

# Updates to the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) Manual for Individuals with intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism

## ODP Announcement 25-043 **REISSUE**

### AUDIENCE:

Administrative Entities (AEs), Supports Coordinators (SCs), SC Supervisors, Supports Coordination Organizations (Consolidated Waiver, Person/Family Directed Support Waiver [P/FDS], Community Living Waiver [CLW], and Adult Autism Waiver [AAW]), Targeted Support Management Providers, Individuals and Families.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this communication is to distribute the updated Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) Manual, which includes changes related to the Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy initiative. This updated PUNS Manual is designed to replace the prior PUNS Manual. **This announcement is being reissued with a correct link for the attachment: PUNS Manual.**

## DISCUSSION:

As outlined in the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Bulletin 00-19-03, updates to Attachment 1 (the PUNS Manual) are being announced through this ODP Communication. To support the successful implementation of the Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy, ODP is making updates to the PUNS process, which include the following:

- **Updated message** - An updated message from the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Developmental Programs.
- **Defining “Immediate Need”** – An “Immediate need” is defined by meeting at least one of the following criteria:
  - **Present Today or Within Six Months:** An immediate need refers to a situation that requires urgent attention either right now or in the near future (within the next six months).
  - **Health and Safety Risks:** The need must involve a risk to the individual’s health or safety, requiring immediate attention.
  - **Imminent or Unavoidable Event:** The situation is an imminent or unavoidable event that will affect the individual's need for new or modified services.
- **Who should have a PUNS?**
  - A PUNS should be completed for all individuals within the County Program or AE who have a current or anticipated funding need (capacity in Consolidated, CLW, or P/FDS) within the next five years.
- **Who Should not have a PUNS?**
  - Individuals in “intent to enroll” or fully enrolled in the Consolidated Waiver are considered fully served and should be removed from PUNS.

- Individuals who are in need of new, additional, or different services, but whose needs can be met under their current Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Funding Source.
  - Individuals who already receive services through the Intellectual Disability and Autism (ID/A) system and who do not need new, additional, or different services (considered “fully served”).
  - Individuals who already receive services through the ID/A system and are seeking a different willing and qualified provider(s) with no change in the type of services that they currently receive.
  - Individuals who need services other than those provided by the ID/A system (e.g. nursing home).
  - Individuals whose waiver has been placed in a Reserve Capacity Status due to a short term stay in a hospital (medical/psychiatric) or a rehabilitation care facility and who are returning to the community do not require a PUNS unless they no longer have an identified willing and qualified provider to resume needed services upon release from the hospital or facility.
  - Individuals who are not anticipated to seek services through the ID/A system within the next five years, although they may request services at a later time.
- **Who Should Not Have an Emergency PUNS?**
    - Individuals who are not financially eligible for Medical Assistance (MA)\*.
      - If the team anticipates the person will become financially eligible at a future date, the individual can be placed on Critical or Planning PUNS.
      - Individuals who are unlikely to meet financial eligibility requirements in the next five years can be placed on critical or planning.

*\*Exception - Individuals who frequently lose and regain MA eligibility may remain on Emergency PUNS when appropriate. Teams should determine the reason for eligibility issues and develop a plan to ensure the individual is able to maintain MA eligibility.*

- Individuals who have been offered waiver enrollment and decline to provide documentation or information to successfully complete enrollment two times in a span of 12 months should not be on Emergency PUNS.
  - Supports Coordinators and AEs must provide information and support to individuals and families to encourage completion of enrollment.
  - Individuals who have been offered waiver enrollment and decline to provide documentation or information to complete enrollment may remain on Critical or Planning PUNS based on anticipated needs.
- Individuals who have been deemed programmatically ineligible for waiver services.
- **Paper PUNS forms and signatures are not required.**
  - The Supports Coordinator (SC) should complete a service note to document the collection of information.
  - The collected information must then be entered into Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS) on the PUNS form and finalized.
  - Finalization must occur within 10 calendar days of gathering the information that identified a current or unmet need.

Bulletin 00-19-03 and Attachments 2, 3, and 4 remain in effect until further updates are issued through other ODP Communications. Attachment 1, effective immediately, has been uploaded as the current version to ODP Bulletin 00-19-03 on the DHS Bulletin webpage. The updated document can be accessed by clicking the blue hyperlink in the Attachment section below.

**ATTACHMENT:**

**Attachment 1:** [PUNS Manual](#)

**CONTACT:**

Questions about this communication should be directed to the appropriate Office of developmental Programs' Regional Office.