

PUNS Form: Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services



The PUNS Form is a tool used to gather information about the needs of a person who has requested intellectual disability / autism waiver services. It identifies the supports and services a person is currently receiving and how they are provided for. Some examples of how people receive supports are informally (from friends, family, caregivers), from community resources or insurance, through eligibility-based supports or school districts.

The PUNS Form also identifies any unmet needs the person may have. Unmet needs are classified as either an Emergency, Critical, or Planning Need on the form.

The PUNS Form has a focus on the family and the Community of Practice LifeCourse. The PA Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has identified a need to consider situations that impact the needs of the individual and the caregiver's ability to ensure their health, safety and well-being. *To learn about Community of Practice LifeCourse and ODP visit www.MyODP.org*

A PUNS Form is completed when a need for waiver funded services is identified or anticipated within five years. The form should be completed through a conversation between the Supports Coordinator (SC), the individual seeking services, their family and persons who support them. During this conversation there will be dialogue about immediate and anticipated needs. Included will be those required for health and safety, community participation and desired life experiences.

When may the PUNS Form be reviewed?

- At least annually
- When you tell your SC that your needs have changed
- When needs identified on your current PUNS Form have been met

What are the PUNS Form signature requirements?

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

What happens if there is a disagreement?

- You will receive a copy of the PUNS Form in the mail after it is reviewed. You will also receive a letter asking if you agree with the information on the PUNS Form. If you do not agree, you can send the letter back to your SC and attempt to resolve the disagreement in this order:
 - You and your SC should attempt to resolve the disagreement.
 - If not resolved, an SC Supervisor will review the PUNS Form, your situation and attempt to resolve the disagreement.
 - If the disagreement cannot be resolved at these levels, an Allegheny County Office of Developmental Supports (ODS) representative will make the final decision on these disagreements.

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PUNS Form categories and some circumstances that determines them:

Emergency Need - needs services immediately because:

- There has been a death, family crisis, serious illness of a caregiver or the caregiver is no longer able to provide care with no other caregivers available.
- Immediate supports (behavioral, day, in-home or other) will prevent the immediate need for residential support.
- The person is living in a setting or location that places their health or safety at risk and immediately needs a new place to live (e.g. shelter, prison, acute care hospital or person is homeless)
- Additional supports are needed immediately to protect the person's health and safety.
- The person or family/caregiver needs immediate support to maintain their employment situation, obtain follow along supported employment or achieve a post-school employment outcome.

Critical Need - anticipated need for services in the near future (within 2 years) because:

- Behavioral support needs or medical concerns or conditions will warrant additional supports
- There has been a change that will no longer allow the caregiver to provide the same level of support. For instance, when another member of the household needs care or the caregivers health is deteriorating.
- They are graduating from high school and will need services.

Planning Need - anticipated need for services is more than two years but less than 5 years away because:

- 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.
- They are graduating from high school and will need services.

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 Form information is used to determine urgency of need.
- SCs and ODS staff use PUNS Form information to identify those who can receive funding as it becomes available.
- ODS uses the PUNS Form information to request additional funding from ODP.

For more information on the PUNS Form, Community of Practice LifeCourse and ODP visit the PA DHS website and www.MyODP.org (PA DHS Office of Developmental Programs)



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For more information regarding ODS, including additional Fact Sheets visit alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS