

**NOBLE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
PREVENTION, RETENTION AND CONTINGENCY (PRC)
PROGRAM**

The Noble County Department of Job and Family Services strive to provide comprehensive services that are designed to promote personal responsibility, family stability, economic security, and self-sufficiency.

The Noble County Department of Job and Family Services will operate a Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) Program designed to provide benefits and services to needy families and low-income employed families who are in need of help with essential supports to move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These supports include non-recurrent, short-term, crisis-oriented benefits and, ongoing services that are directly related to the four purposes of the TANF program, which does not meet the federal definition of assistance.

PRC assistance will be authorized with the expectation that the PRC assistance group will then be able to function without additional agency help. Services are provided to an assistance group to prevent them from relying on cash assistance and guide them to self-sufficiency by helping them through the presenting crisis. Services are also provided to a PRC assistance group to help members retain employment, and thereby to achieve or continue self-sufficiency. In addition, services are provided to a PRC assistance group to meet a presenting or contingent need which, if not satisfied, threatens the safety, health, or well-being of one or more PRC assistance group members.

Assistance Group Composition

PRC benefits and services are available to a family assistance group (AG) which includes a minor child under age 19 and a full-time student or a pregnant individual who is at least six (6) months pregnant as defined in the Ohio Revised Code. Household composition will include all in the household who will derive a direct benefit from the PRC. PRC benefits and services are also available to the non-custodial parent. A non-custodial parent means a parent of a minor child who does not live in the same household as the minor child but is a resident of Noble County. Only non-custodial parents who have demonstrated efforts in the last 4 of 6 months (defined as ordered amount of support paid) to support a minor child is eligible for TANF services. An eligible family must consist of a pregnant individual who is at least six (6) months pregnant or a minor child who resides with a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian.

A child may be “temporarily absent” from the home yet the child and his/her family may still qualify for PRC. The absence of a member of the assistance group is temporary if the individual has been absent for no longer than 45 consecutive days, location of the absent individual is known, there is a definite plan for the return of the absent individual to the home, and the absent individual shared the home with the assistance group prior to the onset of the absence. An exception to the 45 consecutive days applies when a child is removed from the home by the children services agency due to abuse, neglect or

dependency if the agency indicates there is a reunification plan to return the child to the home within six months. During this period, the child is considered to be residing with the parent, specified relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian. An eligible family may also consist of a minor child residing with a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian and other members of the household who may or may not be related to the minor child, as these people may enhance the family's ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Eligibility

In order to receive PRC benefits and services, a member of the assistance group must be a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien as defined in Section 5101:1-2-30 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

Eligibility for PRC is dependent upon the assistance group's demonstration and verification of need for financial assistance and/or services, and whether the agency determines that provision of PRC will satisfy the presenting needs. In order for eligibility to be determined, the gross income of the assistance group must be compared to the economic need standard established for the benefits and services requested. The economic need standards will be based on Federal Poverty Guideline measures which will be updated as the Federal Poverty Guidelines are revised. When determining eligibility for the PRC assistance group, the assistance group's income must be equal to or less than the economic need standard in order to receive benefits or services.

PRC benefits and services are available only to residents of Noble County, unless otherwise noted. Residence is established by living in the county voluntarily with the intent to remain permanently or for an indefinite period. All applicants for PRC benefits and services will be required to provide verification of residency.

Assistance groups (AG's) with striking members shall be ineligible for PRC unless the AG was eligible for benefits the day prior to the strike and is otherwise eligible at the time of application. For PRC purposes, a "striker" shall be anyone involved in a strike or concerted stoppage of work by employees (including a stoppage by reason of the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement) and any concerted slowdown or other concerted interruption of operations by employees. Examples of non-strikers who could be eligible for PRC include (1) employees whose workplace is closed by an employer in order to resist demands of employees and (2) employees unable to work as a result of striking employees and (3) employees who are not part of the bargaining unit on strike not wanting to cross the picket line due to fear of personal injury or death. Pre-strike shall be determined by considering the day prior to the strike as the day of application and assuming the strike did not occur.

If the applicant for PRC, or any other adult in the household, has an outstanding OWF/FA/PRC/Child Care overpayment, the person with the overpayment must enter into an agreement with the agency to start repayment of the outstanding overpayment. To be eligible for subsequent PRC, the repayment must be current. If payments are not maintained, any subsequent PRC requests may be denied.

An applicant for PRC is responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information, and cooperating with the agency in the eligibility determination process. There will be no PRC eligibility if the assistance group fails to make use of available income or resources that are sufficient to meet all or a portion of the presenting need.

Income

The total gross income, both earned and unearned, of all members of the PRC assistance group will be counted, with the exception of earned income of a minor child. This includes all income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for Ohio Works First (OWF). All income received by the PRC assistance group during a 30-day budget period will be considered when determining financial need. The 30-day budget period begins thirty (30) days prior to the date of the PRC application and ends on the application date, unless that time does not accurately reflect the expected income. In that instance, the income that is projected to be received within a 30-day budget period which begins on the date of the PRC application may be used.

For cases in which the income cannot be accurately obtained, the agency will implement practices that are reasonable and prudent when determining countable income. A signed ODHS 7341, "Applicant/Recipient Authorization for Release of Information" will be obtained from the applicant for an inquiry.

Once the release is received, verification which is obtained by telephone, will contain 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 verified income, and the name of the individual who obtained the verification. More stringent verification will be required when PRC benefits and services involve a direct monetary gain by the applicant and opportunities for fraud are prevalent.

Resources are excluded from all services/benefits under this plan.

Community Resources

The availability of resources within the local community (Noble County and the immediate surrounding area) will be explored prior to authorization of PRC. A PRC assistance group shall apply for and utilize any program, benefit or support system which may reduce or eliminate the presenting need.

Agency personnel authorizing PRC will be aware of the community and/or agency resources that could assist a family in need of immediate services such as OWF, DA, SSI and food assistance, as well as Unemployment Compensation, Social Security and special energy programs. Attempts to locate community resources and arrangements made with other service providers will be documented in the PRC assistance group record.

Ineligible Family Assistance Groups

According to Federal and State law, the following assistance groups are not eligible for PRC:

1. Families without a minor child;
2. A single individual, unless that individual is at least six months pregnant;
3. An individual who is not a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien;
4. Families that fraudulently received assistance under the OWF, Food Assistance and PRC programs until repayment occurs.

Repayment

For some selected benefits, a “Repayment Agreement” must be signed with the Noble County Department of Job and Family Services prior to PRC issuance. The PRC assistance group has some options concerning the repayment of the PRC funds.

For those prevention services, retention services, and/or contingency services that require repayment, the PRC assistance group may elect 1) to repay the funds received; or 2) retain employment for a period of six consecutive months from the date of PRC approval and the repayment will be waived; or 3) perform community service. Community service will be determined by the dollar amount of PRC received and the prevailing wage rate of \$10.00 per hour for all sites.

The Noble County Department of Job and Family Services reserve the right to waive the repayment requirement for a household if there are extenuating circumstances.

PRC is restricted to payments made within a twelve consecutive month cycle. If previous PRC payments are repaid by cash payments, the twelve consecutive month cycle will be eliminated.

The twelve consecutive month cycle will be extended indefinitely for those household that contain an adult who received a previous PRC payment as an adult which was not fully repaid by any of the repayment methods listed above. Failure to repay may result in legal action. The PRC Repayment Agreement outlines the specific guidelines for repayment.

Benefits and Services

Gas Card Program – limited to only the adult household member of the assistance group who has earned income, utilizes a car to get to and from work and is employed at least 20 hours per week. Households will be eligible to receive a \$100.00 gas card on a semi-annual basis or at the time of re-determination for food assistance. This will not be subject to a repayment agreement. The FPG is 200% with a \$200.00 cap in 12 months.

Contingency Services – Must be an emergent need that threatens the health, safety or decent living arrangement to the extent that it prohibits job preparation, work and family life. Eligible families could receive the following: Rent/Mortgage, Security

Deposits, Water, Telephone bill/installation or repair of telephone (*must provide documentation of a medical necessity) Utilities Assistance – (***gas, propane and electric assistance will not be available under the PRC program from November 1, 2011 thru March 31, 2012 when emergency HEAP funding is available**). All families will be referred to HEAP during the months specified. The FPG is 150% with a \$200.00 cap. A repayment agreement is required.

Lice Eradication and Education Program – Services under this program will be provided by the Noble County Health Department. Families who have a minor child in the home or have a minor child out of the home not more than six months with a reunification case plan and are at risk of school truancy and/or neglect due to head lice may be eligible. Services available will include lice eradication, in-home education, follow-up visits and other necessary assistance in order to eradicate the head lice. The FPG is 200% with no cap on services. A repayment agreement is not required for this service.

Child Welfare Issues – Child Welfare services allowable under this TANF program include but are not limited to: emergency housing services; domestic violence services; home-based services & mentoring services; parent education & training; post adoption finalization services; respite care services; special services for alcohol & drug abusers; transportation services; and case management services. This service is limited to families with children at risk of abuse/neglect. It provides an opportunity for NCDJFS and Children Services Division to provide services to assist in family reunification or to prevent a removal from the home. Families must be at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. Children may reside in the family home or the child cannot be out of the home less than a total of six consecutive months. If the children are out of the home, the family must have a Children Services Reunification plan in place and be actively working toward reunification, as verified by a children services caseworker. Authorization of PRC must contribute to the reunification process. No cap on services. Eligible services for TANF/PRC Child Welfare include certain direct services and case management or supportive services. The following are also allowable TANF Child Welfare Services under our PRC Plan:

Emergency Housing – Providing case management or supportive services as it relates to emergency housing needs including: making referrals, arranging for, and planning for emergency housing needs and services.

Children Services Case Management – Case management services including: making referrals to, arranging for services, planning, supervising, and assessing results of services provided to families and children.

Domestic Violence Services – Domestic violence services are defined as providing direct assistance to victims of domestic violence and their dependents for the purpose of preventing further violence and may include, but not be limited, to: meals, transportation, housing referral services, legal advocacy, children's counseling and support services, and other services to victims of domestic violence and their dependents. Other eligible services include providing case management or supportive services including: making referrals, arranging for and planning for care or services, planning, supervising and assessing results of care as it relates to domestic violence services.

Home Based Services – Home Based Services are those services provided to families in their own homes or community which are intended to either preserve the family by reducing risks or achieve successful reunification from out of home placements. Services provided to help meet basic human needs, examples include case management functions related to arranging or obtaining financial assistance, food, clothing, housing, household management or repairs, child care and transportation services. Home based services also include direct (face to face) education and counseling, referral and linkage to other community services and case management.

Parent Education Services – Parent education is a teaching process to assist a parent, guardian, or custodian in developing the basic skills necessary to provide adequate care and support to a child in his own home. This also includes case management, making referrals to, arranging for services, planning, supervising, and assessing results of Parent Education Services.

Post Adoption Finalization Services – Post-finalization services or post-finalization adoption services means services provided or arranged by Children Services to support, maintain and assist an adopted child or adoptive family any time after finalization of an adoption.

Respite Care Services – Eligible services include case management, making referrals to, arranging for services, planning, supervising, and assessing results of Respite Care activities and the provision of Respite Care. Respite Care services are services designed to provide temporary relief of child-caring functions which may include, but are not limited to, crisis nurseries, day treatment and volunteers or paid individuals who provide such services within the home. Respite Care Services may be provided to a child placed in a foster home or with a relative as well as for a child in his own home.

Special Services for Alcohol and Drug Abusers – Services to provide a rehabilitation program for alcohol and drug dependent persons. Service activities include:

- Working with the individual, family members, and appropriate social service agencies to develop and carry out an individual rehabilitation plan.
- Providing or arranging for individual, family and group counseling
- Services to assist the individual to recognize the danger of continued substance abuse.
- Case management services including: making referrals to, arranging for rehabilitation services, planning, supervising, and assessing results of services provided to alcohol and drug abusers.

Transportation Services – Transportation Services include arranging for or providing transportation to and from needed services, resources and facilities. (It may include the provision for escort assistance). Transportation provided to children/parents for visits are eligible as well as arranging, scheduling and monitoring visits.

The following services are **not** PRC eligible:

- Foster care and out of home maintenance payments.
- Juvenile justice services.
- Any costs associated with children who do not live with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian (except for the 180 day provision)
- Services available through other federal funding sources.

- Medical services with the exception of those services allowable under Ohio's 1996 IV-A State Plan.

Child Welfare Conditional Services

AG definition for Child Welfare Conditional Services: A child under age 18, age 18 and still attending high school or its equivalent living with an adult relative/guardian and all other members of the household. Pregnant women in their third trimester of pregnancy- each fetus is considered a separate family member.

Scope of Benefits/Services

PRC payments will be limited to the amount actually required to meet the presenting need, up to a maximum of \$200.00 per twelve (12) consecutive month period per eligible PRC household, with the exception of the following: Child Welfare Services and Gas Card.

Any assistance received by an adult member of the household under another Ohio county PRC program within the past twelve (12) months will be taken into consideration when determining eligibility for PRC in Noble County. The maximum dollar amounts stated above will not be exceeded between all the counties during the twelve (12) consecutive month period. In addition, if another Ohio county has a repayment condition on receipt of their PRC benefits, those conditions will continue to be in effect in Noble County if known to the agency.

Any applicant giving false or misleading information in order to obtain PRC benefits may have their application denied. If it is discovered after authorization of benefits that information was falsified, the applicant will be subject to repayment of any overpayment and the recovery procedures by the agency Fraud Investigator.

Standard of Promptness

The agency will process applications within five (5) working days of the receipt of a signed application and all required documentation necessary to process the application. When the time frame cannot be met, the assistance group record will include documentation of the case activity in order to provide a clear explanation of the delay in the processing of the application.

Notice of Approval/Denial

If it is determined that an applicant for PRC is approved, the ODJFS 4074, "Notice of Approval of Your Application for Assistance", or a comparable agency-specific approval form shall be mailed or otherwise delivered. If it is determined that an application for PRC is denied, the ODJFS 7334, "Notice of Denial of Your Application for Assistance", or a comparable agency-specific denial form shall be mailed or otherwise delivered.

Note: Households that have not met the conditions of repayment for PRC benefits may still remain eligible for selected services and/or benefits under this plan. Those households that have not met the conditions of PRC repayment will still be eligible to receive the following services in Noble County provided that all other PRC eligibility criteria is met: Child Welfare Services and the Gas Card Program.

Effective date – September 6, 2011
Approval

Noble County Department of Job and Family Services

Mindy Harding, Director

Date

Noble County Commissioners

Gary Rossiter

Date

Virgil Thompson

Date

Bob Nau

Date

