

Prevention, Retention, Contingency (PRC) Plan

March, 2007

**Clark County Department of Job and Family Services
1345 Lagonda Ave.
Springfield, Ohio 45503
(937) 327-1717**

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Part I

Guidelines for PRC Assistance Provided by the Department

1. Introduction

PRC is a special category of assistance offered by the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services. In all cases, the goal of the PRC program is to promote self-sufficiency. It is designed to help families with urgent needs which, if left unattended, could result in the family requiring public assistance. It is a tool to encourage families to attain and retain employment, prevent dependency and promote family stability. By helping families address short-term needs, services will be provided with the expectation that families will overcome the immediate barriers to achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency and personal responsibility.

Assistance is provided by the Department in four areas: (1) Job Retention and Prevention Assistance, (2) Contingency Assistance, (3) Disaster Assistance, and (4) Transportation Assistance. A description of each service appears below and includes the standard of economic need for each.

In all cases, a PRC application must be completed and approved before services can be delivered. An Application for Cash, Medical, and Food Stamp Assistance may also serve as the application for PRC assistance.

A variety of community agencies and organizations also provide PRC assistance through contracts with the Department. In all cases, only soft services are provided, as defined below. Policies regarding the delivery of these services are provided in Part II of this plan.

2. On-Going Services that have a cash value

If needed services are deemed *not* to have a cash value, such services may be provided on an ongoing basis. These are sometimes referred to as “soft services.”

If, on the other hand, assistance is provided that has a cash value, such benefit must (a) be designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need, (b) not be intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs, and (c) must not extend beyond four months. These services are sometimes referred to as “hard services.”

Only the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services is authorized to provide services that have a cash value.

PRC assistance is not ongoing Ohio Works First (OWF or TANF) assistance. PRC assistance has no direct monetary value to the Assistance Group (that is, the assistance is provided in the form of a voucher and usually not as a direct payment to the applicant) and does not involve implicit or explicit income support. Any number of individual services can be provided or payments can be made during the twelve-month eligibility period following the date of application as long as each is a distinctive, non-ongoing occurrence.

3. The Assistance Group

Assistance Group is the technical term used to describe family members that may be served by a PRC program. While the composition of the assistance group may vary according to program, in all cases it must contain a minor child or a pregnant woman. A minor child means an individual who has not attained 18 years of age, or an individual who has not attained 19 years of age and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.

For the purpose of determining eligibility for Job Retention and Prevention Assistance, Contingency Assistance, or Transportation Assistance, a PRC Assistance Group is a group of individuals living at the same address in Clark County and containing at least one minor child. This is commonly referred to as the Household.

However, two exceptions exist to this requirement. If two or more Assistance Groups reside at one address, any one of the Assistance Groups can apply for PRC to obtain permanent housing based on the income of those persons who are moving out. Likewise, items required by a work activity participant to participate in a work activity or accept employment will be determined based on the Assistance Group's income only.

A non-custodial parent may also qualify for employment related assistance provided that he/she is cooperating with the Child Support Enforcement Agency. A parent with a child who has been removed from the household may also qualify for PRC assistance if that parent is working towards the goal of reunification.

4. Determining Income Eligibility

For all PRC programs, income eligibility must be established before services can be authorized. In Clark County, income eligibility is expressed as a percent of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) and varies according to program. In all cases, eligibility for assistance is dependent upon the demonstration and verification by the Assistance Group of the need for financial assistance and/or services. Further, it must be determined that provision of assistance will satisfy the need.

Objective criteria will be utilized when determining eligibility and approving or denying the application within ten business days after the application date—the date on which a signed and dated application is received. The application will be processed in a fair and equitable manner, which includes verification of information. Eligibility will be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

All income which has been received by any member of the Assistance Group (excluding earned income of minor children who are full-time students) during the 30 day budget period prior to the application date is considered when determining financial need. The 30 day period begins 30 days prior to the date of application and ends on the application date. The income received during this period is used in the computation of financial eligibility. This includes all income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for OWF or DA.

With the aforementioned exceptions, the total gross income, both earned and unearned, of the PRC Assistance Group must be counted. There are no deductions or exclusions allowed from any type of countable income with the following exception: Child support payments paid by an Assistance Group member for a child outside of the assistance group may be deducted. The amount paid, up to the amount ordered, is excluded. Gross earnings with respect to self-employment means the total profit from the self-employment enterprise. The total profit from the self-employment enterprise is determined by deducting the self-employment expenses (i.e., the business expenses directly related to producing the goods or services) from the gross receipts. (Same as rule 5101:1-23-01 of the Public Assistance Manual) Written or verbal verification of income is required. For any verification which is obtained by phone, there must be clear documentation concerning the name and position of the supplier of the information, the date the verification was obtained, the amount of the verified income, and the name of the individual who obtained the verification.

The PRC Assistance Group members must complete the Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program (PRC) Application and the Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Plan. The applicant is responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information, and cooperating to the fullest extent in the eligibility determination process. When applicable, an Application for Cash, Medical, and Food Stamp Assistance may serve as the application for PRC assistance.

In all cases the amount of PRC issued must meet, but may not exceed, the emergent need of the Household. The amount the Household needs to prevent the emergency from happening or continuing must be within the appropriate maximum payment amount. If the amount of PRC available cannot prevent the onset or continuation of the emergent situation, there is no eligibility for payment.

Example: If the amount available from PRC can pay the major portion of the amount needed to avoid a utility shut-off and the applicant and the utility company set up a written agreement for payment of the balance, PRC can be issued. If however, an agreement cannot be made and the amount available through PRC cannot meet the total necessary to prevent the shut-off, no PRC may be issued.

Example: If the cost of the car repair exceeds the value of the car, the request would be denied.

An Assistance Group (Household) can receive more than one item/service during the twelve-month period but the amount of PRC Assistance cannot exceed the maximum limits for each category described below. A new application must be completed with each request.

Every reasonable effort must be made to explore the availability of resources within the county prior to the authorization of PRC. A PRC Household is required to apply for and utilize any program benefit, or support system which may reduce or eliminate the presenting need. County personnel determining eligibility for PRC should be aware of community resources which may be contracted for, or otherwise utilized to help meet the need. The PRC application provides a

section for written documentation of the Agency's attempt to locate and utilize community resources.

The fact that an ongoing Medicaid, OWF, or Disability Assistance (DA) Assistance Group is active is not a determining factor in the consideration of eligibility for the PRC Program. In addition, individuals will be informed about other programs (i.e., Medicaid and Food Stamps) that are available as well as hearing rights that are applicable.

If the applicant has received PRC assistance in another county during the previous 12 months, this will be considered when any PRC plan is developed.

If it is determined that an application for PRC is approved, the CCDJFS shall mail or otherwise deliver the CCDJFS PRC Program Notice of Approval. If it is determined that an application for PRC is denied, the CCDJFS shall mail or otherwise deliver the CCDJFS PRC Program Notice of Denial.

Once eligibility for PRC is established, the Department Director or designee will authorize and generate payment for the assistance, goods, and/or services. Authorization may occur at any time during a period beginning on the day that PRC is approved. As long as payment is authorized within the appropriate period, actual payment may be made to vendors according to the procedures in place at the CCDJFS. All PRC payments are made by the Department to the vendor or the PRC Household. The county must ensure that its policies meet all auditing requirements.

Denial is appropriate in situations where it can be documented by the Department that no attempt has been made to prevent the occurrence of the emergent need and the applicant can show no evidence that the Household has experienced any extraordinary circumstances or expenses. Situations include (1) making no payment toward the obligation, (2) making only minimal payments with the knowledge that such an amount would not prevent the occurrence, or (3) failing to follow through with the previous PRC plan.

Denial is appropriate in situations where an application has been withdrawn, either verbally or in writing.

5. Ineligibility for PRC Services

The following are ineligible for all categories of PRC assistance described below:

- An individual who is a fugitive felon and/or probation/parole violator;
- An individual who is not a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien;
- An Assistance Group with any family member who has any outstanding OWF or PRC fraud overpayment balance;
- An Assistance Group with a member who is ineligible for other programs due to deliberate non-compliance with the terms of his/her assistance, such as those stated in the Self-Sufficiency Plan and Contract (*exception: Individuals in this group who are employed may receive employment-related PRC assistance.*);

- An Assistance Group with an unmarried, non-graduate parent under 18 not attending high school or equivalent;
- An Assistance Group with an unmarried parent under 18 not living in an adult-supervised setting;
- An Assistance Group with a member who has been found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states (ineligible for ten years);
- Families who do not use their own income to help meet their need;
- Families giving false or incorrect information;
- An assistance group with any family member who is determined by the courts or state hearing to have committed an intentional program violation;
- An assistance group with any family member who has not established a current payment plan with the benefit recovery unit for any and all identified overpayments to ODJFS. This includes OWF cash, supplements, work allowances, PRC, and food stamp overpayments.

6. PRC Services offered through the Department

A. Job Retention and Prevention Assistance

The primary focus of the PRC program in Clark County is to provide assistance which will help applicants *retain jobs and prevent the need for ongoing assistance*. To that end, up to \$1,000 can be authorized in a twelve month period to meet a need which if not satisfied might result in (a) loss of employment or (b) an application for OWF assistance. In *exceptional circumstances*, the \$1,000 maximum limit may be waived, provided that approval is authorized by the Deputy Director or his/her designee.

To be eligible for assistance, the goal of which is to help the applicant retain a job and/or prevent the need for an application for on-going assistance, the income of the Assistance Group must be at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guideline as updated annually.

B. Contingency Assistance

The secondary focus of the PRC program is to provide assistance to meet a *contingency*, a need which if not satisfied may threaten the health, safety, or well being of one or more Household members. To be eligible for assistance to meet a contingency, the income of the Household must be at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. Up to \$500 can be authorized to meet contingent needs which are further defined below. In *exceptional circumstances*, the \$500 maximum limit may be waived, provided that approval is authorized by the Deputy Director or his/her designee.

When assistance is provided to meet a contingent need, payments are limited to the following items, not to exceed \$500.

- Rent can be authorized to *prevent eviction* if a court ordered eviction notice is presented. A written notice of eviction, showing the date of any scheduled court appearance is a necessary verification. The amount paid is the actual amount necessary to prevent the eviction (no

court costs or late payment charges are included) up to a maximum of two months delinquent rent. Written documentation must be received from the landlord specifying the monthly rent, the total amount due in order to prevent the eviction, and verification that the payment will actually prevent eviction.

- Rent can be authorized to correct *uninhabitable conditions* due to a natural or chemical disaster or conditions certified by a city, county, township, or state agency as uninhabitable. A certification from Family and Children's Services is acceptable when certification from other sources cannot be obtained in a timely manner.
- Rent can be authorized to alleviate *homelessness*, including instances of court ordered eviction where the applicant has no other resources.
- Rent can be authorized in situations where an Assistance Group has lost its place of residence and has moved in with others. One month's rent may be authorized. The applicant must verify that continued occupation of the current/original residence would violate the lease or create a serious overcrowding situation. Only the income of the Assistance Group will be used when determining eligibility for permanent housing.
- A *security deposit* may be paid only when a landlord will not waive the requirement. The need for a security deposit must exist due to one of the situations listed above. The amount is limited to one month's rent and must be verified by the landlord.
- Assistance may be provided to meet *heating fuel and utility* expenses. Heating fuel is any type of fuel used to provide heat for a home. Utilities include electricity and any source of energy necessary for the functioning of the home heating system. Payments will not be authorized while the Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is in operation. Propane and fuel oil payments can be made only to prevent a shut-off of service, to restore service, or to ensure a continuation of service when there is a serious threat to the safety and health of the Household members. The payment is limited to the amount necessary to prevent shut-off, restoration, or to ensure the continuation of service.
- For *heating fuel and utilities regulated by the PUCO* (Ohio Edison, Columbia Gas, and Dayton Power and Light) assistance is determined based on the Household's participation in the Percentage of Income Plan (PIP) through which customers pay a percentage of their income during the winter heating season and then during the non-heating season continue to pay the PIP amount or the current bill, whichever is higher.
- Assistance may be provided to *enroll a Household in PIP*. A portion may include a deposit if required by the utility company and it will not be waived. These payments may be made if no other method of payment is available and the Household has not had its present service disconnected.
- Assistance may be authorized to defer a *utility disconnection*. A deposit, if required and not waived, may be included in the payment. Payment can only be made to defer disconnection

and if the Household is enrolling in PIP, or has attempted to enroll in PIP but was denied, or is defaulting on the PIP payment.

- Assistance may be authorized for *re-connection of service* if the utility company will accept one defaulted PIP payment. (During the heating season will be a percentage of income or during the non-heating season will be a percentage of income or the previous month's utility bill, whichever is higher).
- Payment may be authorized to *prevent shut-off or restore water and sewer service*. Payments for water and sewer are available year round and do not have the HEAP time period restrictions.

If the applicant has received PRC assistance in another county during the previous 12 months, this will be considered when any PRC plan is developed.

Contingency assistance may also be authorized for families referred through the Family Stability Process, provided that income is less than 300% of FPG. In these instances, no annual dollar limit exists regarding the total monetary value of services that are provided. Eligibility for other PRC assistance is not affected.

C. Disaster Assistance

In instances where (a) the Governor of the State of Ohio proclaims Clark County to be in a "state of emergency" due to a natural disaster, and (b) sets aside a special allocation of TANF funds to provide assistance to victims in Clark County, the Department can provide PRC services and benefits in an amount not to exceed \$1,500 per family dwelling. Examples of assistance that may be provided are replacement of lost wages and reimbursement for household damages or personal property loss. Services may be prioritized and/or customized according to the nature of the disaster and magnitude of the need. To receive such services, the need must be documented and Assistance Group income must not exceed 200% of the FPG.

Special Assistance for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees In September 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, displacing thousands of residents some of whom traveled to Ohio seeking shelter. In accordance with guidance issued by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Clark County residency requirements are hereby waived for families seeking PRC assistance in Clark County who have been evacuated from Hurricane Katrina disaster areas as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Eligible evacuees may apply for PRC services offered by the Department as well as PRC services offered through contracts with other providers.

D. Transportation Assistance

Lack of reliable transportation has been identified as one of the most frequent barriers to self-sufficiency. Many entry level workers have difficulty reaching jobs during evening and weekend shifts when transit services are not offered. Similarly, destinations in the county or outside of the county—areas not served by the transit authority—are also difficult to reach. Providing new

transportation options for low-income workers, especially those who are receiving or who have recently received cash benefits, will increase the likelihood that those workers will get jobs and keep them. PRC assistance may be authorized on an on-going basis for the purposes of providing employment related transportation. Such assistance may be in the form of bus passes, gas vouchers, authorization to use the **WORKPLUS** transportation service, or car repairs performed through the Clark County Garage.

To be eligible for transportation assistance, individuals must be from households with income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. An application must be completed at the Department of Job and Family Services.

For customers with income below 200% FPG, the following fare system applies:

First 3 months of service:	No charge
4 th through 6 th month of service:	\$25 per month
7 th through 9 th month of service:	\$50 per month
10 th through 12 th month of service:	\$75 per month
For service over 12 months:	\$100 per month

*Authorization for **WORKPLUS** transportation for special programs:* On occasion, the Department will approve transportation for activities that are not specifically work-related but whose purpose meets one of the four TANF goals. Examples of such programs are FAST (Families and Students Together) and the Marriage Savers “Parents As Partners” training. Families requesting transportation for these special programs must apply for **WORKPLUS** transportation and meet all eligibility criteria set forth in this PRC policy.

When car repair assistance is provided, all such repairs must be recommended by a representative of the Clark County Garage. To be eligible, the individual must demonstrate employment of at least thirty days. Up to \$1,000 can be authorized to make a car repair. The amount of assistance thus provided shall be included as part of the annual limit for PRC assistance of \$1,000. At the discretion of the PRC worker, the customer may be required to make a partial payment as part of the agreement to provide PRC assistance for car repair.

When car purchase assistance is provided, the automobile must be recommended as suitable for purchase by a representative of the Clark County Garage who, as part of his assessment, will also place a value on the car. To be eligible, the individual must demonstrate continuous employment of at least one year. Up to \$1,000 can be authorized for purchase of a car that has been donated or otherwise acquired by the Department. The amount of assistance thus provided shall be included as part of the annual limit for PRC assistance of \$1,000. At the discretion of the PRC worker, the customer may be required to make a partial payment as part of the agreement to provide PRC assistance for car purchase. In *exceptional circumstances*, the \$1,000 maximum limit may be waived for both car repair and car purchase, provided that approval is authorized by a second party review.

Receipt of transportation services does not prohibit the family from making a separate application for other services or assistance which may be available through PRC. Receipt of

transportation services, excluding car repair, will not count toward the family's eligibility limit for PRC assistance.

All assistance authorized for car repairs is considered to be a "hard service" and must be entered into CRIS-E for statewide clearance. Provision of bus passes, gas vouchers, and authorization to utilize WorkPlus is deemed to be a "soft service." Entrance into CRIS-E is therefore not required.

E. Family Stability Services

PRC assistance can be provided to offer an array of Family Stability Services designed to strengthen the family unit, prevent the removal of a child from his/her home, or to make possible reunification. Typically these are contracted services provided by organizations or providers within the community, but services can also be authorized directly by the Department. In cases where the Department authorizes services for families referred by the Family and Children Services Division in an effort to prevent the removal of a child from the home or to make possible reunification, families will be from an assistance group with income of less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

Part II

PRC Services Available Through Contracts With Other Providers

1. Introduction

PRC is a special category of assistance offered by the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services. In all cases, the goal of the PRC program is to promote self-sufficiency. It is a tool to encourage families to attain and retain employment, prevent dependency, and promote family stability. By helping families address both short- and long-term needs, services will be provided with the expectation that families will overcome barriers to achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency.

A variety of community agencies and organizations provide PRC assistance through contracts with the Department. In all cases, only soft services are provided, as defined below. Policies regarding PRC services delivered by the Department are described in Part I of this plan.

While the completion of a PRC application at the Department of Job and Family Services is not required, the contracted provider of PRC services must ensure that a separate PRC application is completed by the prospective customer. The contractor must also ensure that the customer is informed in writing whether or not services have been approved or denied. If service is denied, the applicant must be informed of hearing rights. When specified in the contract between the Department and the Provider of PRC services, an Application for Cash, Medical, and Food Stamp Assistance may serve as the application for PRC assistance.

Continued receipt of PRC services through a contracted provider does not prohibit the family from making a separate application for other services or assistance which may be available through PRC.

The receipt of PRC services through a contracted provider will not count toward the family's eligibility limit for PRC assistance.

Although entry of the Household into CRIS-E for statewide clearance and PRC authorization is not required, records of all families served will be maintained and will be easily and quickly available for inspection when appropriate.

In these instances, no annual dollar limit exists regarding the total monetary value of services that are provided.

2. On-Going Services versus Services that have a Cash Value

If needed services are deemed *not* to have a cash value, such services may be provided on an ongoing basis. These are sometimes referred to as "soft services."

If, on the other hand, assistance is provided that has a cash value, such benefit must (a) be designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need, (b) not be intended to meet

recurrent or ongoing needs, and (c) must not extend beyond four months. These services are sometimes referred to as “hard services.”

Only the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services is authorized to provide services that have a cash value.

PRC assistance is *not* ongoing Ohio Works First (OWF or TANF) assistance. PRC assistance has no direct monetary value to the Assistance Group (that is, the assistance is provided in the form of a voucher and not a direct payment) and does not involve implicit or explicit income support. Any number of individual services can be provided during the twelve month eligibility period following the date of application.

3. Composition of the Assistance Group

The “Assistance Group” for PRC contract purposes is based on the family unit and its responsibility to support each other. All assistance groups must be made up of: (1) a minor child(ren) and at least one parent or specified relative assuming parental responsibility for that child(ren), or; (2) a minor child(ren) whose care and control and/or custody is with a government entity such as Juvenile Court or the Department of Job and Family Services, or; (3) a non-custodial parent with responsibility to support a minor child, or; (4) a pregnant woman, or; (5) a parent with a child who has been removed from the household and where the parent is working towards the goal of reunification. With the exception of services provided to Hurricane Katrina evacuees, the individual receiving services must be a resident of Clark County.

“Minor child” means either of the following: an individual who has not attained age eighteen, or an individual who has not attained age nineteen and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.

“*Specified relative*” means the following individuals who are age eighteen or older:

- (i) The following individuals related by blood or adoption:
 - X Grandparents (including grandparents with the prefix “great,” “great-great,” or “great-great-great”)
 - X Siblings
 - X Aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces, including such relatives with the prefix “great,” “great-great,” or “great-great-great”
 - X First cousins and first cousins once removed
- (ii) Stepparents and stepsiblings
- (iii) Spouses and former spouses of individuals named above.

Some people cannot be counted as a separate assistance group or be excluded from an applicant assistance group because of their relationship to others living in the same household. As long as they are living together: (1) minor children cannot be separated from their parents; (2) siblings, step-siblings, or half-siblings cannot be separated from each other; and (3) spouses cannot be

separated from each other. These rules may create an assistance group with members that may not have a blood relationship with every other member of the assistance group but are required to be included and have their income counted.

In households containing multi-generational families, a minor parent will link their parents and their child together as one assistance group until the minor parent no longer meets the definition of a minor child.

“Non-custodial parent” means a parent of a minor child who does not live in the same household as the minor child. Only non-custodial parents who are cooperating with the Child Support Enforcement Agency and who are Clark County residents are eligible for PRC services.

The Department of Job and Family Services will provide additional guidance in determining composition of the Assistant Group when family members not described within this plan are living in the household.

4. Determining Income Eligibility

For all PRC programs, income eligibility must be established before services can be authorized. Income eligibility is expressed as a percent of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) and varies according to program. At a minimum, eligibility for PRC assistance must be determined or re-determined at least once annually.

All income which has been received by any member of the Assistance Group (excluding earned income of minor children who are full-time students) during the 30-day budget period prior to the application date is considered when determining financial need. The 30-day period begins 30 days prior to the date of application and ends on the application date. The income received during this period is used in the computation of financial eligibility. This includes all income that is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for OWF.

With the aforementioned exceptions, the total gross income, both earned and unearned, of the PRC Assistance Group must be counted. There are no deductions or exclusions allowed from any type of countable income with the following exception: Child support payments paid by an Assistance Group member for a child outside of the assistance group may be deducted. The amount paid, up to the amount ordered, is excluded. Gross earnings with respect to self-employment means the total profit from the self-employment enterprise. The total profit from the self-employment enterprise is determined by deducting the self-employment expenses (i.e., the business expenses directly related to producing the goods or services) from the gross receipts. (Same as rule 5101:1-23-01 of the Public Assistance Manual)

In all cases, an application must be completed using the appropriate form for the type of service requested. The applicant is responsible for completing all necessary documents, furnishing all available facts and information, and cooperating to the fullest extent in the eligibility determination process.

In cases where a Department staff member verifies that a customer is receiving OWF cash assistance, Food Stamps, or Medicaid (only when need standard is 300% of FPG), income eligibility will be deemed to have been met. The customer will not be required to provide additional information regarding income.

In all cases, a statement of approval or denial for services must be issued, either by the Department or the Contractor.

5. Ineligibility for PRC Services

The following applicants are ineligible for all categories of PRC assistance described below:

- Individuals who are fugitive felons and/or probation/parole violators;
- A person who is not a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien;
- A person who is failing to cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Agency in establishing paternity or securing support;
- An Assistance Group with a member who has any outstanding OWF or PRC overpayments due to fraud for which a repayment plan has not been established;
- An Assistance Group with a member who has been found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states (ineligible for ten years);
- Families giving false or incorrect information.

Note that the above prohibitions relating to OWF or PRC fraud make the *entire* Assistance Group ineligible for PRC services. Other prohibitions listed above disqualify *only* the individual who is seeking services; other member of the Assistance Group may be eligible for services. When determining income eligibility, the income of *all* members of the Assistance Group must be considered, except for certain income discussed in Section 4 above.

6. PRC Services Offered Through Contracts with Other Providers

A. Literacy

Recognizing that attainment of basic literacy skills and a GED are essential to achieving self-sufficiency, participation in such programs is often included as part of Self-Sufficiency Plans. PRC assistance can be utilized to continue to provide basic skills, GED instruction, or literacy training for participants in Assistance Groups where income is within 200% of the FPG. The Springfield City Schools (Project Springboard/Even Start) is the primary provider of such services in Clark County.

B. Short Term Job Training Programs

PRC assistance can be authorized to help individuals acquire the skills needed to obtain good jobs or to move up to better jobs. Short-term training must not exceed 26 weeks in duration; only in exceptional circumstances will this limit be waived by the Department. The primary provider of short-term job training is Clark State Community College.

To be eligible for such training, individuals must be from an Assistance Group with income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

C. Work Experience Training, Work Readiness, Job Placement and Retention Services

PRC assistance can be provided to individuals who need help in work readiness activities, finding employment, and keeping a job. Work experience activities, job placement, and retention services can be provided to an individual in an Assistance Group where income is not greater than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

Among the Contractors providing work experience training, job placement, and job retention services are Express Personnel Services, O.I.C. of Clark County, Jobs & More, and Catholic Social Services.

Other PRC contractors may not provide direct services to eligible participants but seek to work with service providers to maximize their effectiveness. In doing so, these contractors positively affect the employment climate, pool of job-ready workers, economic development initiatives, or the coordination of job hiring in the community. Among the contractors making such a contribution are The Nehemiah Foundation, Hyden Consulting, Think Tank, Inc., the Turner Foundation, and OIC of Clark County.

D. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Substance abuse and mental illness constitute major barriers for participants in programs of all four of the Department's divisions: Employment and Benefits, Family and Children Services, Child Support Enforcement, and Workforce Development. It is estimated that approximately 70% of adults served by our agency experience one or both problems.

Accordingly, PRC assistance may be authorized to provide allowable substance abuse and mental health services to eligible DJFS customers and all clients of the Family and Children's Services Division. Among the services that may be provided are the following: brief screenings and brief treatment, information and referral, outreach, awareness, education, early intervention, family therapy, and wrap-around services.

Substance abuse and mental health services will be provided upon referral by staff of the Department of Job and Family Services. Family income must not exceed 200% of the FPG.

E. Help Me Grow

Help Me Grow is a program administered by the Ohio Department of Health through which home visiting and ongoing service coordination are provided to families with children prenatal to age three. Families with children who are enrolled in the Help Me Grow program are eligible for all services provided through the program, including but not limited to the following: outreach/child find/intake and referral/procedural safeguards; prenatal and newborn home visits; home visiting services; service coordination/IFS development, implementation and review;

paraprofessional/family support services; multi-disciplinary evaluation; and specialized services in everyday routines, activities and places. Other allowable services are transportation assistance and the distribution of household items, furniture and other soft services that are needed to assist families to meet the goals included in the IFSP. Rent and utility assistance are deemed to be “hard services” and are therefore not allowable.

To be eligible for PRC assistance for Help Me Grow services, assistance group income must not exceed 300% of the FPG at the time of enrollment and as documented on the PRC application recommended for use by the Department. No annual dollar limit exists regarding the total monetary value of Help Me Grow services that are provided. Eligible families may continue to receive Help Me Grow services as long as the income of the assistance group does not exceed 300% of the FPG.

F. Healthy Steps

Healthy Steps is a nationally recognized program aimed at enhancing the quality of health care in the first three years of life. Healthy Steps emphasizes a close relationship between health care professionals and parents in addressing the physical, emotional, and intellectual growth and development of children from birth to age three. While Help Me Grow, administered by the Clark County Combined Health District, focuses on home visits by service coordinators, Healthy Steps, administered in Clark County by the Rocking Horse Center, is office-based, with non-medical services provided at the time of well-child examinations. Non-medical services include developmental and behavioral screenings, assistance with behavioral/parenting problems, linkage to community services, and encouragement of open and positive communication.

To be eligible for PRC assistance for Healthy Steps services, assistance group income must not exceed 300% of the FPG at the time of enrollment and as documented on the PRC application recommended for use by the Department.

G. Legal Education and Assistance

PRC assistance may be authorized to provide assistance to homeowners who are delinquent on their mortgages or who have been victims of predatory lending. Services can include legal education, legal analysis of loan documents, and litigation of predatory lending claims and/or bankruptcy to avoid foreclosure. The primary provider of such legal assistance is Legal Aid of Western Ohio.

Legal assistance may also be provided to PRC-eligible participants in the areas of (a) consumer, (b) housing, (c) medical, and (d) domestic needs. The purpose of such services is to provide assistance in resolving legal issues for low income persons who are striving to remove barriers to self-sufficiency and who wish to strive for stability in the family unit.

To be eligible for PRC assistance for legal issues, assistance group income must not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

H. Service to Latino Community

Many services targeted to the Hispanic population in Clark County are delivered on an outreach basis, providing education, information and referral services to members of the Latino community who live in Clark County.

I. Housing Services

PRC assistance may be authorized to provide emergency housing for a period not to exceed four months. Activities designed to promote self-sufficiency and find permanent housing options may also be provided, including case management and provisions for food and daily living necessities. The primary provider of emergency services is Interfaith Hospitality Network.

In response to the increasing number of current or prospective homeowners who request financial literacy education or counseling, a number of direct services are being made available to PRC-eligible participants, including homebuyer education, financial fitness, predatory lending seminars, home maintenance courses, and financial counseling to prevent or respond to foreclosure. The primary provider of homeowner services is the Neighborhood Housing Partnership of Greater Springfield, which will continue to provide prevention services, information, and referral to the entire community on an outreach basis. To be eligible for PRC assistance for direct housing services, family income must not exceed 200% of the FPG.

In some cases, PRC funds may be extended to umbrella agencies that provide coordination and leadership to the Springfield Housing Collaborative. This organization is comprised of several community groups that work together to improve and expand existing services as well as add new services for homeless individuals and families.

J. Family Stability Services

PRC assistance can be provided to offer an array of Family Stability Services designed to strengthen the family unit, prevent the removal of a child from his/her home, or to make possible reunification. Among the services that can be provided are home-based services for families, wraparound services, lice prevention and eradication services, enrichment and support programs for youth, mediation services, parenting services, services to pregnant women and their partners, mentoring services, and services intended to expose families and children to the arts.

To be eligible for such services provided by contractors, individuals must be from an assistance group with income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. (PRC eligibility is not required for services designed to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.)

On occasion, other PRC contracts may be offered to school districts or other organizations that have accepted a community directive to foster growth and support to children and families, the goal of which is to better prepare children for entering kindergarten and ensure academic success as they continue through their formal education. Better educated students will help to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency and ensure a more qualified workforce. One such initiative, known as

Aspire P-16, is carried out through the leadership of the Clark County Educational Service Center.

Note: The one-time allocation of ABC-TANF funding will be utilized to support the provision of Family Stability Services.

K. Student Intervention Projects

A special TANF allocation is available from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for specific student intervention initiatives administered by the Ohio Department of Education. These projects are made available to participating counties through contracts with local school districts and will provide additional learning opportunities for children. The initiatives are in two categories: (1) after school and summer programs for school-aged children, and (2) school readiness enrichment programs for children entering kindergarten. To be eligible for PRC assistance for the Student Intervention Projects, families will meet all PRC eligibility criteria stated on the PRC eligibility form with the following exceptions:

- Income eligibility may be determined by standard methods stated on the Clark County PRC Eligibility Form, with assistance group income not to exceed the 200% federal poverty guideline. One additional criteria for income eligibility can be considered when determining income eligibility: families whose children qualify for free and reduced lunch will also be deemed to have met the income eligibility requirements for participation in the TANF-funded student intervention projects.
- Typically, minor children are defined as outlined in Part II, Section 3 of this document. Because the Ohio Department of Education is administering the TANF Student Intervention Project and because ODE recognizes school children through age 21, youth eligible to obtain services in the TANF Student Intervention Project will be served through age 21.

L. Prevention Programs

PRC assistance may be provided with the goal of preventing the need for OWF cash assistance in the future. The Department provides support to a number of activities that are not associated with an application for direct services but are instead intended to address the causes of poverty with the goal of creating healthier environment in Clark County in which our citizens can overcome the barriers that keep them from attaining self-sufficiency.

Among the programs that are supported are the following:

- *Neighborhood Housing Partnership*—a community development agency that creates and preserves affordable, quality housing and strong neighborhoods through partnerships of residents, business, and government. (Specific direct services provided to individuals will be delivered to PRC-eligible participants as described in Paragraph G.)
- *Clark State Center for the Performing Arts*—community collaborative that use the arts to engage individuals in community life and promote student success.
- *Marriage Savers of Clark County/Marriage Resource Center*—community collaborative to encourage formation and maintenance of two-parent families by enlisting local churches in effort to provide pre-marital counseling and support.

- *Bridges Out of Poverty*—community collaborative to address causes of poverty and educate low-income people and social services workers regarding the “rules of class.”
- *Project Woman*—facilitation of the continuum of care/housing collaborative to prevent homelessness in Clark County
- *Junior Achievement*—in partnership with employers and educators, promotes self-sufficiency by helping school-age children understand economics of life.
- *Springfield-Clark Chamber of Commerce and Local Hiring Coordinator*—provides community-wide services to link employers and job-seekers.

The following programs receive funding support as part of the Department’s outreach effort to individuals and families who may be eligible for assistance:

- *Adopt-A-Block*—volunteers share information about services provided by the Department and its partners.
- *Casa Amiga and Del Pueblo*—Bridges to the rapidly growing Spanish speaking community.
- *United Way*—Information and referral services.

Part III

Approval and Certifications

The Clark County Prevention, Retention and Contingency Plan is hereby approved by:

Robert B. Suver, Director
Clark County Dept. of Job and Family Services

Date

This is to certify that amendments to this policy were reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Clark County Family Services Planning Council.

Ted McClenen, Chair
Clark County Family Services Planning Council

Date