
12. **Appeal Process for denial of services** – A written request for a county conference must be submitted to the Director of the Guernsey County Department of Job and Family Services or his designee within 5 days of the notice of the decision. A county conference will be scheduled within 10 days of the receipt of the request. A decision will be made by the Director or his designee within 5 days after the county conference. The decision reached will be final and is not appealable. No other appeals or hearing process will be recognized for the denial of services.
 13. **Appeal Process for denial due to ineligibility** – A county conference and/or state hearing is available.

A. HOUSEHOLDS INELIGIBLE FOR PRC

1. **Maximum Limit** – Any household that has a member who has received the maximum allowable under PRC is ineligible.
2. **Income** – Any household that exceeds 200% of the monthly federal poverty guideline is ineligible.
3. **Minor Child** – Any household that doesn't meet the minor child guideline listed in the plan is ineligible.
4. **PRC Delinquency** – Any household with a member who is the applicant on a PRC and is delinquent on a previous PRC repayment agreement is ineligible for PRC. (See Section 3, 4E)
5. **Fugitive felons, probation and parole violators** - Any household who has a fugitive felon, a probation or parole violator is ineligible.
6. **Outstanding IPV claims and disqualification penalties** –Any household containing an individual with an outstanding IPV claim or disqualification penalty in any benefit program (ADC, TANF, OWF, PRC, Child Care or Food Stamps) is ineligible to participate in the PRC Program. Ineligibility continues until the cost of the IPV fraudulent claim is repaid, or the disqualification period ends, whichever is longer.
7. **Residence Fraud** – A person found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states is ineligible for ten years from the date of conviction.
8. **OWF Sanctions** – If the household is under current sanction on the OWF program, it is ineligible for PRC.
9. **Food Stamp Sanctions** – If a household member is under current food stamp sanction, the household is ineligible for PRC.
10. **Child Support** – An individual not cooperating with establishing paternity or obtaining child support is ineligible.

11. **Under 18** – An unmarried, non-graduate parent under 18 not attending high school or equivalent is ineligible.
12. **Under 18** – An unmarried parent under 18 not living in an adult supervised setting is ineligible.
13. **Medical Expenses** – Because the PRC program is funded with federal Title IV Block Grant Funds, no medical expenses for applicants are covered except for the following:
 - A. pre-pregnancy family planning service
 - B. employment related needs such as special glasses

A. AGENCY REQUIREMENTS

1. **Objective Criteria** – The county is responsible for using objective criteria when determining eligibility and approving or denying services in a fair and equitable manner, which includes verification of information within three business days after completion of application process.
2. **Other programs** – The county will inform PRC applicants about other available programs (i.e., Medicaid and Food Stamps) and hearing rights that are applicable.
3. **Authorization** – Applications for prevention and retention assistance will be authorized by the agency director or his designee(s). Applications for contingency assistance do not require authorization by the agency director or his designee(s).
4. **Auditing** – The county will ensure that its policies meet all auditing requirements including application entry for tracking on CRISE.
5. **Notices** – If eligibility for PRC is established, the GCDJFS will issue written notice of approval or denial.

GUIDELINES FOR EXPANDING THE PRC PROGRAM

On August 22, 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) became federal law. Provisions in PRWORA overhauled the federal regulations pertaining to public assistance by abolishing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) entitlement program and replacing it with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant program. Substitute House Bill 408 (SHB 408) is Ohio's legislative response to PRWORA. The following six principles guided the creation of SHB 408: **Personal Responsibility, Community Involvement, Integration of Services, Simplifying Service Delivery, Problem Prevention, and Evaluation of Program Outcomes.** SHB 408 created, among other provisions, the Ohio Works First (OWF) public assistance program to replace the former ADC program. It also created a companion program, Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) and gives each of Ohio's 88 counties maximum flexibility in defining the parameters of receipt of cash benefits and a focus on moving individuals and families to economic self-sufficiency.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has developed parameters in which Federal TANF funds can be expended locally with more flexibility. These expanded activities and services are identified as child welfare, child support and social service programs related to family stability. These additional activities and services have increased in scope to further state and local flexibility in designing welfare programs that best serve our local populations (families) to achieve economic and family self-sufficiency.

Within ODJFS and Federal guidelines, the Guernsey County Department of Job and Family Services (GCDJFS) will identify services, activities and programs (direct and supportive) for which individuals and assistance groups may be eligible for TANF reimbursement, i.e., Ohio Works First (OWF); Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC); and Family Self-Sufficiency/Family Stability (Social, Human and Economic) activities identified in the Guernsey County Plan.

The GCDJFS Director or his designee, with the approval of the Guernsey County Commissioners, may enter into agreements with agencies, organizations or individuals that will provide services, programs or activities that assist families and/or individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency and/or family stability. Consistent with the spirit of ODJFS' authority in accordance with Section 5101.211 of the ORC, the GCDJFS may enter into written agreements or contracts with, or issue grants to private or government entities under which funds are

provided to assist in the coordination, provision, enhancement or innovation of human service activities on the local level. These agreements must comply with all federal, state and local laws and program policies and guidelines including procurement procedures/policies.

Agreements for services entered into with the GCDJFS and approved by the Guernsey County Commissioners become part of the Guernsey County PRC Plan for the life of the contract and are subject to all rules and regulations mandated by Ohio House Bills ,167,408 and PRWORA.

At the discretion of the Director, eligibility requirements can be waived to meet extenuating circumstances.

To expand the universe of families and individuals who are eligible for partnership (agreement) services with GCDJFS and community entities the only eligibility requirements will be the income guidelines and the requirement to have a child in the home or be responsible for a child.

Income Guidelines will be considered met when assistance groups are approved for Medicaid, Food Stamps, Day Care Assistance, WIC or the School Free Lunch Program or as outlined in the contract.

SANCTIONED households will remain eligible for services. *This is an exception to how sanctioned households are treated in Section 4.*

Participation by eligible participants does not preclude the families from making a separate application for other services or assistance available under the County's PRC Plan. The receipt of these services will not count toward the families eligibility for primary PRC assistance.

The following are suggested areas for grants.

PLACEMENT AND RETENTION SERVICES

Projects should develop service strategies to assist OWF and/or PRC eligible participants in securing and/or retaining fulltime or part-time employment with fringe benefits (i.e., health insurance, retirement plans, 401K, etc.).

PREVENTION SERVICES

The focus for prevention services should be on serving youth, young adults and entry level work/training participants. The services and program design should

promote the development of a work ethic and provide practical work experiences for the participant, and/or assist with career goal exploration and career development.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The parameters include any child welfare activity that relates to family stability with the exception of placement costs for residential, out of home, emergency shelter, and substitute care services. These activities include, but are not limited to, case management, respite care, day treatment, diagnostic services, emergency caretakers, homemaker services, parent education, in-home services, special services for drug and alcohol abusers, transportation, unmarried parent services, domestic violence, post-finalization services, counseling, prevention and reunification for TANF eligible families or families who are at risk of staying dependent.

TITLE XX SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION

This includes Title XX services and administrative activities related to OWF and PRC participants that are less than 200% of the FPG. These services include information and referral, adoption, protective services for children, continuing protective services, day treatment for children, counseling services, case management, transportation, special services for alcohol and drug abusers, education and training services, pregnancy and parenting services for young parents, prevention and intervention services, and special services for youth involved in or at risk of involvement in criminal activity, if addressed in the county's Title XX plan.

JOB CREATION/WORKFORCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Guernsey County is an Appalachian county that is faced with geographic, social, and economic issues that are unique to this demographic area. Services/Programs will be considered that address the economic development of the area and increase the options for employment.

ADDITIONAL OWF SERVICES: WELFARE REFORM STRATEGIES

Programs may be considered that are designed to research, assess, develop, plan, implement and/or evaluate activities that are consistent with the philosophy and intent of the aforementioned programs.

FISCAL GUIDELINES

Projects will be funded only when funds are available to the county through the State (OWF) and Federal (TANF) governments and within the fiscal year July 1 – June 30. The source of funding is Federal TANF Program and therefore can only be expended on TANF eligible participants for TANF allowable services. Providers of services will need to enter into a fiscal agreement (contract) with the GCDJFS. Funds will be available for reimbursement of services and administration. A maximum of 10% for administration is the cap for total funds expended on the project. Contract requirements will be stipulated in the request for services.

**PRC PLAN AMENDMENT TO INCORPORATE SERVICES PROVIDED
THROUGH CONTRACTS**

(This section will be added to as contracts are entered into)

PRC Program – Section 10

Section Amendment Date – 10/01/11

The PRC Plan and amendments will be effective upon the date of authorization by the Director of the Guernsey County Department of Job and Family Services.

PRC Plan effective October 1, 2011

Approved by: