

The PUNS System

(for Students with Developmental Disabilities)



What is PUNS?

PUNS is the statewide waiting list for individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) who do not yet have funding for DD “Medicaid Waiver” services, but may need funding for services.

What does PUNS stand for?

PUNS stands for Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services.

What is the qualification criteria to enroll in PUNS?

A person must have a developmental disability in order to enroll in PUNS.

When does one enroll in PUNS?

An individual should enroll in the PUNS database as early as 2.5 years old with a diagnosis of developmental disability verified by a physician. Children, teens, and adults can enroll in PUNS.

How does one enroll in PUNS?

To enroll on the PUNS list, you must arrange a PUNS interview with your local Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agency.

This can be done by:

- Calling the DHS hotline at 1-800-843-6154
- Using the ISC Office Locator, link: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12>

What types of services can funding cover?

Once you are selected from the PUNS list, your funding will cover DD Medicaid Waiver services (administered by the IDHS/DDD – Div. of Developmental Disabilities). These services may include: community integrated living arrangements (CILAs), home-based supports, respite care, child group homes, and others.

Brief description of some of the services PUNS/DDD funding can cover:

- Home-Based Supports Services: designed to enable participants to remain living in their family home (or their own home if 18+) while receiving support to help them achieve personal goals. Funding allocated from home-based services can be used for community agencies, personal support workers, community day services, or employment services (e.g., via agencies enrolled in the Medicaid Waiver program.)
- Respite care: short-term relief for primary caregivers.
- CILAs: living arrangement for adults (18 and older) in a group home, family home, or apartment where 8 or fewer unrelated adults with developmental disabilities live under supervision of community developmental services agencies.
- Child group homes: A structured living environment for no more than 10 children per living arrangement; child group homes provide individualized and rehabilitative and therapeutic services to children and adolescents who cannot live in their family home.

What are the PUNS categories and what do they mean?

There are two categories under PUNS which indicate the extent of need for services. These categories include:

- Seeking services = in need of services now (individual with DD is 18 or older)
- Planning for services = not in need of services now; planning for the future (individual with DD is not yet 18 years old)
- Important information on PUNS categories:
 - » You must notify your ISC upon turning 18 to move from planning into seeking category - this does not happen automatically.
 - » Funding decisions are made based on cumulative length of time on the seeking services list.

How do I know if I (or my family member) has been selected for funding?

If you are selected for funding, you will receive a letter from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) that indicates you have been selected for funding. At this time, you can apply for services by contacting your ISC agency. While you are on the list, you can check your status by emailing DHS.DDD.PUNS@illinois.gov.

Other Important Information About PUNS:

- It is important to enroll as early as possible; there may be a long wait before you/your family member gets selected for funding.
- It is important to update your information regularly, as changes to your situation (e.g., student or family experiencing a crisis) may prompt a change in your PUNS status. Individuals who meet the crisis criteria (see the DDD Crisis Criteria for more information) can receive immediate, expedited funding for services.
- To stay on the PUNS list, you must update your status every year. If you do not update your status, you may be removed from the waitlist. Updating your status indicates that you are still interested in receiving funding for DD services.