

# Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program for Washington County

Situations happen in every household when unplanned expenses arise which weren't anticipated. For many households, these unplanned expenses are met by utilizing their savings or by borrowing the money and paying it back over time.

For those living at or near poverty, unplanned expenses can pose disaster, as there may be no savings or credit ability to attain the money to meet the unplanned expense.

The challenge is to help the poor households of the county without absorbing the total household's responsibility for the unplanned expense.

In Washington County, we accepted the challenge by starting a model program on October 1, 1997 called Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC).

This PRC Plan is funded, in whole or in part, by federal funds provided under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, commonly known as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). As such, use of the TANF funds for programs is predicated upon the program achieving at least one (1) of the overarching goals of the TANF program as shown below:

1. to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives;
2. to end dependence of needy parents on governmental 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 those pregnancies;
4. to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent households.

## **QUALIFICATION, ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION**

### **NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Must have a minor child as defined by OWF or an adult pregnant woman in the household; or a non-custodial parent of a minor child in which paternity has been established, is cooperating with the child support enforcement agency in establishing a support order and an employment related need exists; or a non-custodial parent of a minor child who is ordered into the Employment Program by a Court within Washington County or referred by the Washington County Child Support Enforcement Agency (WCCSEA) and is complying with the Employment Program to find a job. However, if program meets either or both TANF goal three or four, then the County reserves the right to designate any household composition or any income limits.
2. Household composition will be determined by including all who live in the household.
3. PRC is restricted to eligible payments made to qualified households over a 30-day period of time within a 12 consecutive month cycle, unless otherwise noted. However, if previous PRC payments were totally repaid to the county via cash payments, the 12 consecutive month cycle will be ignored. Conversely, the 12

consecutive month cycle will be extended indefinitely for those households that contain an adult who received a previous PRC payment as an adult which was not fully repaid by any of the three (3) repayment methods listed below.

4. Those households containing an adult who previously received assistance under another Ohio county PRC program or another states emergency assistance program within the past 12 months will be restricted from obtaining PRC assistance for non-employment related items until 12 months of time has transpired since the last authorization of PRC or emergency assistance benefits. In addition, if another Ohio County had conditions on receipt of their PRC benefits, those conditions will continue in effect in Washington County if known to the agency.

## **FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Total gross household income for necessary **employment** related needs can't exceed 150% of the monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines as indicated on CRIS-E based on household size. Only earned income of a minor child who is attending up through a secondary school, any student loans/grants for any household member and all other income and resources pursuant OAC 5101:1-24-20 shall be excluded. 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. Reasonable attempts will be made by the agency to verify income. Repayment agreement must be signed by every adult household member prior to PRC issuance with household making choice of paying back the total amount issued for PRC by either (1) regular payments, (2) donating a specified number of volunteer hours to designated needs within the county, or (3) a combination of both. The PRC authorized by the WCDJFS plus any additional needed payments by the client must be sufficient to purchase the service and to not create an obvious repayment hardship for the household at a later date. Failure to repay may result in legal actions. For those choosing the option to volunteer hours for community needs, applicants may need to obtain a site prior to the authorization of PRC in which they and the site are willing to allow the PRC recipient to serve their hours. The site will then be reviewed by the agency to determine if it is acceptable and may approve it or designate another volunteer site.
2. Total gross household income for **non-employment** related needs that threaten the safety or health of the household can't exceed 100% of the monthly Federal Poverty Guidelines as indicated on CRIS-E based on household size. Only earned income of a minor child who is attending up through a secondary school, any student loans/grants for any household member and payments issued to a support payee on or after March 1, 2001 by the state of Ohio as reimbursement for child support in accordance with the provisions set forth in Amended Substitute Senate Bill 170 of the 124th General Assembly and with approval by the Governor are excluded from the gross income determination. 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. Reasonable attempts will be made by the agency to verify income. Repayment agreement must be signed by every adult household member prior to PRC issuance with household making choice of paying back the total amount issued for PRC by either (1) regular payments, (2) donating a specified number of volunteer hours to designated needs within the county, or (3) a combination of both. The PRC authorized by the WCDJFS plus any additional needed payments by the client must be sufficient to purchase the service and to not create an obvious repayment hardship for the household at a later date. Failure to repay may result in legal actions. For those choosing the option to volunteer hours for community needs, applicants may need to obtain a site prior to the authorization of PRC in which they and

the site are willing to allow the PRC recipient to serve their hours. The site will then be reviewed by the agency to determine if it is acceptable and may approve it or designate another volunteer site.

### **Applicants Ineligible for PRC**

1. Single people (unless noted), childless couples (unless noted) and parents without a minor child (unless noted) with exception of employed non-custodial parents of a minor child or a non-custodial parent of a minor child who is ordered into the Employment Program by a Court within Washington County or by the Washington County Child Support Enforcement Agency (WCCSEA) and is complying with the Employment Program to find a job is eligible. Short-term cost incurred by agency to determine if non-custodial parent will comply is reimbursable to the agency.
2. Households containing a fugitive felon or probation/parole violator
3. Households containing an individual with any outstanding OWF fraud or PRC fraud or Child Care fraud overpayment balance
4. Households containing an individual who is ineligible for this or any other assistance program due to non-compliance with the terms of their assistance
5. Households containing an individual who is under sanction on the OWF program unless due to current income into the household they would be financially ineligible for OWF if no sanction were imposed or if all adults in the assistance group are currently employed at 40 hours per week at no less than minimum wage.
6. Households containing any adult or minor head of household who quits a job is ineligible for a 90-day period from date of quit except where good cause has been established per 5107.26 of the Ohio Revised Code.
7. Households containing any adult or minor head of household who has been fired within 90 days of application due to willful actions on the employees part to cause the employer to fire them.
8. A non-graduate parent under 18 not attending high school or equivalent
9. A parent under 18 not living in an adult supervised setting
10. A person found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states are ineligible for 10 years.
11. If a member of a PRC household exhausts all of their federal and state time limits for OWF cash assistance, the household would only be eligible for necessary employment related needs under the PRC program.
12. Because the PRC Program is funded with federal Title IV-A block grant funds, no medical expenses for applicants are covered except pre-pregnancy family planning services or as permitted by state and/or federal law.
13. Residence outside of Washington County, Ohio with exception that a non-custodial parent of a minor child who is ordered into the Employment Program by a Court within Washington County or referred by the Washington County Child Support Enforcement Agency (WCCSEA) and is complying with the Employment Program to find a job may live outside of Washington County, but needs to be within State of Ohio.
14. Any illegal alien.
15. Households containing an adult member that is unwilling to sign the application and/or the repayment agreement.

### **BENEFIT LEVELS & QUALIFICATIONS**

Maximum payment for PRC approved items will be determined by the following: Participants ability to repay the amount loaned. Items required are prudent and necessary. All yearly PRC

participant payments are within the agency PRC budget. A maximum of \$500.00 per 12 consecutive month period per eligible PRC household, will be issued based on the following:

1. Criteria for employment related benefits would be determined based on need and income. For those whose household incomes is not greater than 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, as indicated on CRISE, they will be eligible for up to 100% of the maximum eligible payments.
2. Criteria for non-employment related benefits would be determined based on need and income. For those whose household incomes is not greater than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, as indicated on CRISE, they will be eligible for up to 100% of the eligible payments. Households who present a bill for PRC payment and have themselves failed to make a payment for three or more consecutive months are ineligible for PRC unless reasonable cause can be documented for the non-payment and this reasonable cause is accepted and approved by the WCDJFS.
3. Up to three quotes for any single purchased item that exceeds \$250.00 in cost for either employment or non-employment related PRC may be required of the applicant to obtain prior to PRC being authorized. **Note: Effective 8/1/09 the PRC program will no longer cover the purchase of vehicles.**
4. If state or federal programs are available to meet participant needs (i.e., HEAP, etc.); participants must utilize those services before utilizing PRC.
5. Eligibility factors, processing, delivery and the maximum benefits allowable under the Washington County PRC plan may be waived in unusual circumstances, as defined by the department, and approved by the Director of the WCDJFS.

## AGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Eligibility will be determined within three business days.
2. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the presenting need of the PRC AG.
3. Will inform PRC applicants about other available programs (i.e., Medicaid and Food Stamps and child care) and hearing rights that are applicable.
4. If eligibility is established, an agency representative will authorize payment for assistance, goods, and/or services. Actual payment will be done at a later date and according to procedures in place at the WCDJFS.
5. Appropriate information will be available for an audit trail.
6. If eligibility for PRC is established, the WCDJFS will mail or deliver the ODJFS 4074, Notice of Approval of Your Application for Assistance. If it is determined that an Application for PRC is denied, the WCDJFS will mail or otherwise deliver the ODJFS 7334, Notice of denial of Your Application for Assistance.
7. If an employed non-custodial parent is not currently paying child support, then WCDJFS will report all current employment to CSEA prior to approval.
8. We will help you if English is not your primary language. Persons who cannot, or have difficulty speaking or understanding the English language are protected against discrimination based on national origin. We may also be able to provide you oral or written translation of documents.
9. Charitable Choice: The CDJFS has agreements with other agencies to provide services to families who may be receiving PRC or act as worksites to families receiving OWF. Some of the services or worksites may be held at religious agencies,

such as churches. If you do not want to go to a religious agency for services or as your worksite, your worker will provide you with another agency for your worksite or to provide services.

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## **ADDITIONAL PRC PROGRAMS**

### **1. NURSING GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM (Employment and job readiness, TANF Goals 1,2,3,4)**

Washington County Department of Job and Family Services will purchase Ohio Tuition Trust Authority credits. These credits will be used, once other available funding (PELL, WIA, OIG, etc.) is used first, to offset the cost of tuition for very specific and identified programs that benefit the county. The recipient must meet the requirements specified by the County, live in a qualified household with minor child where the self-declared household income is at or under 300% of FPL. Any student receiving assistance under this program must agree that, upon completion of their individual program, will remain in and be employed in one of these fields in Washington County for one year.

- A. Prior obtaining of PRC for other related items will not affect the receipt of these specific services. Lastly, future eligibility for regular PRC will not be affected due to receipt of these specific funds.
- B. Applicants ineligible for these services will be 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 listed in section titled Applicants Ineligible for PRC in this document.

### **2. SCHOOL CLOTHES PROGRAM (Youth, TANF Goals 1,3)**

Due to the economic needs in Washington County, WCDJFS will provide school clothes and shoes for eligible children in Washington County. \$235.00, per eligible child, is available to cover children who attend school outside of their home and are in grades K-12 during the school year of 2011-2012. In addition, the school age child must be a Washington County resident and either certified as approved and receiving the Ohio Medicaid card for the month of January 2011 or eligible for the Ohio Medicaid Card but chooses not to receive it for the month of January 2011. Applications were mailed to each child who was on Medicaid as of January 31, 2011. In order to determine the amount that was designated for each vendor, we had a deadline of 4:30 p.m. on April 15, 2011 for the forms to be turned in. We then worked on those submitted forms and determined eligibility. We will develop an approval letter, using the ODJFS 4074, Notice of Approval of Your Application for Assistance” as a model. If it is determined that the child is eligible, we will notify the parent in writing of the approval and the line of credit they would have available at the store they designated. All approvals and denials will be sent no later than July 31, 2011. It is required that only the children in school will be eligible for the above items when they are purchased and also that no exchanges for cash will be allowed. The PRC application for this program will be the approved Medicaid application on file with Washington County DJFS. In the event the household would have been eligible for the Medicaid card for the month of January 2011 WCDJFS will take an application to determine the eligibility but a Medicaid card for that month may not be issued.

- A. There will be no requirement to pay back or work off these services. In addition, prior obtaining of PRC for other related items will not affect the receipt of these specific services. Lastly, future eligibility for regular PRC will not be affected due to receipt of these specific funds.
- B. Applicants ineligible for these services will be 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 listed in section titled Applicants Ineligible for PRC in this document.

**3. GAS CARDS (TANF Goal 1,2) – effective 10/1/10 till supply is depleted**

The Washington County Department of Job and Family Services (WCDJFS) understands that the high price of gasoline could put a financial burden on families that are working. WCDJFS will provide gas cards, not to exceed a value of \$100.00 per qualified time, to eligible households that receive food assistance or Healthy Start/Families or Transitional Medicaid in Washington County, have a minor child in the home, an adult member of the assistance group has earned income, and utilizes a car to get to and from work. The gas card will be redeemable for gasoline only. In addition, eligibility for this program will be done during intake or redetermination of the food assistance and/or Medicaid eligibility or when a change in employment has been reported and verified. NOTE: At the discretion of the agency director or Eligibility Referral Supervisor, eligibility for this program can be done when other changes in the household has been reported. If the household continues to be eligible for food assistance or one of the above noted Medicaid programs once the case has been authorized, and all other eligibility criteria's have been met, including completing a self-declared PRC application, the gas card will be given to the eligible household. Once the household receives the gas card, the household will be ineligible to receive any additional cards until the next intake, redetermination, or change but no sooner than six months.

- A. There will be no requirement to pay back or work-off services received under this PRC provision. In addition, prior receipt of PRC for other related items will not affect receipt of these services. Lastly, future eligibility for regular PRC will not be affected due to receipt of these services.
- B. Applicants ineligible for these services will be 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 as listed in section titled Applicants Ineligible for PRC in this document.

Agreement:

Washington County Department of Job and Family Services agree to implement the PRC Model as written.

**Signature on file**

October 26, 2011

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Thomas Ballengee, Director of WCDJFS

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Date