

What is the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program?

Ohio's PCA program provides financial resources for personal assistance services to Ohioans with severe physical disabilities. Personal assistance services help people with severe physical disabilities perform activities of daily living. Such activities may include (but are not limited to) dressing, grooming, bathing, toileting, preparing food, feeding, giving medications, turning, repositioning, transferring and assisting with ambulation.

Through participation in the PCA program, many people have been able to obtain or maintain employment. Individuals have left institutional settings, avoided nursing home situations or gained personal independence by moving into their own homes or apartments.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Ohio's PCA program, a person must:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- be an Ohio resident and be willing to receive services within Ohio unless otherwise approved;
- be severely physically disabled (require assistance in a minimum of three activities of daily living);
- not be receiving services through the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency's (OOD's) vocational rehabilitation program or other community programs which would duplicate services funded through the PCA program (participants can use more than one resource but may not bill for the same hours of personal assistance services from more than one resource);

- need no fewer than eight consecutive weeks of PCA and no more than 455 hours per quarter (a personal assistant can be employed for additional hours at the participant's expense);
- have adjusted income of not more than 600 percent of the federal poverty level for a single individual (adjusted income is applicant's total income plus spouse's income in excess of \$10,000 less impairment-related expenses);
- be capable of instructing and supervising an assistant or arranging for such instruction and supervision;
- be living, or through the PCA program be able to live, independently of family or an institution (person can live under the same roof as family); and
- agree that need for continuing PCA be subject to periodic evaluation.

Eligibility Priority

When funds are available, those individuals found eligible will be served based on these group priorities:

1. people who are employed and need personal assistance services to maintain employment;
2. people who are ready for and actively seeking employment and who need personal assistance services to locate and maintain employment;
3. people who are in a state-licensed/ accredited training program with employment as an outcome goal and need personal assistance services to participate in training; and
4. people who need personal assistance services to live independently.

Application Process

Any Ohioan with a severe physical disability who needs assistance with activities of daily living and meets the program's eligibility requirements may write or call to request an application from OOD or a local facility chosen by OOD to operate the program (see list of participating facilities).

The person sends the completed application to the appropriate facility, which does a pre-screening evaluation of need for service, number of hours and financial assistance and makes an acceptance recommendation to the PCA program coordinator at OOD. The program coordinator reviews the recommendation and determines the applicant's eligibility. The applicant is then put on a waiting list according to priority.

Once accepted into the program, the applicant may request assistance from the local facility in how to find, train and employ an assistant. The accepted applicant becomes the assistant's employer and is subsequently reimbursed by OOD for the approved number of hours of personal assistance services.



"..You make it possible to look to the future with a degree of confidence. Thank you."

– PCA participant

Participant Responsibilities

- screening, interviewing, selecting, instructing and supervising assistants;
- paying the assistant's wages in a timely manner agreed upon by the two parties; and
- adhering to all procedures, payments and obligations of employer costs as required by law.

Who Can Be an Assistant?

Anyone who agrees to the following responsibilities with the person eligible for the PCA program may be an assistant:

- the terms of work;
- performance of tasks agreed upon;
- performance of tasks to avoid injury and/or discomfort;
- reporting to work as scheduled; and
- maintaining the person's privacy.

If you're interested in more information about becoming an assistant, contact one of the participating facilities listed.

Comments

When asked the "greatest benefit" or "most significant change in your life" from the PCA program, participants praise the program for:

- restoring self-esteem and self-worth;
- improving health;
- improving quality of life;
- allowing employment of self/spouse; and
- restoring control over own life.

Participating Facilities

The Ability Center of Greater Toledo

Mark Armstrong, community inclusion coord.
5605 Monroe St., Sylvania, OH 43560
419. 885. 5733 voice/TTY
419. 882. 4813 fax; 866. 885. 5733 toll free
marmstrong@abilitycenter.org

Center for Independent Living Options, Inc.

Whitney Christophersen, rural services coord.
2031 Auburn Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45219
513. 226.1654 cell; 513. 241. 2600 office;
wchristophersen@cilo.net

Services for Independent Living, Inc.

Lisa Marn
26250 Euclid Ave., Suite 415, Euclid, OH 44132
216. 731. 1529 voice/TTY
lmarn@sil-oh.org

Society for Equal Access/Independent Living Center

Bob Fair, IL skills supervisor
1458 5th St. NW, New Philadelphia, OH 44663
330. 343. 9292, ext. 224 voice
330. 602. 4515 TTY
rfair@seailc.org

Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP)

Kathy Foley, ADRC coordinator
2545 Lorain Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113
216. 696. 2716, ext. 825
kfoley@leapinfo.org

OOD Responsibilities:

- establish maximum reimbursement rates;
- choose non-profit facilities that exist, at least in part, to provide services to people with disabilities to operate the program at the local level;
- assist the facilities in locating people with severe physical disabilities to apply for the PCA program;
- make final eligibility determinations on PCA program applicants based on the facilities' assessments;
- periodically evaluate the program to ensure efficiency and effectiveness; and
- issues reimbursement checks to participants.

Local Facility Responsibilities:

- locate citizens who have a severe physical disability and may be eligible for the PCA program;
- assess applicants' potential for the PCA program, including the ability to instruct and supervise assistants and to maintain schedules and records;
- assess applicants' personal assistance needs;
- provide assistant management training to participants to include (but not be limited to) training in how to recruit assistants, how to conduct interviews and screen applicants and how to supervise and instruct assistants on tasks required;
- assist OOD in conducting annual evaluation of each participant's need for continued personal assistance services; and
- serve as an information resource on alternate community programs that provide personal assistance services.

How PCA Got Its Start

In 1981, the Ohio General Assembly enacted legislation that gave OOD authority to "establish and administer a program... to provide personal care assistance to enable eligible, severely disabled persons to live independently or work."

PCA program services began in October 1982 with funds allocated for the pilot project. Beginning in 1984, the PCA program received line item funding in Ohio's Biennial Budget. The program's budget is renewable every two years.

"...[the program is] especially wise and understanding in that the participants choose, hire and train their own attendant..."

– PCA participant

For more information:

Katie Scheetz, PCA program coordinator
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency
895 Central Ave., 7th Fl.
Cincinnati, OH 45202-1961

Toll-free in Ohio, 1. 800. 686. 3323 or 513. 314. 7650.

E-mail: katie.scheetz@ood.ohio.gov

Produced by OOD's Office of Communications
Catalog # IL-3
Revised

6/06
10/13

Ohio

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