



August 2019 Update PUNS, The Basics

What is PUNS and why is it important?

PUNS is the name for the list of the people in Illinois with developmental disabilities who want or need services, but do not yet have funding. Individuals who need help from the government to pay for needed DD Waiver services now, or in the future, should register for PUNS.

To get on the PUNS list, one must have a developmental disability (DD). The Independent Service Coordination Agency (ISC) will determine eligibility.

Through Medicaid, a person with DD is entitled to access institutional services (Intermediate Care Facilities), not DD Waiver services. In Illinois, there is a wait for DD Waiver services and one must join the PUNS list unless in crisis (homeless, abused, or neglected). If the consumer is in crisis, speak directly to the ISC. Crisis situations are addressed outside of the PUNS waiting list.

The Independent Service Coordination Agency is the “doorway” to PUNS and funding for services.

Some of the services funded by the Medicaid waiver programs that may be needed are:

- In-Home Supports
- Job Coaches
- Community Day Services
- Residential Services
- Therapy Services
- And many others

How to get on the PUNS list

To get someone on the PUNS list, a date for a PUNS interview needs to be arranged with the local Independent Service Coordination Agency (ISC). The

ISC is the “doorway” to PUNS and funding for DD Waiver services. Questions about the individual and his/her needs are part of the PUNS enrolment process.

The PUNS list is a waiting list for Medicaid waiver funding to pay for services, provided through the IL DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

Don't forget to update the PUNS form every year. Only those who have completed the PUNS - and keep it updated - have a chance to be “selected” to receive services. Watch the U.S. Mail for a letter alerting the consumer that a PUNS annual update is due. If the consumer does not get a letter, call the ISC to schedule an update appointment.

How to find the ISC

To find the ISC for the individual seeking services, call any of The Arc Programs listed on the final page of this document. Contact the DHS Customer Help Line at (800) 843-6154 or go to the Illinois DHS Office Locator and choose “Developmental Disability Services” as the Office Type, along with your county. DHS Office Locator:

<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>

The PUNS list is a wait list

From the Ligas Implementation Plan, 5/3/19. “Effective August 2017, PUNS categories were revised to “Seeking Services” (for those who want supports now) and “Planning for Services (for those who do not currently want or need supports but may in the future).” Future PUNS selections will be based on the length of time an individual has spent in the Seeking Services category since the age of 18.”

From the Independent Service Coordination Manual, posted July 2019. “PUNS selections for Waiver services will occur as funding is available. Selections will be based on a person's cumulative length of time in the Seeking Services Category after age 18. Selections will not be made from the Planning for Services category. If the individual enrolled in PUNS before turning age 18, the length of time begins calculating on the individual's 18th birthday provided that they are in the Seeking service category. In order to

move from one category to the other, individuals and/or guardian must notify their ISC. Movement from one category to the other is not automatic.”

The waiting time on the PUNS list has been lengthy. It is possible to find out when one is likely to be selected by sending an email with name of the individual, address, birthdate, and the name of the ISC to the following address. DHS.DDD.PUNS@illinois.gov.

Please keep in mind that many factors influence the PUNS list and it changes frequently. There is a possibility that a selection may occur slightly earlier or later than estimated. All estimates of selection and funding availability are subject to appropriation by the Illinois Legislature.

From the Ligas Implementation Plan, Exhibit A, 5/3/19.
“PUNS selections will be tailored such that by the FY2025 selection, no individual will wait on PUNS for over 60 months. For individuals who are added to the PUNS list before their 18th birthday, the 60-month period will begin when the individual turns 18.” *Please note that the individual must also be in the “Seeking Services” category.

Children and PUNS

Although very few children have been funded for services except in crisis situations in recent years, there are still Medicaid waiver programs in place for children and youth. Those with current or anticipated future needs are encouraged to complete the PUNS process to get on the PUNS waiting list. A PUNS interview can be requested for children age 2.5 years and older with developmental disabilities.

For more information . . .

If you want more information about PUNS or DD Waiver services, the following Programs of The Arc of Illinois may be helpful:

- Family to Family Health Information Center
www.familyvoicesillinois.org
866-931-1110

- Illinois Life Span Program
www.illinoislifespan.org
1-800-588-7002
- The Ligas Family Advocates Program
www.ligasfamilyadvocateprogram.org
708-331-7370
- Family Support Network
www.familysupportnetwork.org
708-331-7370
- The Arc Spanish Helpline - Linea de Información en Español
708-218-1958

Arc of Illinois staff members are also available to talk about other possible options, programs and services for your family member with a developmental disability.