

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

The Noble County Department of Job and Family Services strives 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 paid 50% of their proceeding 90 day child support obligation 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 to receive benefits or services, the assistance group's income must be equal to or less than the economic need standard.

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.

Applicants must show that they have sufficient means to maintain monthly expenses after receipt of PRC for an emergent need. Individuals experiencing a short-term loss of income due to illness and injury and are expected to return to work within a reasonable time frame will be considered for receipt of PRC on a case-by-case basis.

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. The PRC application packet also includes a voter registration application.

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 with the exception of excluded income as listed in OAC 5101:1-24-20, and income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for Ohio Works First (OWF). All countable 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 ODJFS 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 benefits and services 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

Effective May 1, 2018, all repayment agreements through April 30, 2018 will be waived and there will be no repayment agreement required for any PRC program.

PRC is restricted to a one time only non-recurring payment for a particular emergent need made within a 12 consecutive month cycle (i.e. you can only receive PRC for a specific utility once in the 12-month period but you could receive assistance for another emergent need in the same 12-month period as long as it doesn't exceed the cap on the services.) Effective May 1, 2018 any applicant that has received PRC in the past 12 months could possibly be eligible for additional benefits up to the \$2,000 cap.

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 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.

Benefits and Services

- **Household, Shelter & Utilities** **TANF Goal 1&2**
Payment must be an emergent need that threatens the health, safety or decent living arrangement to the extent that it prohibits children being cared for in their own home or inhibits job preparation, work and family life. The FPG is

200% for these services, with a cap of up to \$2,000 required. This benefit can be used once in a 12-month period. To be eligible for rent or a mortgage payment, a notice from the landlord/bank listing the payment due date will be required. If both rent and deposit are requested, payment from PRC will pay rent first, then the deposit. If a deposit is paid from PRC, the assistance group will be required to sign a deposit repayment agreement agreeing that when the deposit is refunded, NCDJFS will receive their portion of the deposit refund first. Payment required for these emergent needs must be past due or in danger of disconnect/eviction at the time of application. A copy of the bill and/or disconnect notice will be required. Relocation services will be provided to applicants requiring these services due to employment opportunities and housing availability/suitability. These services will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

- **Automobile Insurance** **TANF Goal 1&2**
Limited to only the adult household members, individuals must have proof of vehicle ownership; a valid driver's license or driving privileges for work; and proof of financial responsibility. The applicant must also be working a minimum of 20 hours per week; receiving unemployment compensation; or be actively participating in a required work activity through NCDJFS. The FPG is 200% with a \$2,000 per calendar year cap. This benefit can be received once in a 12-month period.
- **Automobile Payments** **TANF Goal 1&2**
Limited to only the adult household members, individuals must have proof of vehicle ownership; a valid driver's license or driving privileges for work; and proof of financial responsibility. The applicant must also be working a minimum of 20 hours per week; receiving unemployment compensation; or be actively participating in a required work activity through NCDJFS. The FPG is 200% with a \$2,000 per calendar year cap. This benefit can be received once in a 12-month period.
- **Car Repairs** **TANF Goal 1&2**
Limited to only the adult household members, individuals must have proof of vehicle ownership; a valid driver's license or driving privileges for work; and proof of financial responsibility. The applicant must also be working a minimum of 20 hours per week; receiving unemployment compensation; or be actively participating in a required work activity through NCDJFS. Repairs must be completed by an established dealer or business and must be the best of three estimates. The FPG is 200% with a \$2,000 per calendar year cap. This benefit can be used once in a 12-month period.
- **Transportation** **TANF Goal 1&2**
Gas vouchers are limited to a maximum of \$300 in a 12-consecutive month period. Eligibility is 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. Assistance Groups will be eligible to receive \$100 gas voucher every four months. This benefit is not subject to a repayment agreement. The FPG for this service is 200%. Gas vouchers will expire within one year of the issuance date.

A \$50 gas voucher may also be issued to OWF (Ohio Works First) applicants who have OWF benefits pending, have signed a self-sufficiency contract and their assignment is job search and/or when the individual is participating to meet the OWF sanction compliance requirements. This will not be subject to a repayment agreement and is excluded from the maximum amount in the gas card voucher program.

- **Disaster Assistance Program**

TANF Goal 1&2

To the extent permissible under Federal law and/or Ohio statutes and regulations, the Director may authorize TANF discretionary funding for disaster relief when a State of Emergency has been declared by the federal government or the Governor of the State of Ohio. This disaster relief will be made available to eligible families with unplanned expenses related to natural disasters (i.e. must have been adversely affected by the emergency condition). Eligibility shall be determined based upon the TANF guidelines not to exceed 200% of poverty or whatever is in effect at that time including exceptions specified by law or regulations. The relief amount for natural disasters will be discretionary per assistance group, with the maximum amount to be specified by the Director which will be based on available funding and within the maximums set by Federal/State and/or granting agency. (Maximum reimbursed by the State is currently set at \$1,500 per household and shall not be exceeded unless other funding or reimbursement maxes are provided. The Director may select a lower or higher amount as determined when the disaster assistance is offered).

Non-TANF Funds for Elderly and Disabled: If a disaster or state of emergency is declared by the Federal Government or the Governor of the State of Ohio, non-TANF funds for the elderly and disabled may be determined to be available. This disaster relief will be made available to Noble County Residents age 55 or over, without a minor child or receiving full disability benefit payments, with unplanned expenses related to natural disasters (i.e. must have been adversely affected by the emergency condition). Other than what has been stated, eligibility shall be determined based upon the same guidelines as all other PRC assistance in effect at that time including exceptions specified by law or regulations. The relief amount for natural disasters will be discretionary per assistance group, with a maximum amount to be specified by the Director which will be based on available funding and within the maximums set by Federal/State and/or granting agency. (Maximum reimbursed by the State is currently set at \$750 per non-TANF household and shall not be exceeded unless other funding or reimbursement

maxes are provided. The Director may select a lower or higher amount as determined when the disaster assistance is offered).

Disaster Assistance will be outside of the established maximums within the PRC Plan. Regardless of applicant's determined eligibility, the applicant will not receive said benefits if funding is not available.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

TANF Goal 1&2

(Could be outside of the PRC Budget – Projects Listed may not be all Inclusive)

- **TANF Employment Program for Youth:** Noble County DJFS may provide a TANF Employment Program for Youth which would typically run from May 1st to August 31st of each year but could be extended at the discretion of the Agency Director contingent on the availability of funds. This program will offer subsidies to employers as an incentive to hire eligible youth as per Chapter 5108 of the Ohio Revised Code and the parameters of OWF and PRC employment programs as per Section 5101:1-3-16 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

The purpose of the TANF Employment Program for Youth is to provide eligible youth an opportunity to gain work experience, to help meet their basic needs, and provide employers an incentive to hire youth who are in need of these services.

Eligible youth are as follows:

- Youth ages 14-17, as long as the youth is a minor child in a needy family and is in school (youth may be 18 if they are a full-time student in a secondary school);
- Youth ages 18-24, as long as they are in a needy family that also has a minor child; or
- Youth ages 18-24 that have a minor child and are considered needy.

The youth served may be non-custodial parents as long as they are considered "needy" and have a minor child. "Needy" is defined to be income at less than 200% of the federal poverty level. No repayment agreement is required for this program.

Public, private non-profit and private for-profit employers are eligibility to participate in the program. Employers shall receive a subsidy to assist in the cost of employing the youth. The youth may work up to 40 hours per week; however, all State and Federal labor relates laws apply. In addition, the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) Office of Unemployment Compensation has stated that, under Section 4141.5.05 of the Ohio Administrative Code, employers are not required to report the wages paid to youth as part of the Employment Program for Youth for purposes of unemployment. Employers should not include the youth or youth's wages on

their quarterly unemployment compensation reports. So long as the youth is not included on the wage reports, the weeks and wages should not count towards any other employment that the youth might have for the purpose of an unemployment claim.

This program's job positions may be full or part time. "Full time" is defined by the employer; however, Noble County DJFS may include stipulations on maximum/minimum hours for full or part time positions. The program will include wage and fringe benefits not to exceed 100% of actual costs incurred by the employer. Wages shall be no higher than \$10 per hour (unless otherwise authorized by the Director and/or designee) and shall not be below the State minimum, unless otherwise stated by ODJFS rules for said project.

Participants in the TANF Employment Program for Youth shall be considered regular employees of the employer. They shall be entitled to the same employment benefits and opportunities that are available to other regular employees of the employer. Once considered eligible for this program, applicants are considered eligible until the program ends. The participant may request work related items such as uniforms, tools, licenses, etc. as long as it is verified as necessary through the employer. These supportive services are contingent upon funding and determined on a case by case basis and will only be provided as long as they are within the scope of the program as determined by the Director. Any supportive services that follow the State guidelines will be made available through this program, contingent upon funding availability. Assistance with transportation will be provided and could include, but not limited to gasoline vouchers, taxi services, public transportation, etc. There will be no cap placed on the number of participants in this program but the agency will have the discretion to determine a cutoff number of participants in this program, contingent upon funding availability.

The Noble County DJFS and the participant shall enter into a written contract with the employer which establishes the parameters of the program, as per guidance from ODJFS (as available), which may be more specific than what is stated within this plan. The contract shall be written to cover the time period in which this plan shall be utilized. Contracts for this program will be based on availability of funds and will require the Director and/or their designee's approval. This special project will only be offered when funding is determined to be available by the Director. Enactment of this program will not require an amendment of the PRC Plan. Regardless of what the above plan states, ODJFS guidelines for this special project shall be followed and deviations from the overall special project concept stated above, resulting from ODJFS requirements, shall not require modification of this plan unless significantly different by the Director. All rules related to the project will be discussed during the orientation process.

This program will be operated and coordinated with the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP). Modification to what is stated in the PRC Plan will not be necessary to incorporate this program with CCMEP. When there are differences between this program and CCMEP, the rules of CCMEP shall be followed. In addition, contracts may be developed with various providers to provide services to meet the goals of the program and will not require any additional information in the PRC Plan to implement. This section applies to any applicants that would be participating in CCMEP or the TANF Employment Program for Youth.

- **Child Clothing Allowance:** The Noble County DJFS may provide assistance to PRC eligible families with school age children (Pre-School through 12th grade) to purchase clothing. Such project, if offered, will be available twice a year with the months of application and issuance to be determined by the agency director and will be contingent on the availability of funds. Each PRC eligible school age child will receive PRC funds in the form of a clothing voucher or any other method approved by NCDJFS. The voucher will specify the dollar amount as well as the store(s) in which the voucher may be redeemed. The dollar amount of the voucher will be determined by the Director and/or their designee upon determination of the total available funding for the project. Vendor(s) will be selected by the Director and/or their designee based on ability of vendor to meet the needs of the project in its entirety. Applications for the program will only be accepted during the special project dates set by the Director and/or their designee and will not be accepted if not dated and received during that specified time frame. Use of the vouchers must be within the set time frame indicated on the voucher. Vouchers that are outdated are void and unusable. The applications will be processed on a first come, first serve basis and will be strictly contingent upon funding. Youth in Foster Care/Kinship settings who are age pre-school through 12th grade and verified to be enrolled in the upcoming school year shall be considered an assistance group of one for this PRC Program only.

To be eligible for the clothing voucher, the family must meet all PRC eligibility requirements; and the family must provide verification of enrollment in Pre-School through 12th grade. The child must be in the same household with parent/guardian applying and must be residents of Noble County. The application must include the last thirty days household income, ID for the adult applicant, address verification and proof of school enrollment/attendance. The income guidelines for the program are 200% of poverty, does not apply to PRC time limits, and no repayment is required. This special project will only be offered when funding is determined to be available by the Director. Enactment of this program will not require an amendment of the PRC Plan.

- **Child Welfare** **TANF Goal 1-4**
Eligible services for TANF/PRC child welfare may include, but are not limited to: hard services (transportation assistance, utility assistance, emergency assistance, other – to be determined by the child welfare case manager or supervisor; soft services (screening & programming information, referral to social services agency or other outside partner services and/or wrap-around services, domestic violence services, parenting training, case management activities to prevent removal of child, case management services to reunite a child, case assessments and case management, post-finalization services or post-finalization adoption services, respite care, other – to be determined by child welfare case manager or supervisor). Receipt of regular PRC benefits does not apply to child welfare services and any amount received does not count toward any eligibility for either hard or soft services amounts required.

- **Family Wellness, Survival Skills for Healthy Families** **TANF Goal 1&4**
Family Wellness, Survival Skills for every family member, is a best practice model that has been used to help over a million people worldwide. It is a wellness approach that teaches practical skills to families. The curriculum is interactive and family friendly. It is not a dull class with lots of lecture, but has families participating and learning from the very start. It is designed to work with families that are dysfunctional, and the approach quickly overcomes resistance.

The focus is to teach parents (and youth over the age of 10) specific family skills that will help build new skills that lead to healthier families. Parents are required to come to a minimum of six (6) sessions. For families with chronic problems, the research suggests that as much as 200 hours of intervention may be needed to break family patterns and cycles. The training events are typically held once a week for 1.5 to 2 hours. If they have children age 10 and up, they may choose to bring those children who will participate with them. Referrals will be made through our community partners. The FPG for this program will be 200% and no repayment is required.

- **Kinship Caregiver Program (KCP)** **TANF Goal 1**

The target group/eligibility criteria for this program is as follows:

Kinship caregivers are individuals who are 18 years of age or older and are related by blood or adoption: grandparents – including prefixes “great”, “great-great”, or “great-great-great”; siblings; aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces – including prefixes with “great”, “great-great”, “grand” or “great-grand”; first cousins and first cousins once removed; step parents and step siblings; spouses and former spouses; legal guardians and legal custodians. All other avenues for provision of service, including regular PRC benefits, must be exhausted. Verification of current or past child welfare open case

must exist. The kinship caregiver must be a resident of Noble County. The cap for these services will be \$1,000 per family, contingent upon funding availability. Redetermination of TANF eligibility for KCP shall be required no less than every 12 months from determination of eligibility.

Kinship Caregiver Stabilization Services: Needed services that are provided must be provided under the regular PRC Program whenever applicable. Reasonable and necessary relief of child caring functions to maintain children in the home of a relative caretaker are as follows: services include, but are not limited to, necessary clothing, household items and utilities for a child to be placed or remain in the kinship provider home. Legal services to establish guardianship, placement or custodial care when agreed among all parties (limit not to exceed \$500). Respite care is limited to four (4) months within a 12-month period. Respite shall not be more than seven (7) continuous days out of the kinship home. Training related to caring for special needs children. Kinship navigator services. Clothing will be available (not to exceed a one-time \$200 per child allowance in each 12-month period). Eligibility for these services will be determined with the assistance group only including the minor child and their income. Income guidelines are 200% FPL.

Kinship Caregiving Services: Limit of four (4) months in a rolling 12-month period. Reimbursement to kinship caregivers who are employed outside of the home and who are not eligible for publicly funded child care. Children must be under the age of 13 or older than 13 with an identified special need. Reimbursement will be limited to \$500 per child per month with appropriate verification of payment to a certified provider or day care center. These services are not included in the cap stated above but are contingent upon funding availability. To be eligible for these services the kinship caregiver must be participating in one of the following approved activities: paid employment on a full time or part time basis; a training or education activity that prepares the caretaker for paid employment; or participating in one or more work activities as a condition of eligibility for either Ohio Works First (OWF) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). For this program, the assistance group will consist of the minor child and the kinship caregiver and all of their income will be used to determine eligibility. Income guidelines are 200% FPL.