



FactSheet:

PUNS: Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services

DHS Office of Intellectual Disability

What is the PUNS?

The PUNS is a tool used to gather information about the needs of a person who has requested intellectual disability services. It identifies the supports and services a person is currently receiving, whether they are provided by family, community resources, private insurance, a school district, or within the Intellectual Disability System. The PUNS also identifies any unmet needs the person may have. An unmet need is classified as either an Emergency, Critical, or Planning Need.

What determines a person's category of need on the PUNS?

An emergency is considered a need that must be met within the next six months to keep the person healthy and safe. The Emergency Need category is split into two subsections:

Emergency Need (person needs out-of-home residential supports immediately)

- The person's need for services are immediate, and cannot wait until some later, perhaps unspecified, date.
- *Example:* There is a death of a caregiver and there is no other family member available to provide support.

Emergency Need (person needs in-home supports, day supports or other supports immediately)

- The person's need for services is immediate, and cannot wait until some later, perhaps unspecified, date.
- *Example:* Needs immediate support to stay in their own home/family home or to maintain their employment situation.

Critical Need

- The person's need for services is in the near future (within 2 years) but they do not require services immediately.
- *Example:* Person has a caregiver who is or will be age 60+ and will need supports in the next two years.

Planning Need

- The person's need for services is more than two years but less than 5 years away.
- *Example:* The presence of an aging caregiver who, at the moment, is capable of continuing to provide care and wishes to continue doing so, but may, at some time in the next five years, no longer be able to continue providing care.

When is the PUNS completed?

- When a need for services is identified or anticipated within five years

Who completes the PUNS?

You will have a conversation with your Supports Coordinator (SC) about what is important to you and what your needs and goals are. The information gathered from this conversation, as well as from the people that know you best, will be used to complete your PUNS.

When is the PUNS reviewed?

- At least annually (at your Individual Support Plan Annual Review)
- When you alert your SC that your needs have changed
- When needs identified on the current PUNS have been met

Signature requirements

- The PUNS form **must** be signed by the people present during the completion of the form
- When the PUNS is completed or reviewed over the telephone, the SC will obtain signatures at a later time
- These signatures indicate participation in the meeting or review, not necessarily agreement with the information on the PUNS

What happens if there is a disagreement?

You will receive a copy of the PUNS form in the mail after it is reviewed with your SC. You will also receive a letter asking if you agree with the information on the PUNS form. If you do not, you can send the letter back to your SC and attempt to resolve the disagreement in this order:

1. You and your SC should attempt to resolve the disagreement.
2. If not resolved, an SC Supervisor will review the PUNS your situation and attempt to resolve the disagreement.
3. If the disagreement cannot be resolved at these levels, an Allegheny County Office of Intellectual Disability (OID) representative will make the final decision on these disagreements.

Note: The PUNS cannot be appealed through the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals.

How is the information on the PUNS form used?

- The PUNS form can help you understand what category of need you are in.
- The PUNS information is used to determine urgency of need.
- SCs and OID staff use PUNS information to identify those who can receive available funding.
- OID uses the PUNS information to request additional funding from the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

Bulletin information

For additional information from ODP, please refer to the following bulletins on the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services website.

- 00-06-15: PUNS Manual, Bulletin
- 00-06-15 Attachment 1: PUNS Manual, Document
- 00-06-15 Attachment 2: PUNS Disagreement Form

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For more information regarding OID, including additional FactSheets visit <http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Disabilities/Intellectual-Disability.aspx>