

Mahoning County
Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program
Effective September 7, 2022

The Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Plan is designed to provide benefits and services to low-income families to help with essential support needed to move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These supports include nonrecurring, short-term, crisis-oriented benefits and ongoing services that are directly related to the four objectives of the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) Program which do not meet the Federal definition of assistance. Nonrecurring, short-term assistance addresses discrete situations, not to exceed four months in duration dependent upon federal, state and local funding.

Assistance Group Composition

PRC benefits and services are available to a family Assistance Group (AG) which includes a minor (under the age of 18) child living with a parent or caretaker relative or a pregnant individual as defined in Sections 5108.01 and 5108.06 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Some PRC benefits and services are available to the non-custodial parent of a minor child who receives or is eligible for but does not receive assistance and lives in the county but does not live in the same household as the minor child. The scope of benefits can vary for AGs.

Eligibility

Eligibility for PRC benefits and services is contingent upon the AG's demonstration and verification of the need for financial assistance and/or services and whether or not the county determines the provision of PRC benefits or services will satisfy that need. In order for eligibility to be determined, the income of the AG must be compared to the economic need standard established for the benefits and services requested. The economic need standards are based upon the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guideline measures which shall be updated annually when the federal guidelines are released. When determining eligibility for the PRC AG, the AG's gross income must be equal to or less than the economic need standard.

Income

Total gross income of all members of the AG is included, excluding that which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for Ohio Works First (OWF). Per OAC 5101:1-24-20, the following types of income are excluded as income and resources in determining financial eligibility for PRC benefits and services: Child Support payment distributions made by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; Drug discounts and transitional assistance received under the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act; Monetary allowances paid under Section 401 of the Veteran's Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 effective December 1, 2000; Payments authorized and made by the Veterans Administration to provide certain benefits including a monthly allowance for children with covered birth defects who are the natural children of women veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam from February 28, 1961 through May 7, 1975.

All income which is received and/or expected to be received during the thirty (30) day budget period is considered when determining financial need. The 30-day budget period begins 30 days projected from the date of the PRC application unless this period of time does not accurately reflect expected income. In this instance, income received 30 days prior to the date of application may be utilized. Contracted agencies have the option of using self-declaration to verify income.

Residence

Services or benefits will be available only to those residing in Mahoning County. Residence will be established by living in the county voluntarily with the intent to remain permanently or for an indefinite period of time. Residence is also established by an applicant who is not receiving assistance in another state or county and who has entered the county with a job commitment, whether or not currently employed.

Ineligible Family AGs

Federal and State law must be adhered to when providing PRC benefits and services. Listed below are federal and state prohibitions based on 42 U.S.C. 608 and Section 431 of PRWORA (as amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1995 and Balanced Budget Act of 1997) and the ORC:

1. No assistance for families without a minor child.
2. No assistance to a single individual unless such individual is pregnant.
3. No medical services except for family planning services.
4. No benefits or services to an individual who is not a citizen of the United States or a qualified alien.
5. No assistance for families that fraudulently receive assistance under the OWF and PRC programs until repayment, in full occurs (also known as an Intentional Program Violation).

In addition, AGs will not be eligible in the following situations:

1. No assistance for fugitive felons or those in violation of parole.
2. No assistance to families where the minor children are not attending school or the equivalent (for example: home schooling).
3. No assistance to families that fraudulently received assistance under any other program administered by the agency until repayment in full occurs.
4. No assistance to families who have an outstanding overpayment resulting from an administrative error or an inadvertent household error until a repayment agreement is signed by the party responsible for reimbursement.

Frequency

A family may be eligible for several PRC benefits and services over time. The agency will have the final decision as to whether further benefits or services are appropriate for the PRC AG. When an individual has received benefits or services in another PRC AG, the agency shall determine whether further benefits or services are appropriate.

Program Integrity

The PRC AG will be given a choice of providers/vendors when appropriate and convenient. Under no circumstances will an employee of the Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services be an approved vendor. A PRC AG that is discovered to have fraudulently received or improperly disposed of PRC benefits or services will be required to reimburse the Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services the full cost of the benefit or service and may be subject to possible prosecution. Providing false and/or misleading information on the application will render the household ineligible for any PRC benefit or service for a twenty-four-month period.

Program Operation

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of families applying for PRC benefits or services, the program shall be continuously in operation according to the standards of policy and procedure as set forth within this document. The covered benefits and services or the amounts specified for the benefits and services listed in the section detailing the scope of coverage may not be reduced, limited or restricted unless program is amended.

Scope of Benefits/Services

The attached chart contains the scope of benefits and services provided under the PRC program in Mahoning County. The chart also contains the specific assistance groups served, the economic need standard for the particular benefit/service, caps on the benefits/services and the targeted groups. The targeted groups are used to customize service delivery specific to the family's circumstance.

Standard of Promptness

The focus of this program is to provide and authorize benefits and services within ten (10) days of receipt of a signed application. In some instances, this time frame will not be met due to unavoidable delays on the part of the applicant or agency. The ten-day standard of promptness is intended to stress the importance of processing PRC applications in an appropriately efficient manner. The denial of a PRC application due only to the expiration of the ten-day period is not an acceptable eligibility determination practice. The AG record shall contain sufficient documentation of the case activity on the PRC application, including an explanation of unexpected or unavoidable delays in processing the application.

Community Resources

Every effort must be made to explore the availability of resources within the local community prior to the authorization of a PRC benefit or service. For the purposes of the PRC program, the 'community' may be defined to include areas beyond the county's boundaries. The PRC AG is required to apply for and utilize any program, benefit or support system which may reduce or eliminate the presenting need. County staff determining eligibility for the PRC program must be aware of community resources which could assist a family in need of immediate services. The PRC application provides a section for written documentation of attempts to locate and utilize community resources.

Applicant Responsibility

An applicant applying for a PRC benefit or service is responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information and cooperating in the eligibility determination process. An applicant must utilize available income and resources in meeting the presenting need. This includes ongoing assistance programs such as OWF, SSI and food Stamps, as well as unemployment compensation, Social Security and special energy programs. There is no PRC eligibility if the AG fails to make use of available income or resources that are in an amount sufficient to meet a portion of or the entire amount of the presenting need.

Application

The Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program Application is to be used when a family is applying for PRC benefits and services. The application and any other information gathered during the eligibility determination process shall be kept in the AG's ongoing OWF, Medicaid and/or Food Stamp records. If the AG is not in receipt of ongoing assistance, a separate case shall be maintained for the PRC application and related verifications. PRC benefits and services provided to noncustodial parents shall also be kept in a separate AG case. During the eligibility determination process the applicant will be advised of their hearing rights if they disagree with the notice of approval or denial. A separate application (Employment Support Program application) will be used for services requested under the Employment Support Program. This application will be kept with the CSEA file. A separate application (Summer Work Program application) will be used for services requested under the Summer Work Program. A separate application (TANF High School Graduation Assistance Program application) will be used for services requested under the High School Graduation Assistance Program. A separate application (Kinship Caregiver Program Application) will be used for services requested under the Kinship Caregiver Program. A separate application (COVID-19 Response Program Application) will be used for services requested under the COVID-19 Response Program. A separate application (Employment Incentive Program Application) will be used for services requested under the Employment Incentive Program. A separate application (School Clothing Program Application) will be used for services requested under the School Clothing Program. These applications will be kept on file at MCDJFS.

Eligibility factors, time restraints and amounts available to pay for the various PRC benefits and services covered must be explained. Anyone applying for PRC services must receive appropriate information about, referrals to and access to Medicaid, Food Stamps, Child Care assistance and other programs that provide benefits that could help make the transition to work successful. Voter registration as prescribed by the Secretary of State should also be available to PRC applicants (reference Section 329.051 of the ORC).

PRC assistance will be authorized with the expectation that the PRC AG will be able to function without additional or with limited agency help. Benefits and services shall be provided which directly lead to or can be expected to lead the family to becoming self-sufficient by accomplishing one of the four purposes of TANF:

- a. Provide assistance to needy families;
- b. End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
- c. Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- d. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Notice of Approval/Denial

If it is determined that an application for PRC is approved, the ODHS 4074 "Notice of Approval of Your Application for Assistance" shall be mailed. If it is determined that an application for PRC is denied, the ODHS 7334 "Notice of Denial of Your Application for Assistance" shall be mailed.

Once eligibility for PRC is established, authorization shall occur and a payment for the benefits or services will be generated. Authorization may occur at any time during the period beginning on the date the PRC is approved. Payment will be authorized within 30 days, unless additional information is needed, and will be made to the vendor.

The Statewide Automated Eligibility System shall be utilized to track services received from county to county. The PRC Reporting Tool shall be used to register the AG and PRC issuance of benefits and services. PRC services provided from Family and Children First, Early Start and School Readiness programs may be tracked and recorded through the ODJFS 2827, Monthly Financial Statement.

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	Job Preparation Services & Benefits				
	Job Readiness Assessments	Not to exceed \$250 in a lifetime	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children
	Pre-employment background check	Not to exceed \$250 in a lifetime			
	Testing for state licenses, board certification, commercial drivers' license	Not to exceed \$250 in a lifetime			
	GED Preparation	Not to exceed \$250 in a lifetime			
	Driver License School and testing	Not to exceed \$400 in a lifetime	Minor children ages 15-17		

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	Job Readiness Training				
	Short-term training, not to exceed eighteen (18) months	Not to exceed \$3,000 in a lifetime (short-term training & education). And only if not offered through MCTA with the exception of STNA	Parents and care taker relatives with minor children	200% FPL	Individuals who are employed, underemployed or unemployed but employable.
	Short-term education expenses, as deemed appropriate to achieve self-sufficiency		Non-custodial parents		

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	Employment Support Program CSEA case management services. Employment and training support activities designed to obtain or retain employment or improve employment activities.	Limited to availability of TANF funding	Non-custodial parent with minor child	200% FPL	Non-custodial parent with minor child in Child Support Enforcement system and has court or administrative ordered child support. Individuals who are employed, underemployed or unemployed.

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	Work Support/Retention Services Expenses for tools, equipment, supplies, job support clothing not provided by employer (limited to clients referred by MCDJFS Work Activities Program).	Not to exceed \$500 in a lifetime Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that obtain employment of at least 20 hours per week.

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	Work Support/Retention Services \$250 job retention bonus after the first month of continuous employment at the same job and \$450 job retention bonus after the third month of continuous employment at the same job that \$250 bonus was issued	Limit to once every 5 years Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that become ineligible for TANF cash assistance due to employment of at least 20 hours per week.

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	Contingency Services Rent Utilities	Actual amount needed for court order eviction up to \$600. Actual amount needed to prevent disconnection up to \$500. There will be no payment if service is already shut off. Not to exceed \$1,100 for both (every 24 months)	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL Family must have sufficient income to maintain prevention status	Families at risk of losing current employment through no fault of their own Must show a payment history of no more than 2 missed payments over the previous 12 months

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	Contingency Services Essential household items/appliances: - Bed, washer, dryer, stove - Refrigerator	Purchase of items/appliances up to maximum payment of \$600 per item for bed, washer, dryer and stove and \$750 per item for refrigerator per application Original invoice required from vendor Landlord statement needed to verify essential household items/appliances not provided at residence	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL Family must have sufficient income to maintain prevention status Limited to availability of TANF funding Limited to once every 7 years	Families at risk of losing current employment through no fault of their own

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	Transportation Services and Benefits Bus Pass	Not to exceed 4 months Limited to once per year Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children Non-custodial parents	200% FPL	Employed parents or caretaker relatives of minor children and employed non-custodial parents Must be employed 20 hours per week and making at least federal minimum wage

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	Transportation Services and Benefits Gas allowance to assist with purchase of fuel First month gas allowance issued upon PRC approval, subsequent months of gas allowance will be issued after receipt of pay stubs indicating full month of employment.	\$60.00 monthly gas allowance if employed 20-29 hours per week \$90.00 monthly gas allowance if employed 30 or more hours per week Not to exceed 4 months Limited to once per year Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	200% FPL	OWF parents and caretaker relatives in receipt of TANF cash assistance that become ineligible for TANF cash assistance due to employment, must provide written documentation of how fuel costs are incurred.

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1	<u>Diversion/Contingency Services</u> Diversion program for temporarily incapacitated persons. Program subject to availability of funds	1-2 months off - \$750.00 payment 3-4 months off - \$1,500.00 payment Short term non-assistance to remain self-supporting Once yearly from date of application Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	Must meet OWF eligibility guidelines	OWF applicant who is temporarily unable to work and meets the following 3 conditions: 1. Employed 3 out of 4 months preceding application 2. Verification is provided from physician verifying the temporary condition 3. Plan exists to return to work

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1	<u>Diversion/Contingency Services</u> Contingency Program for persons affected by temporary employer shutdowns of more than 60 days	Provides up to 4 months of short term non-recurrent benefits may include rent, stoves, refrigerators, utility assistance, car payment, etc. Once yearly form date of application Limited to availability of TANF funding	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children	Must meet OWF eligibility guidelines	OWF applicant applying for self and children who is unable to work due to a temporary employer shutdown. Must meet the following 3 conditions: 1. Employed with employer up to shut down date 2. Provide verification from employer of return date 3. Apply for unemployment benefits

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1	Family Disaster Assistance Benefits to assist with damage or loss sustained as a result of a natural disaster upon declaration by the Governor	Cap based on amount allocated by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Parents and caretaker relatives with minor children and individuals living in their households	200% FPL	Families sustaining disaster-related damage or loss upon disaster declaration by the Governor

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	High School Graduation Assistance Program Serves persons from a TANF eligible family	Provides Senior Graduation Dues up to \$300 per student for youth ages 16-24 from January 10, 2022 to June 10, 2022	As defined by TANF eligibility guidelines	200% FPL	<p>Student has not attained the age of 18 at the time of application or student has not attained the age of 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school; verified by their high school to be graduating in Spring 2021</p> <p>Student ages 18-24 in a needy family that has a minor child</p> <p>Student ages 18-24 that has a minor child and are considered needy</p> <p>Student may be a non-custodial parent as long as they are considered needy and have a minor child</p> <p>Youth in temporary or permanent custody of a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) who are placed in a licensed foster care setting, who has not attained the age of 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school graduating in Spring 2021</p>

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1 & 2	<p>TANF Summer Youth Employment Program</p> <p>Serve youth ages 14-18 from a TANF eligible family</p>	<p>Provides paid employment at \$13.00 per hour for youth ages 14-18 from May 3, 2022 to September 30, 2022</p> <p>Provide bus pass for transportation, work related items such as uniforms, tools, licenses or certifications, case management activities, job coaches and mentors</p>	As defined by TANF eligibility guidelines	200% FPL	<p>Youth is a minor child in a 'needy' family and is in school</p> <p>Youth in a 'needy' family that has a minor child</p> <p>Youth that have a minor child and are considered 'needy'</p> <p>Youth may be a non-custodial parent as long as they are considered 'needy' and have a minor child</p> <p>Youth in the temporary or permanent custody of a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) who are placed in a licensed foster care setting</p>

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1	<p><u>Kinship Caregiver Program</u></p> <p>Through Mahoning County Children Services (MCCS), assist kinship caregivers with providing and maintaining a home for a child in place of a child's parents by providing reasonable and necessary relief of child caring functions</p> <p>Kinship caregiver shall either be an adult relative or adult nonrelative who is the legal guardian/ custodian of the child</p> <p>Kinship caregivers who provide and maintain a home for a child(ren) placed by MCCS may reside in any county within the State of Ohio</p>	<p>Provides payment of child caring function costs for family stabilization and caregiving services</p> <p>Initial eligibility begins the date the application is received</p> <p>Stabilization services: provides up to 4 months of short term non-recurrent benefits. Examples include but are not limited to child care services not to exceed four months; or incidentals incurred when taking on the responsibility of caring for a child unexpectedly (i.e., one-time purchases for basic needs such as but not limited to cribs/beds, etc.)</p> <p>Caregiving services: provides up to 12 months of services from initial eligibility, with a redetermination of TANF eligibility required, unless the kinship child is no longer residing in the home</p>	<p>As defined by TANF eligibility guidelines</p> <p>Stabilization services: assistance group shall include only a minor child residing with a kinship caregiver</p> <p>Caregiving Services: assistance group shall include at least a minor child residing with a kinship caregiver and the kinship caregiver</p>	<p>Gross income less than 200% FPL</p>	<p>Stabilization services: child has not attained the age of 18 at the time of application or child has not attained the age of 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school</p> <p>Caregiving services: child must be under age 13 at the time of application and may remain eligible until they turn 13; or be under age 18 at the time of application if the child meets the definition of special needs and may remain eligible until they turn 18</p> <p>Caregiving services: kinship caregiver shall be participating in one of the following approved activities: paid employment, training or education in preparation for paid employment, work assignment requirements</p>

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
<p>1 & 2</p>	<p>COVID-19 Response Program</p> <p>Benefits to meet an immediate need in households affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The need could have been created specifically due to illness and a total or partial loss of income.</p> <p>Assistance may include needs such as: utilities, shelter, toiletries</p> <p>Limited to the duration of the COVID-19 emergency</p>	<p>Provides financial assistance up to an amount of \$400.00 for a FAMILY as defined as a minor child who resides with a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian</p> <p>Provides financial assistance up to an amount of \$200.00 for a FAMILY as defined as either a pregnant individual with no other children; or a non-custodial parent who lives in Ohio but does not reside with his/her minor child(ren)</p> <p>Limited to availability of TANF funding</p>	<p>Family is defined in federal and state law and regulations as follows: caretaker with a minor child; pregnant individuals with no other children; and non-custodial parents</p>	<p>200% FPL</p>	<p>Families with minor children; pregnant individuals with no other children; and non-custodial parents</p>

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Cap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
1	<p>School clothing</p> <p>Targeted for families with school age youth, i.e. Kindergarten through 12th grade.</p> <p>Assistance may include needs such as: school clothing items such as shirts, pants, shoes, coats, hats, sweatshirts, etc.</p>	<p>Provides financial reimbursement up to an amount of \$250.00 per child, for one application during a school year, for a FAMILY as defined as a minor child, age Kindergarten through 12th grade, who resides with a parent, specified relative, legal guardian or legal custodian.</p> <p>Limited to availability of TANF funding</p>	<p>Family is defined in federal and state law and regulations as follows: caretaker with a minor child age Kindergarten through 12th grade.</p>	200% FPL	Families with minor children age Kindergarten through 12 th grade.

The Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services shall implement the PRC Program as written above.

All of the terms and conditions of the PRC Plan shall remain in full force and effect and are hereby adopted and reaffirmed. The PRC Plan is in compliance with ORC Chapter 5108.

Mahoning County Department of Job and Family Services


 Audrey Morales, Director

Signature


 Date

Appendix A

TANF Purpose	Service or Benefit	Gap	Assistance Group	Economic Need Standard	Target Group
2	<p>Employment Incentive Program</p> <p>JFS case management services designed to obtain or retain employment and/or improve employment activities</p>	<p>Provides one-time payments for Work Program Clients who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have already been working a minimum of 20 hours per week for at least 30 days - \$250.00 payment -Who obtain employment working a minimum of 20 hours per week and maintain it for at least 30 days - \$250.00 -Who have been working and maintained employment working a minimum of 20 hours per week for at least 90 days - \$450.00 <p>A combination of two payment allowed, not to exceed \$700.00</p> <p>Limited to availability of funding</p>	<p>Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWDs)</p>	<p>200% FPL</p>	<p>ABAWDs participating in JFS Case Management Services</p>