

## **SENECA COUNTY PREVENTION, RETENTION, AND CONTINGENCY PLAN**

The Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program (PRC) was established under Chapter 5108 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). It is designed to provide services to low-income families who are in need of help with essential supports to move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. These supports include nonrecurrent, short term, crisis-oriented, and employment services that are directly related to the four purposes of the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program. The four purposes of the TANF program are:

1. To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own home or in the home of relatives.
2. To end the dependence of needy parents on government 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 these pregnancies.
4. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

PRC assistance will be only authorized if the PRC Assistance Group's family situation will be stabilized due to services provided. This will be determined by the Workforce Development Supervisor and/or Administrators based on the service requested, the applicant's service plan, the recommendation by the Social Services Supervisor and/or Administrator for Family Strengthening Services, the Multi-Systemic Team for Multi-Systemic Therapy Services, and all other verifications received. These services will prevent them from reliance on and divert them from ongoing cash assistance, helping them to retain the employment they have, or assist them at the point of new employment to make the need for ongoing cash not

necessary. Assistance issued can also start them in a job that reduces their cash benefits. In addition, services can be provided to a PRC AG who is working with Social Services to keep children in their home or to reunite families. PRC may also be used to help with child development through the Help Me Grow Program. This program is for children ages 0 to 3 years. Help Me Grow consists of Welcome Home, Early Start, and Early Intervention. Other PRC programs are the Multi-Systemic Therapy Program, the Wellness Program, the Adult Literacy and Child Reading Program, the Diversion Program for At-Risk Youth/Families, the Workforce Training Initiative Services Program, the Youth Socialization Program and the Mental Health Services Program. The Multi-Systemic Therapy Program provides services to help stabilize youth and families in Seneca County. The goal of the Wellness Program is to prevent out-of-wedlock births among teens in Seneca County. The Adult Literacy and Child Reading Program provides adult literacy programs and child reading programs to TANF eligibles. The Diversion Program for At-Risk Youth/Families are in place to address at-risk behavior of youth that would keep the child in their home and out of the system and/or work with both parents and child(ren) to reduce the family conflict, strengthening the family and keeping them together. There is also a general consensus that reducing substance use/abuse, improving social skills and keeping children in school helps with the teen pregnancy issue. The Workforce Initiative Services Program helps families in Seneca County obtain skilled job credentials to gain employment, overcome family issues and work toward self-sufficiency. The Youth Socialization Program helps Seneca County youth, 13 years and under, after school, to build their self-esteem and enhance their socialization. The Mental Health Services Program helps families in Seneca County

overcome mental health issues in order to gain employment, overcome family issues and work toward self-sufficiency.

WIA/TANF supplemental funds, WIA/TANF incentive monies, and/or TANF incentive monies may be issued to adults for employment and training activities in order to develop the workforce and stabilize families in Seneca County. This includes Employment and Training Services, Diversion/Contingency Services, Transportation Services and Employment Retention.

Disaster services can be used to help families in Seneca County in times of disaster declared by Federal Government, State Government or the County Commissioners. These services are for immediate emergency disaster-caused needs necessary to resume normal daily activities independently. All assistance is based on verified disaster-caused needs.

PRC has been designed to provide benefits and services that are not considered assistance. The following are included in definitions of non-assistance:

1. Nonrecurring, short-term benefits that:
  - a. are designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;
  - b. are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and
  - c. will not extend beyond four months.
2. Supportive services such as transportation provided to families who are employed;
3. Services such as counseling, case management, peer support, educational programs, Help Me Grow program, child care information and referral, transition services, job retention, and other services that do not provide basic income support.

The Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services has allocated the following through State Fiscal Year 2005 for PRC services: Service costs for the Multi-Systemic Therapy Program cannot exceed \$92,000, the Employment and Training Services cannot exceed \$170,000, the Diversion/Contingency Services cannot exceed \$150,000, the Transportation Services cannot exceed \$90,000, the Employment Retention Services cannot exceed \$25,000, the Family Strengthening and Preservation Services cannot exceed \$150,000, the Help Me Grow program cannot exceed \$161,496, the Wellness Program cannot exceed \$100,000, the Adult Literacy and Child Reading Program cannot exceed \$67,500, the Disaster Services cannot exceed \$200,000, the Diversion Program for At-Risk Youth cannot exceed \$9,000, the Workforce Training Initiative Services Program cannot exceed \$229,910, the Youth Socialization Program cannot exceed \$104,847.80, and the Mental Health Services Program cannot exceed \$40,873.50 for the State Fiscal year 2005. All benefits and services are contingent on the availability of funding.

**Assistance group composition / Residence:**

PRC benefits and services are available to families living in Seneca County. An eligible family must consist of a minor and/or dependent child who resides with a parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian or legal custodian (or consist of a pregnant woman). An Ohio non-custodial parent may be eligible for services which will enable him/her to pay their child support obligations for a Seneca County child(ren).

1. A minor child means either of the following: an individual who has not attained age 18, or an individual who has not attained age 19 and is a full-time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.
2. A pregnant individual with no other minor children.
3. A minor parent and his/her child(ren) residing with his/her parents are considered one assistance group for PRC purposes.

All adults in assistance groups will cooperate with the Seneca County Child Support Enforcement Agency (SCCSEA), as defined by SCCSEA. A child may be temporarily absent from the home for the purposes of PRC. In order to meet residency and assistance group requirements, the applicant must have a minor/ dependent child that is a resident of Seneca County and the child is not residing in the home as a result of interaction with the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services, Social Services division. This child, for the purposes of PRC, is considered to be residing in the home with the parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, or legal custodian during the temporary absence period. This must be verified by the Social Services division.

The assistance group will be defined by the type of services received. The determination of the assistance group members is defined on the attached Scope of Services table.

### **Ineligible Family Assistance Groups (AG)**

PRC AG-s who contain these individuals are ineligible:

1. Families without a minor/dependent child;
2. Single adult, unless such individual is pregnant;

3. Individuals who are not citizens of the United States or qualified aliens;
4. Families currently disqualified from benefits due to an Intentional Program Violation, as they fraudulently received assistance under the OWF, Food Stamp or PRC assistance programs until repayment occurs;
5. Fugitive felons, probation and parole violators and incarcerated individuals;
6. Strikers;
7. Unmarried, non-graduate parent under the age of 18, not attending high school or equivalent;
8. Unmarried, non-graduate under the age of 18, not living in an adult supervised setting;
9. A person found to have fraudulently misrepresented residence in order to obtain assistance in two or more states is ineligible for a period of ten years;
10. Individuals who falsify an application for PRC;
11. Individuals who fail to cooperate with any service plan connected to their PRC assistance.
12. Individuals who PRC Services will not make a difference for regarding employment (Employment and Training) or keeping the family together (Family Preservational Strengthening).

Note: Those applicants who have received PRC in another county and move to Seneca County can receive benefits. We will count the amount issued in the previous county against our standards and use the beginning date of PRC in the previous county as the beginning date of their 12 month time period in Seneca County. Also, all PRC assistance received in the 12 month time period prior to July 1, 2003, will count against the amount of the cap for the requested service.

Also, if applicant fraudulently receives PRC benefits/services, overpayment will be pursued.

### **Eligibility**

Eligibility for PRC is dependent upon the family (Assistance Group-~~s~~) demonstration and verification of need for services. In order for eligibility to be

determined, an application must be submitted to the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services (SCDJFS). For the Wellness Program and the Adult Literacy and Child Reading Program, applications are not needed for outreach services; and sign-in sheets and/or proof of eligibility for the free lunch program are needed for direct services. An application, if required, must be completed and approved before the provision of services. All needed information is subject to verification. When determining eligibility for the PRC assistance group to receive services, the assistance group's countable income must equal or be less than the economic need standard as listed on the Scope of Coverage Chart for Seneca County. PRC requests received after a previous 30 day period of eligibility requires a new application and determination of eligibility. Receipt of assistance from programs such as Ohio Works First (OWF), Disability Assistance (DA) Medical Program and entitlement programs such as Medicaid and Food Stamps, does not preclude eligibility for receipt of PRC services. When other federal, state or community programs are available to meet a household's needs, those programs must be utilized prior to any issuance of PRC. If the services requested are available through other sources (e.g., community resources), the availability of these sources must be explored and utilized prior to an eligibility determination for PRC. Also, if the program cap is not sufficient to meet the AG's existing need, the AG must verify other community resources that will pay the difference, and the amount must be paid prior to the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services approving the application for services.

The Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services is responsible for using objective criteria when determining eligibility and approving or denying the request

within ten (10) business days after the completion of the application process. A PRC application will be denied after 30 days if all requested verifications are not received. The completion of the application process starts with the receipt and/or verification of all requested documents. The eligibility determination will be processed in a fair and equitable manner. Under the Seneca County PRC program, an assistance group that includes at least one minor/dependent child, or pregnant woman, and meets all program eligibility requirements may receive customized benefits and/or services as determined by the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services PRC Committee and the Director or designee. Other services targeted toward goals of the Seneca County PRC Plan may be recommended by the Seneca County PRC Committee and approved by the Director or designee. The committee will consist of the administrator from each of the following departments: the Workforce Development Division, the Financial Assistance Division, the Social Services Division, the Child Support Division, and the Business Administration Division.

Eligibility factors, time restraints, and amounts available to pay for the various services covered must be explained to the applicant. 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 and/or services that could help them successfully move out of poverty and become self-sufficient. Any applicant found ineligible or adversely affected by a county determination will be provided with written notice, outlining their State Hearing Rights. PRC hearing decisions are based on the PRC program plan in effect in Seneca County at the time of the adverse action.



If the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services determines that an application for PRC is approved, the ODHS 4074, ANotice of approval of your application for assistance@shall be mailed or otherwise delivered. If the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services determines that an application for PRC is denied, the ODHS 7334 ANotice of Denial of your Application for Assistance@shall be mailed or otherwise delivered within 30 days of the date of application.

Once eligibility for PRC is established, authorization shall occur, and a payment for the benefits and/or services will be generated. Authorization may occur at any time during the period beginning on the date that PRC is approved. As long as payment is authorized within 30 days, actual payment may be made to vendors according to the procedures in place in Seneca County. All payments shall be made to the vendor or PRC Assistance Group. Policy has been written to ensure all auditing requirements are maintained. All service provider records must be available for review by SCDJFS upon request.

### **Income**

The total gross income of all members of the PRC AG, as defined on the Seneca County Scope of Services chart, including earned and unearned income, shall be counted, except for the gross earnings of a minor /dependent child. This includes all income which is normally exempt or disregarded when determining eligibility for any public assistance program. This also includes money received from the State for child support arrearages. All income that has been received by the PRC AG within the 30 day period immediately prior to the date of application is considered when determining

financial need. For cases in which income cannot be accurately obtained, the implementation of practices that are reasonable and prudent should occur when determining countable income. If pay stubs or other documentation is not available, a signed ODHS 7341, ~~an~~ Applicant/Recipient Authorization for Release of Information should be obtained from the applicant for an inquiry. Once the release is received, verification must occur and be clearly documented in the PRC case record. This documentation should include the name, position and phone number of the person who supplied the information, the date the information was received, the specific information, and who obtained the information.

For Family Strengthening and Preservation Services **ONLY**, a written, signed, dated self-declaration of the previous 30 days' income for the Assistance Group may be used.

### **Scope of Services**

The attached chart contains the scope of services provided under the Seneca County PRC program. The chart also contains the assistance groups served, the economic needs standard and cap for each service, and the targeted groups and needed verifications.

Assistance issued to meet a family's ~~an~~ ongoing basic needs has a maximum four month time period of issuance. Transportation and other supportive services for people who **ARE NOT** employed are restricted by this four month time period of issuance.

Transportation and other supportive services for people who **ARE** employed **ARE NOT** restricted by this four month maximum.

