



Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy Report: Eliminating the Emergency Adult Waiting List

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS (ODP)

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Message from the Deputy Secretary

ODP's mission is to support Pennsylvanians with intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or autism to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity in their lives. Our vision is to continuously improve an effective system of accessible services and supports that are flexible, innovative, and person-centered. These services and supports allow for more of the individuals we serve to remain in their homes and communities and to live an "everyday life."

For years, the intellectual disabilities/autism (ID/A) community asked for help addressing a growing waiting list and the direct support workforce shortage. Governor Shapiro heard these pleas and in February 2024 announced the Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy (MYPGS) to end the emergency waiting list for adults with ID/A. The announcement was accompanied by



a historic proposed investment in ID/A services in the FY24-25 state budget. Unfortunately, the impasse for the FY25-26 budget lasted into November 2025 and efforts to reduce the waiting list were stalled during that time period. A core element of the MYPGS is Administrative Entities (AEs)/Counties managing to budget allocations. Without a budget, AEs were unable to enroll additional individuals into home and community-based waivers.

Since the Governor's announcement, ODP reduced the emergency adult waiting list (age 21+) by 31%. During this same time period, ODP has increased total program capacity by 9% meaning that finally

The Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy for ending the emergency waiting list for adults (ages 21+), resulted in a 31% reduction of the list!

more than 40,000 individuals with ID/A receive HCBS. Current program capacity is 41,916. It is important to note that this work could not have been accomplished without the passion and commitment of the disability advocates behind the Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign. Their engagement has been essential in moving the current system forward while

also anticipating the future landscape for individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania.

Kristin Ahrens, Deputy Secretary

Introduction

Acronyms Used in this Report

Acronym	Stands For...
ACAP	Adult Community Autism Program
AE	Administrative Entity
AAW	Adult Autism Waiver
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CLW	Community Living Waiver
EDW	Enterprise Data Warehouse
FY	Fiscal Year
HCBS	Home and Community-Based Services
HCSIS	Home and Community Services Information System
ICF	Intermediate Care Facility
ID	Intellectual Disability
ID/A	Intellectual Disability/Autism
LOC	Level of Care
MYPGS	Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy
ODP	Office of Developmental Programs
P/FDS	Person/Family Directed Support Waiver
PROMISe™	Provider Reimbursement and Operations Management Information System
PUNS	Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services
SC	Supports Coordinator
TSM	Targeted Services Management
YTD	Year-to-Date

Multi-Year Program Growth Strategy (MYPGS)

In February 2024, Governor Shapiro announced the MYPGS to end the emergency waiting list for adults with ID/A. The announcement was accompanied by a historic proposed investment in ID/A services in the FY24-25 state budget. A core element of the MYPGS is AEs/Counties managing to budget allocations.

Prior to beginning the process of managing to budget allocations, each AE/County was required to demonstrate readiness to implement the new practices. All AEs were required to meet readiness standards by December 31, 2025, but were strongly encouraged to submit for readiness approval earlier. Monthly virtual office hours with ODP program and fiscal staff were held for AEs during this period to provide technical assistance and answer questions. In addition, AE specific training courses on the MYPGS and Leveraging Data to Make Decisions were posted to MyODP to assist the AEs in the submission process.

Once an AE was determined ready to begin the process, they became eligible to submit Quarterly Budget and Capacity Adjustment (Q-BACA) requests. During the first submission period in April 2025, 14 AEs were eligible to submit requests and 43% of them did. As a result, ODP was able to approve an additional 28 consolidated and 31 community living waivers. The delay in state budget approval impacted the next 2 submission periods with an inability to approve the AE requests during that time. However, by February 2026, 100% of AEs were eligible to submit requests, and 71% did submit requests totaling 162 Consolidated, 155 Community Living, and 22 Person/Family Directed Supports waivers. At the time of the writing of this report, these requests were still under review but with most likely to be approved.

During this time, a workgroup was also convened to make key updates to the PUNs manual to align with the MYPGS and to ensure consistent implementation of prioritization practices that support long-term sustainable service planning and delivery across the system. A new PUNs supplemental form was piloted in June 2025 and included in the PUNs manual update, which was released in February 2026. Trainings for Support's Coordinators on an overview of the MYPGS, PUNs updates, and their roles and responsibilities regarding the MYPGS were posted to MyODP in August 2025.

Pennsylvania's ID/A Waiting List

The waiting list is comprised of individuals who are eligible to receive services and supports through ODP home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers¹, however, due to insufficient waiver capacity, the state cannot currently meet their needs. While individuals are on the waiting list, they are placed into one of three (3) categories of need, determined by the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) tool. These categories are:

1. Emergency—Person needs services immediately, within the next six (6) months
2. Critical—Person needs services more than six (6) months but less than two (2) years from now
3. Planning—Person needs services more than two (2) but less than five (5) years from now

The PUNS is a tool that Supports Coordinators (SCs) use to facilitate discussions with individuals and their families, about their needs. The data collected by SCs via the PUNS is entered into Home and Community Service Information System (HCSIS). The PUNS was developed in 1999, with the direct assistance of advocates, and has been modified and improved over the years. It not only helps to accurately identify needs and a timeline to meet them but also helps ODP plan for the service system years in advance. The category in PUNS for each individual on the waiting list depends on their specific situation; the people with the most urgent needs have priority for enrollment.

¹ Intermediate Care Facility for Intellectual Disability or Other Related Conditions level of care

Program Enrollment & Growth

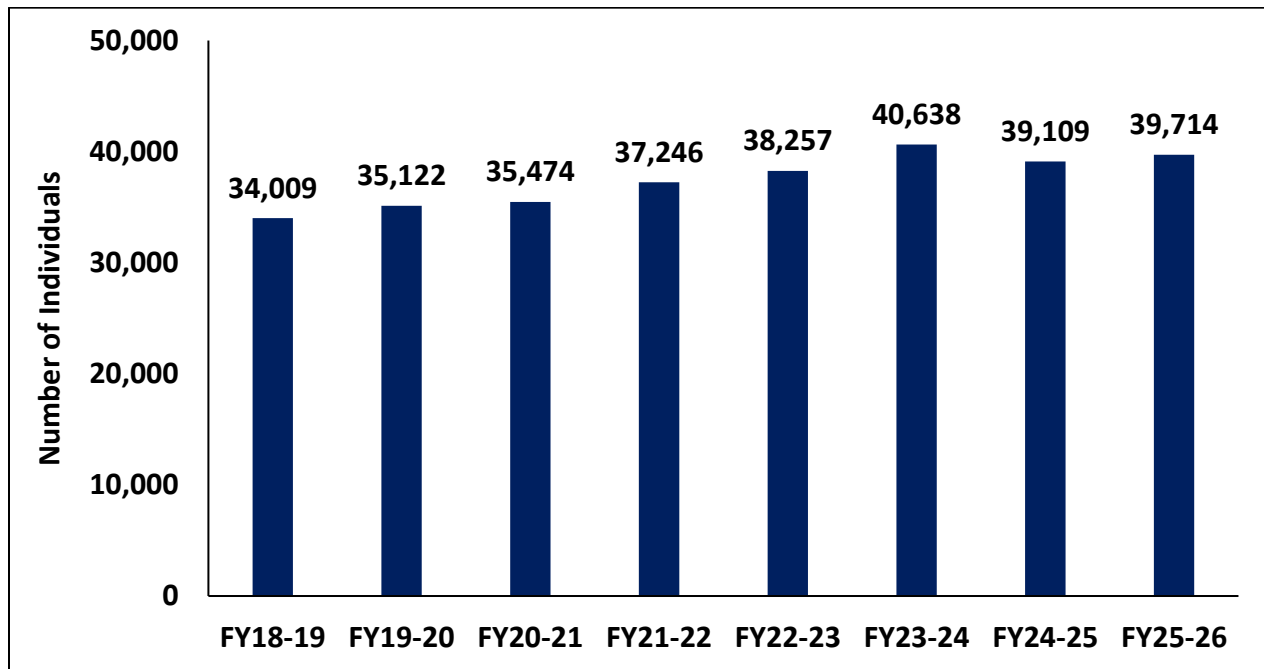
Figure 1: Enrollment by Program During State Fiscal Year (FY)

State FY	Base Only	CLW	Consolidated Waiver	P/FDS Waiver	Private ICF/ID from Paid Claims	SC Services Only	State Center from Paid Claims	ACAP	AAW
FY21-22	5,858	4,682	18,928	13,636	1,730	16,298	623	186	729
FY22-23	5,547	5,783	19,041	13,433	1,658	16,950	567	189	727
FY23-24	5,421	7,765	19,569	13,304	1,607	17,920	474	190	732
FY24-25	4,741	8,130	19,448	11,531	1,553	16,460	437	187	722

Source: EDW Consumer Demographics fact table, pulled from Cognos HCSIS Ad Hoc Package

Snapshot Date: 3/20/2026

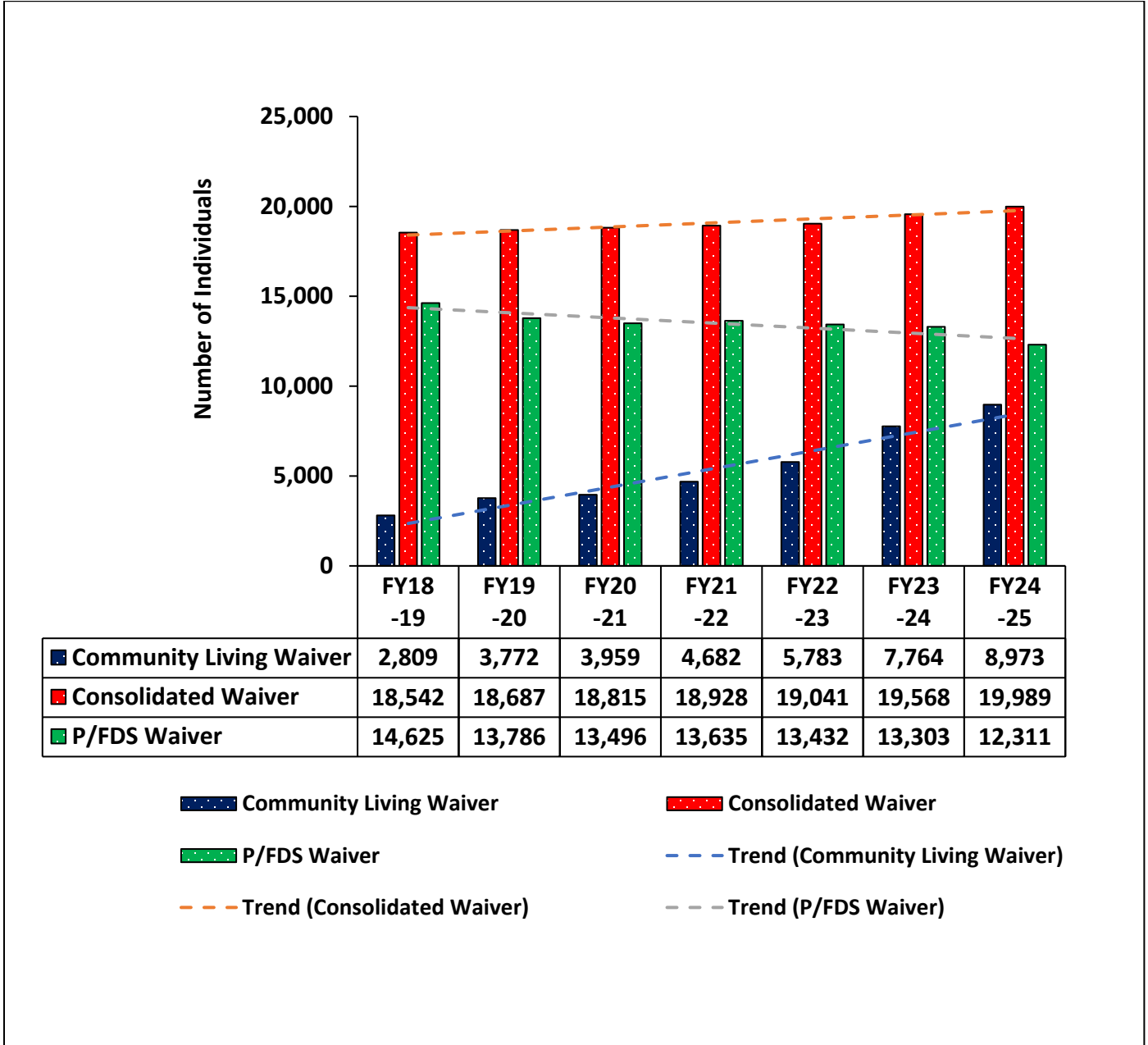
Figure 2: Individuals in ID/A Waivers - Total Enrollment by Fiscal Year



Source: HCSIS Snapshot Date: 3/20/2026

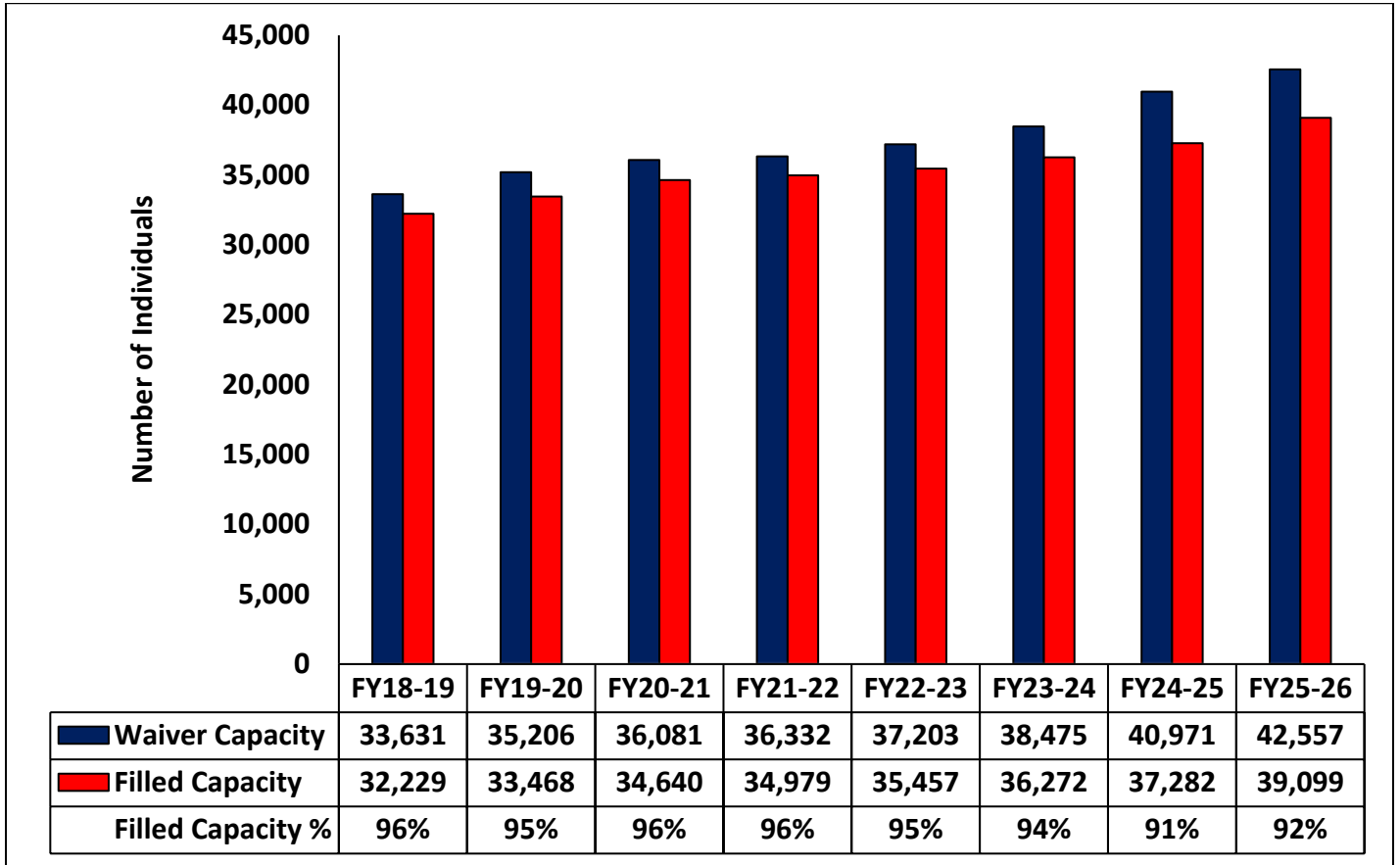
Notes: FY25-26 data in this graph is year-to-date (YTD) as of 3/20/2026. It is not a complete fiscal year.

Figure 3: Individuals by ID/A Waivers by Fiscal Year (FY)



Source: HCSIS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

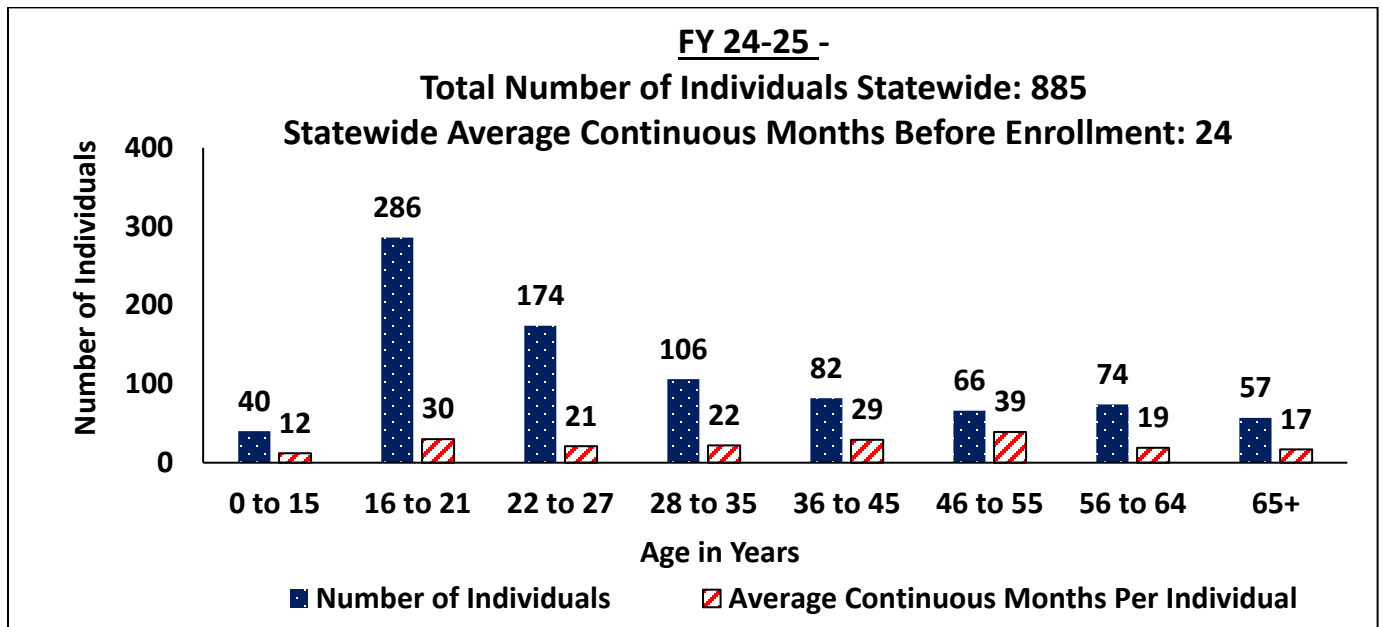
Figure 4: All Waivers - Capacity vs Filled Count and Percent by Fiscal Year



Source: HCSIS Snapshot Date: 02/25/2026

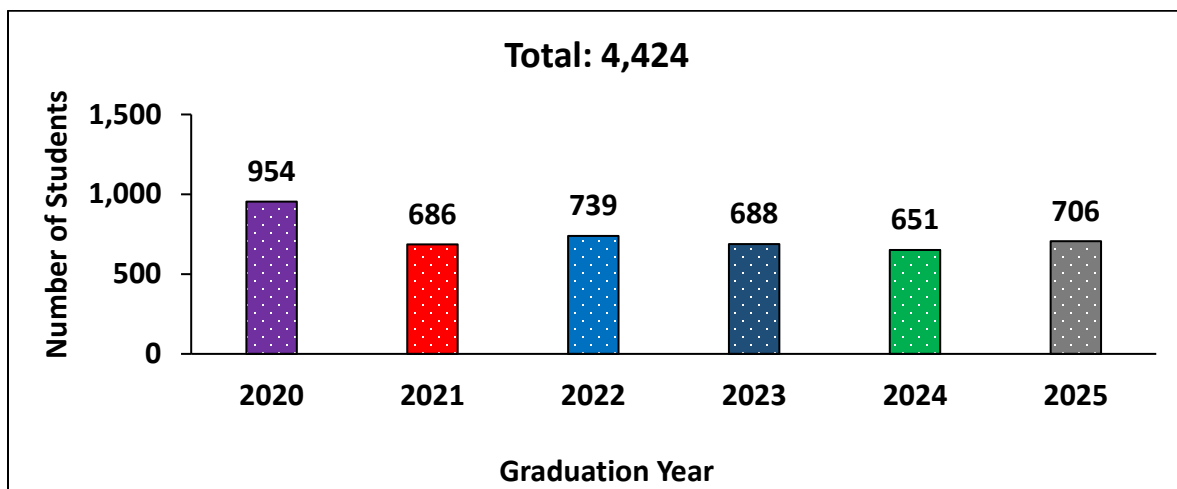
Note: FY25-26 data in this graph is YTD as of 2/25/2026. It is not a complete fiscal year.

Figure 5: New Consolidated Waiver Enrollees by Age Group & Time on Waiting List



Source: PUNS Monthly Fact Data Extract Snapshot Date: 02/24/2026

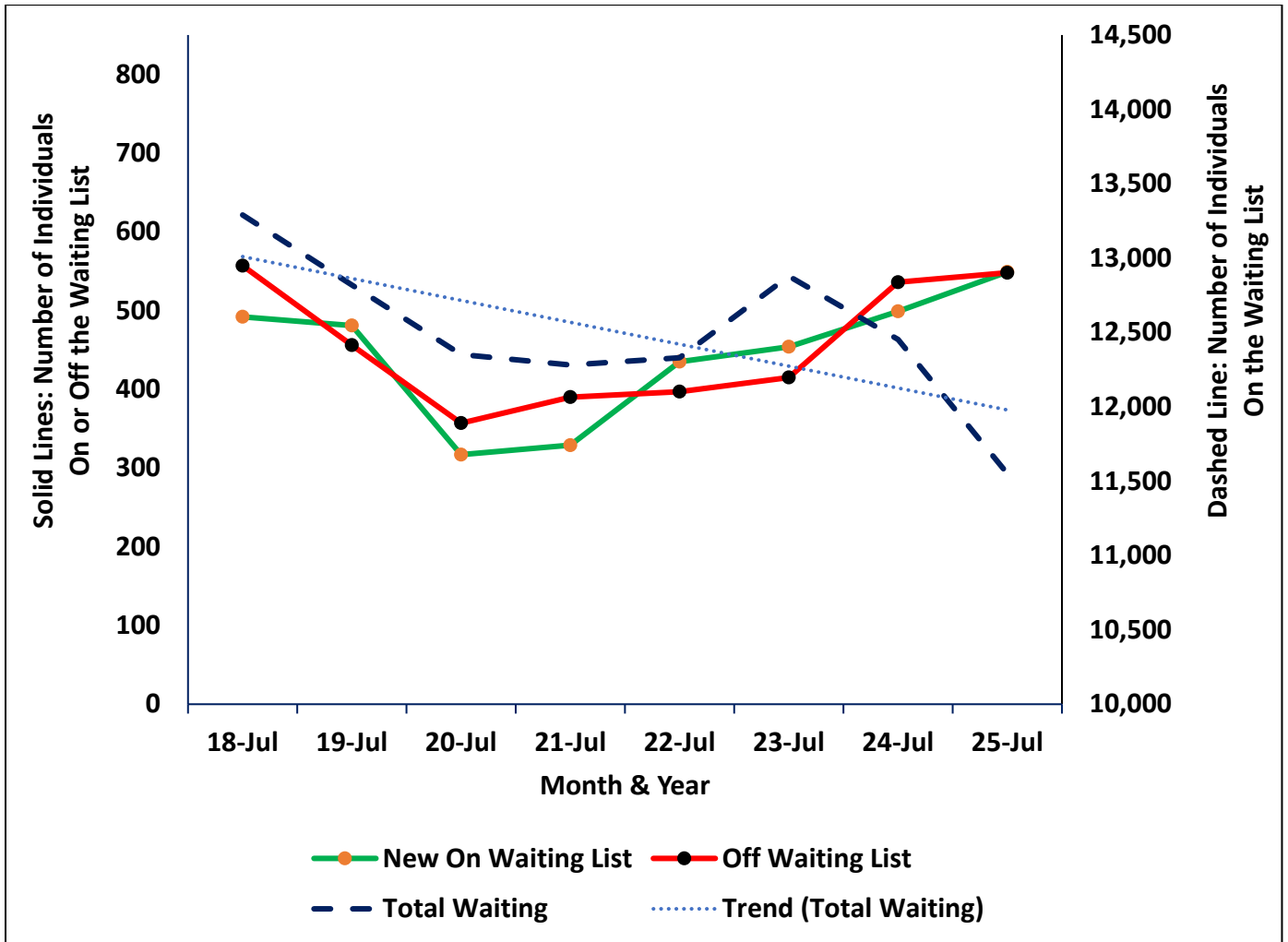
Figure 6: Number of ODP Registered Students who have Graduated Since 2020, by Year



Data Source: ODP Bureau of Client Services – Graduate Tracking Sheets from 2020 to 2025

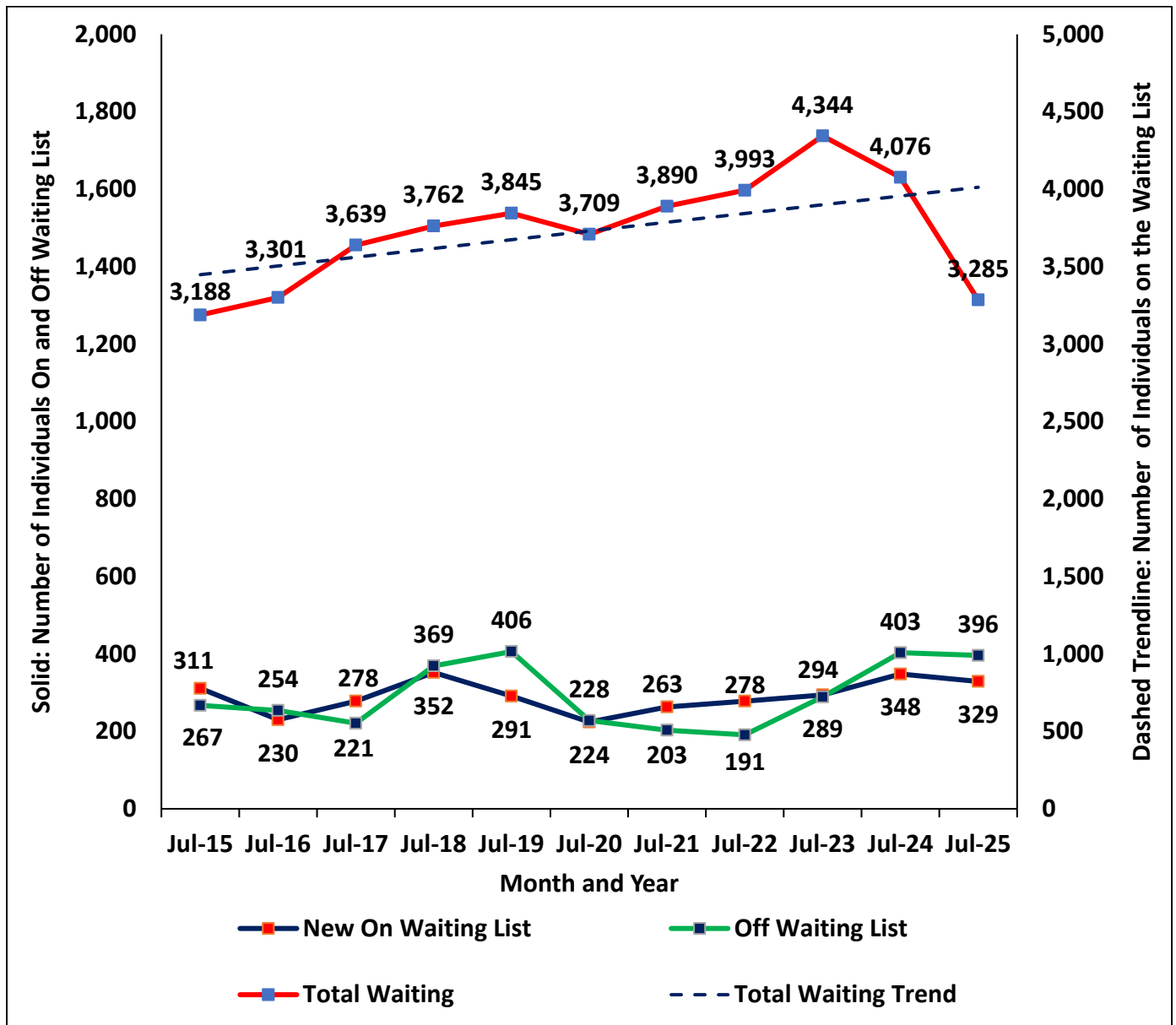
Waiting List Trends & Stats

Figure 7: All Individuals On & Off the Waiting List vs. On the Waiting List



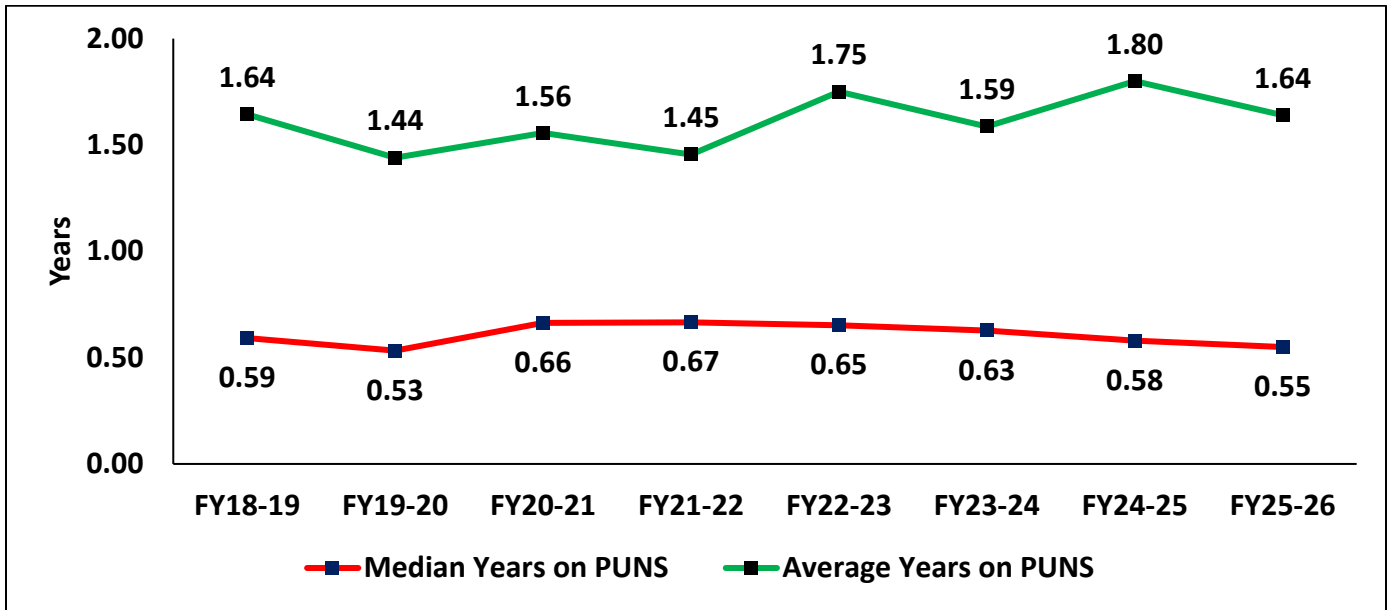
Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/05/2026

**Figure 8: Individuals On & Off the Waiting List vs. On the Waiting List -
Ages 21+ in Emergency Category**



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/05/2026

**Figure 9: Median & Average Years On the Waiting List
Ages 21+ in Emergency Category**

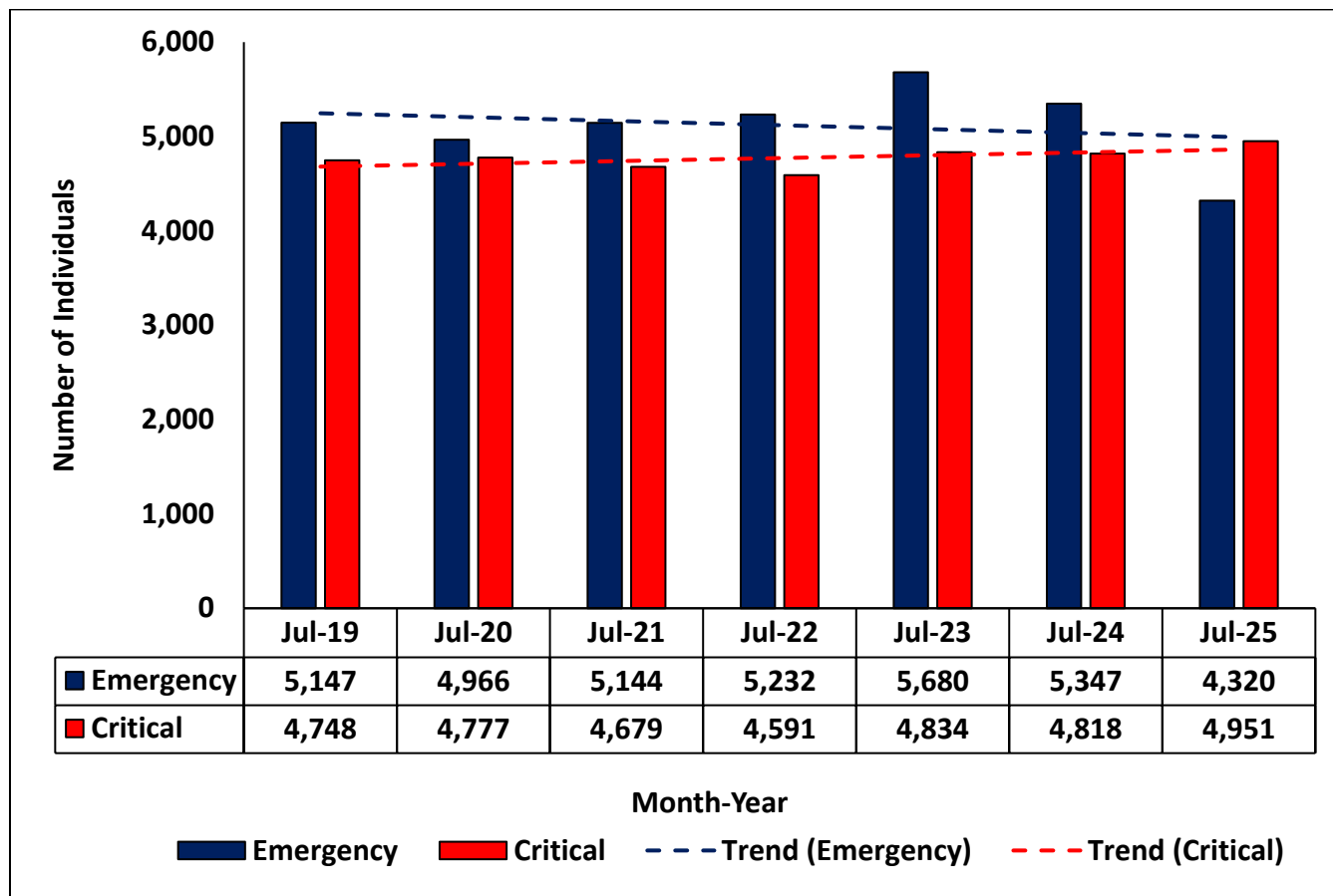


Source: EDW HCSIS Consumer Demographics Fact and PUNS Fact

Snapshot Date: 02/06/2026

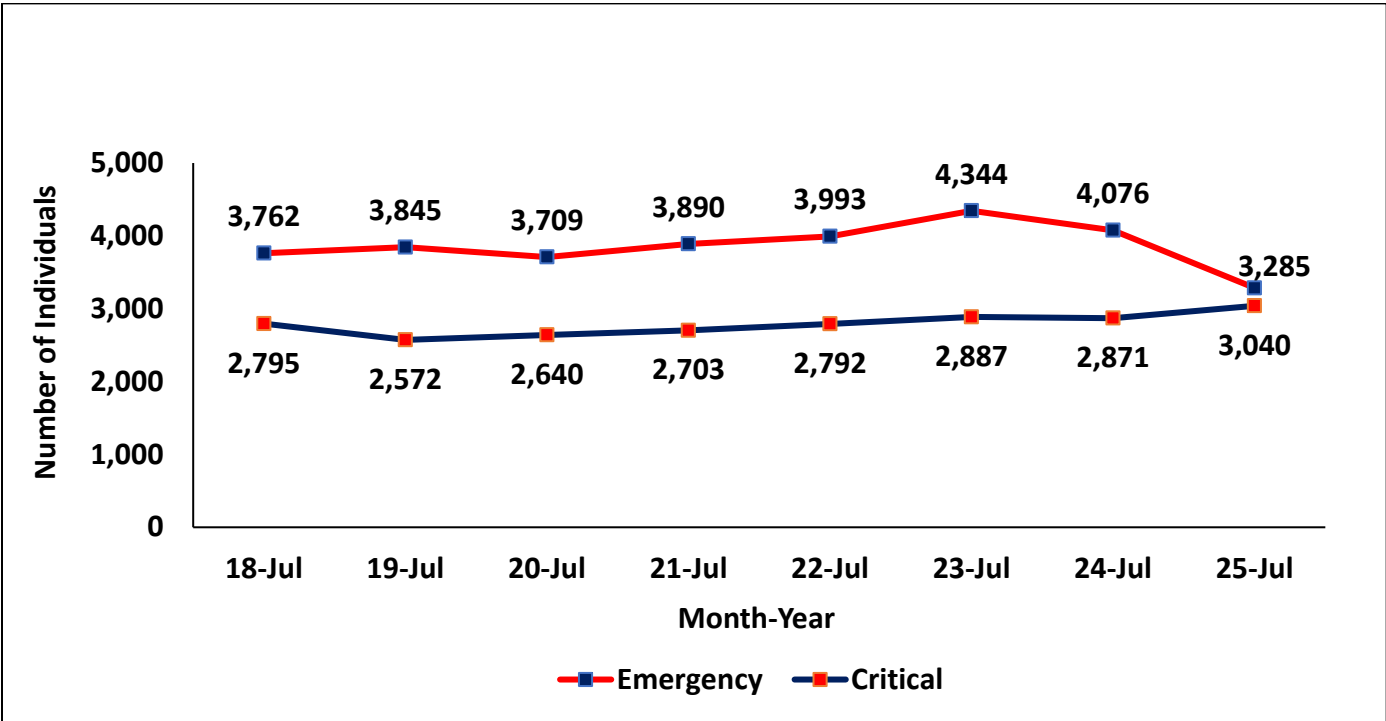
Note: Data for FY25-26 is YTD data as of 02/06/2026.

Figure 10: All Individuals on Waiting List in Emergency and Critical Need Categories



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/26/2026

Figure 11: Individuals Ages 21+ on Waiting List in Emergency and Critical Need Categories



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/26/2026

Figure 12: Individuals on Waiting List Ages 21+, by Need Category & County/Joinder with Current County HCBS Waiver Enrollment

County/Joinder	Emergency 21+	Critical 21+	Planning 21+	All Categories 21+	HCBS Waiver Enrollment
Allegheny	250	66	311	627	4,611
Armstrong/Indiana	70	15	<11	--	640
Beaver	59	14	14	87	690
Bedford/Somerset	28	<11	25	--	376
Berks	61	29	86	176	1,490
Blair	22	<11	31	--	572
Bradford/Sullivan	11	<11	<11	19	300
Bucks	142	105	134	381	1,813
Butler	35	15	12	62	538
Cambria	21	<11	27	--	547
Cameron/Elk	<11	<11	0	12	96
Carbon/Monroe/Pike	78	12	106	196	930
Centre	17	<11	43	--	361
Chester	131	60	195	386	1,608
Clarion	<11	0	<11	<11	242
Clearfield/Jefferson	32	18	<11	--	359
Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union	12	<11	32	--	498
Crawford	14	<11	26	--	397
Cumberland/Perry	57	45	79	181	752
Dauphin	39	<11	124	--	1,006
Delaware	86	28	247	361	2,073
Erie	110	55	150	315	1,583
Fayette	21	14	22	57	422
Forest/Warren	<11	<11	<11	<11	141
Franklin/Fulton	75	<11	19	--	421
Greene	15	0	<11	--	106
Huntingdon/Mifflin/Juniata	20	15	<11	--	559
Lackawanna/Susquehanna	96	17	41	154	956
Lancaster	50	15	243	308	1,452
Lawrence	30	15	17	62	854
Lebanon	26	<11	66	--	366
Lehigh	117	19	16	152	1,320
Luzerne/Wyoming	117	26	83	226	1,392

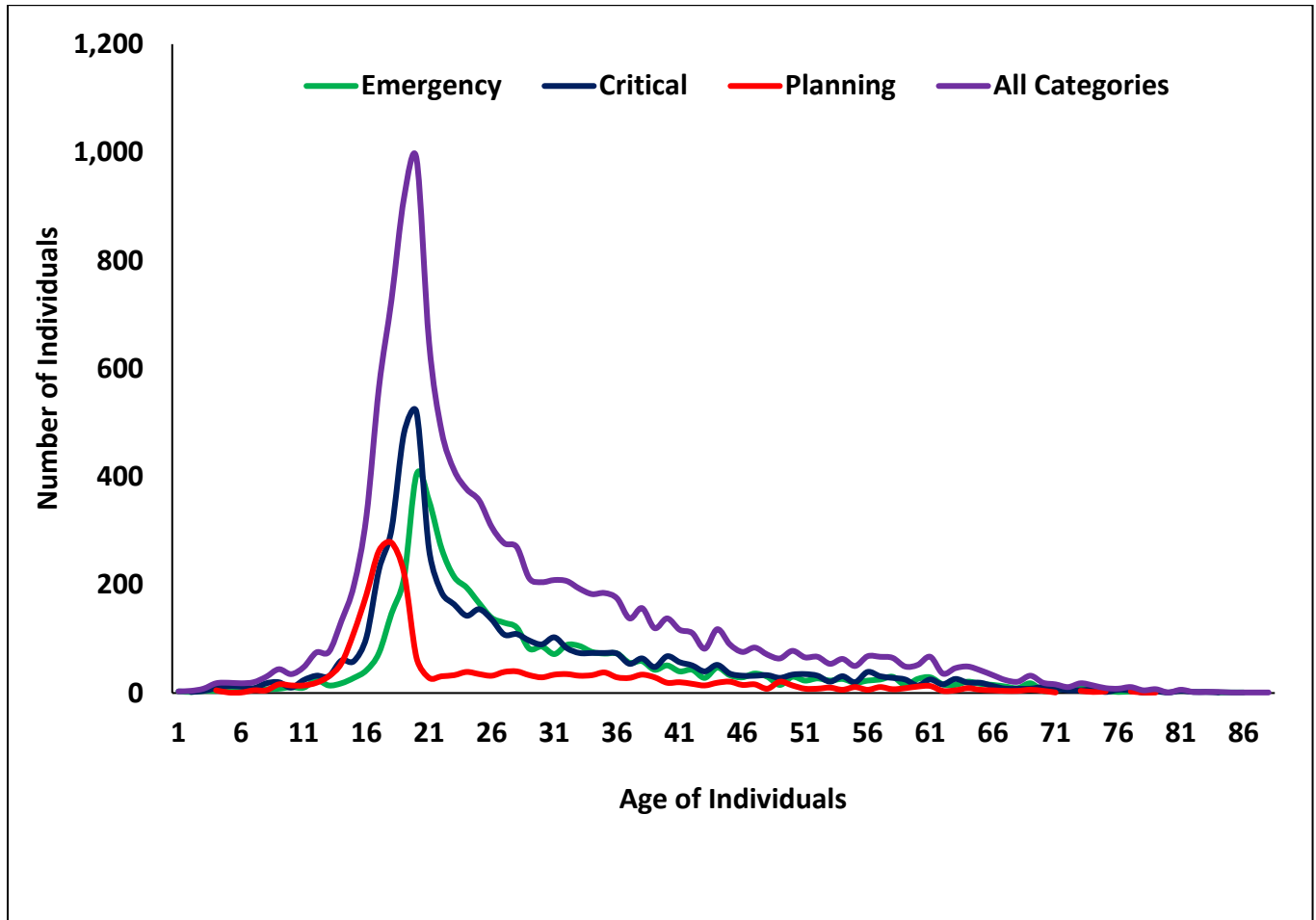
Figure 12: Individuals on Waiting List Ages 21+ by Need Category & County/Joinder with Current County HCBS Waiver Enrollment (continued)

County/Joinder	Emergency 21+	Critical 21+	Planning 21+	All Categories 21+	HCBS Waiver Enrollment
Lycoming/Clinton	15	<11	36	--	504
McKean	<11	<11	15	23	183
Mercer	12	<11	21	--	574
Montgomery	220	73	254	547	2,791
Northampton	77	20	33	130	948
Northumberland	36	<11	23	--	455
Philadelphia	401	134	342	877	4,622
Potter	<11	0	<11	<11	43
Schuylkill	26	11	40	77	575
Tioga	<11	<11	<11	21	153
Venango	<11	<11	<11	18	204
Washington	40	<11	66	--	573
Wayne	13	<11	<11	28	181
Westmoreland	196	32	50	278	1,226
York/Adams	128	24	123	275	1,229
Statewide:	3,044	978	3,208	7,230	43,322

Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/26/2026

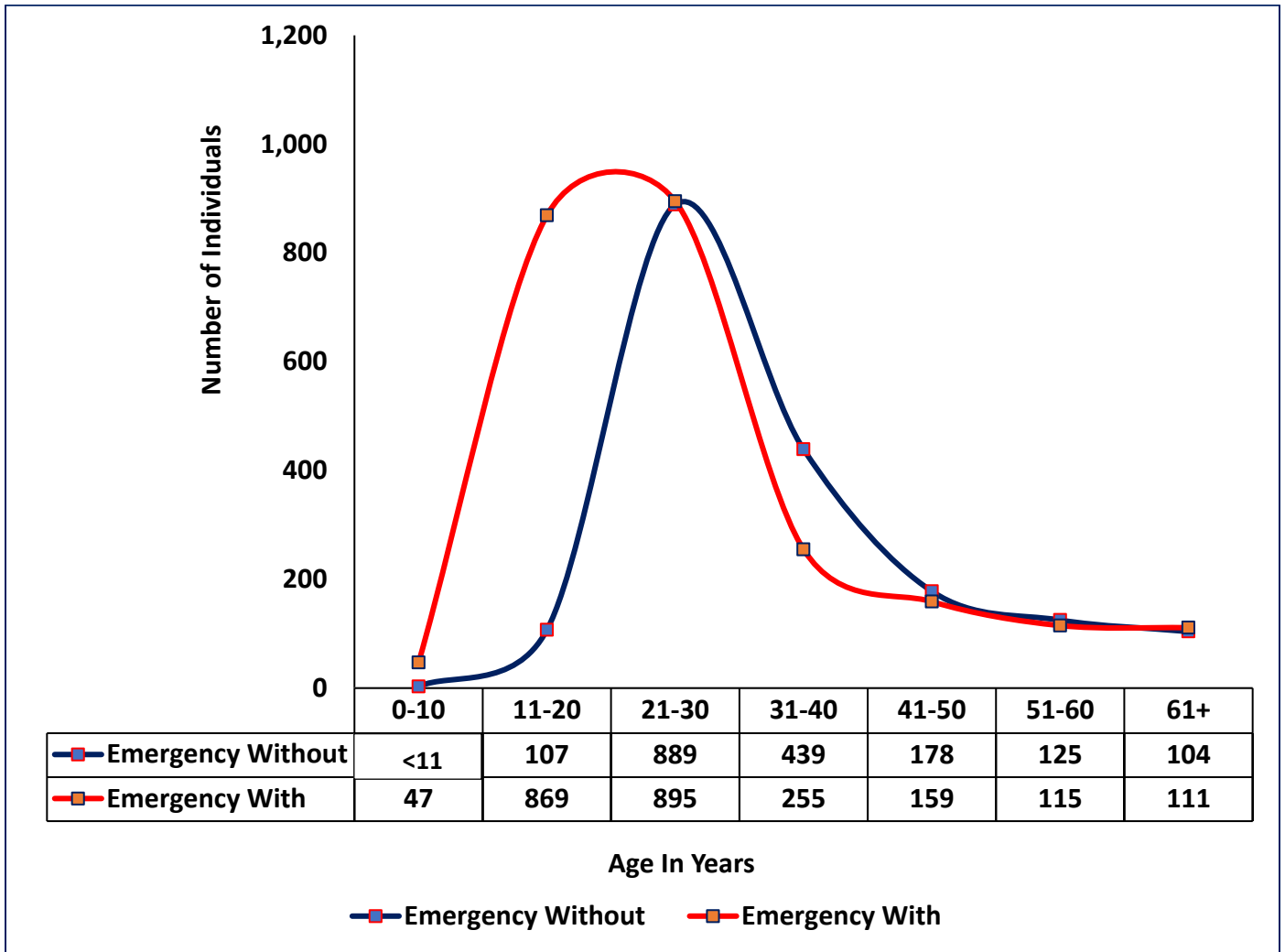
Note: Data greater than zero and less than 11 is not shown in the table for privacy purposes.

Figure 13: All Individuals on Waiting List by Need Category & Age



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Figure 14: All Individuals on Waiting List in Emergency Need Category, by Age & Served Status

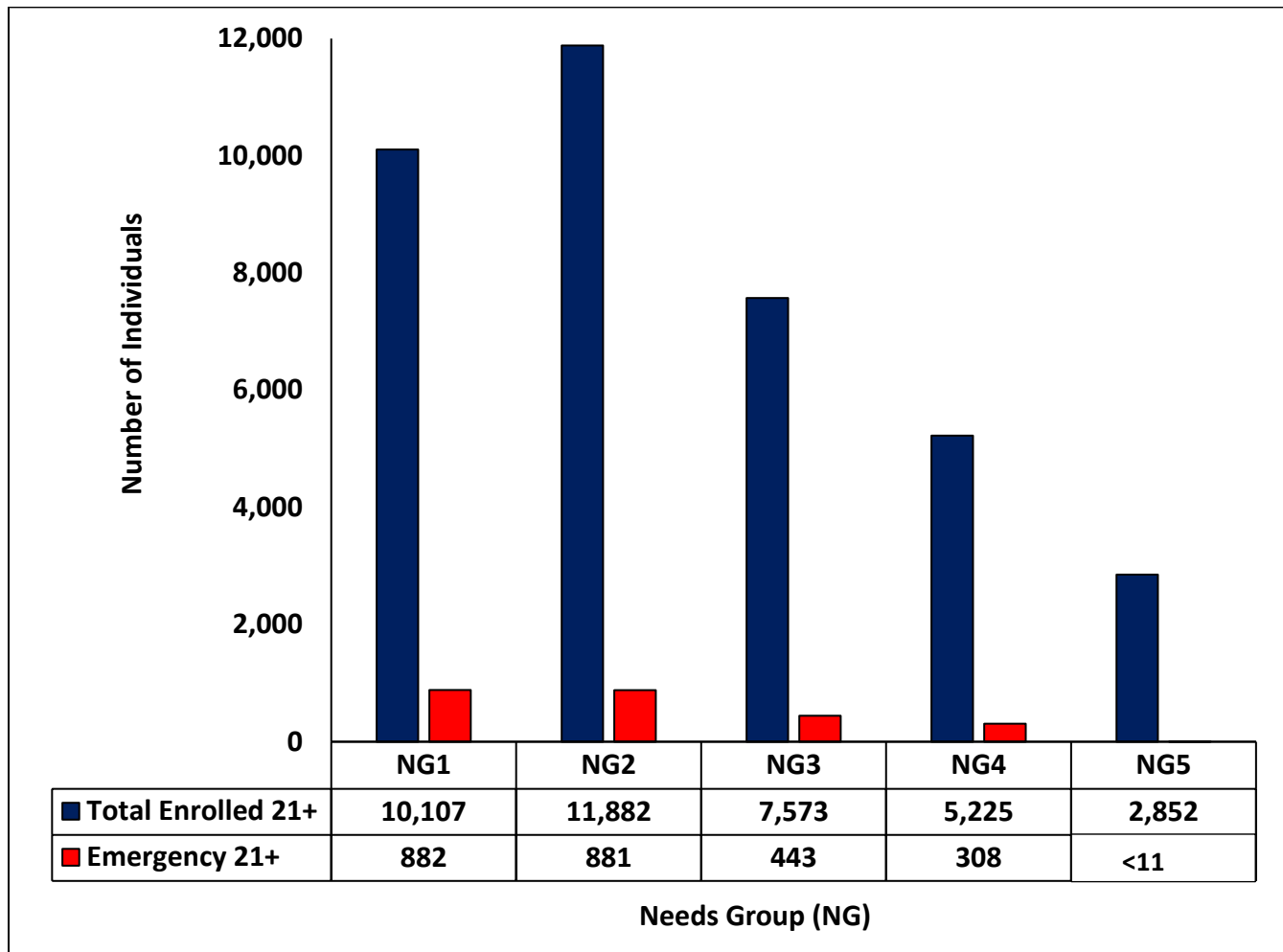


Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Note: Emergency “With” is defined as individuals with completed PUNS, who received non-case management services, within the 12-month period, prior to the PUNS Snapshot date.

Emergency “Without” is defined as the remaining individuals with completed PUNS, not under the “With” category.

Figure 15: Individuals Ages 21+ Enrolled in ID/A HCBS Waivers and Individuals in Emergency Category Ages 21+, by Needs Group



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Note: Needs Groups reflect increasing levels of overall intensity of support needed, from minimal assistance to continuous, comprehensive care. See the reference table on the next page for more details.

Needs Group	Level of Support Needed	Description
1	Minimal	Independent in most areas; needs occasional prompting or guidance for complex tasks.
2	Low	Generally independent but requires regular support for planning, organization, and some daily living tasks.
3	Moderate	Needs consistent support with daily activities (e.g., cooking, money management) and social decision-making.
4	Moderate – High	Requires daily supervision and hands-on assistance; may have behavioral or health-related needs.
5	High	Significant support required across most areas of life; frequent supervision and structured environments needed.
6	Very High	Extensive, ongoing support with most daily activities; may include complex medical or behavioral needs.
7	Highest/Intensive	Requires constant (24/7) supervision and comprehensive support due to significant medical, behavioral, and functional challenges.

Figure 16: Individuals Ages 21+ on Waiting list by Need Category & Race

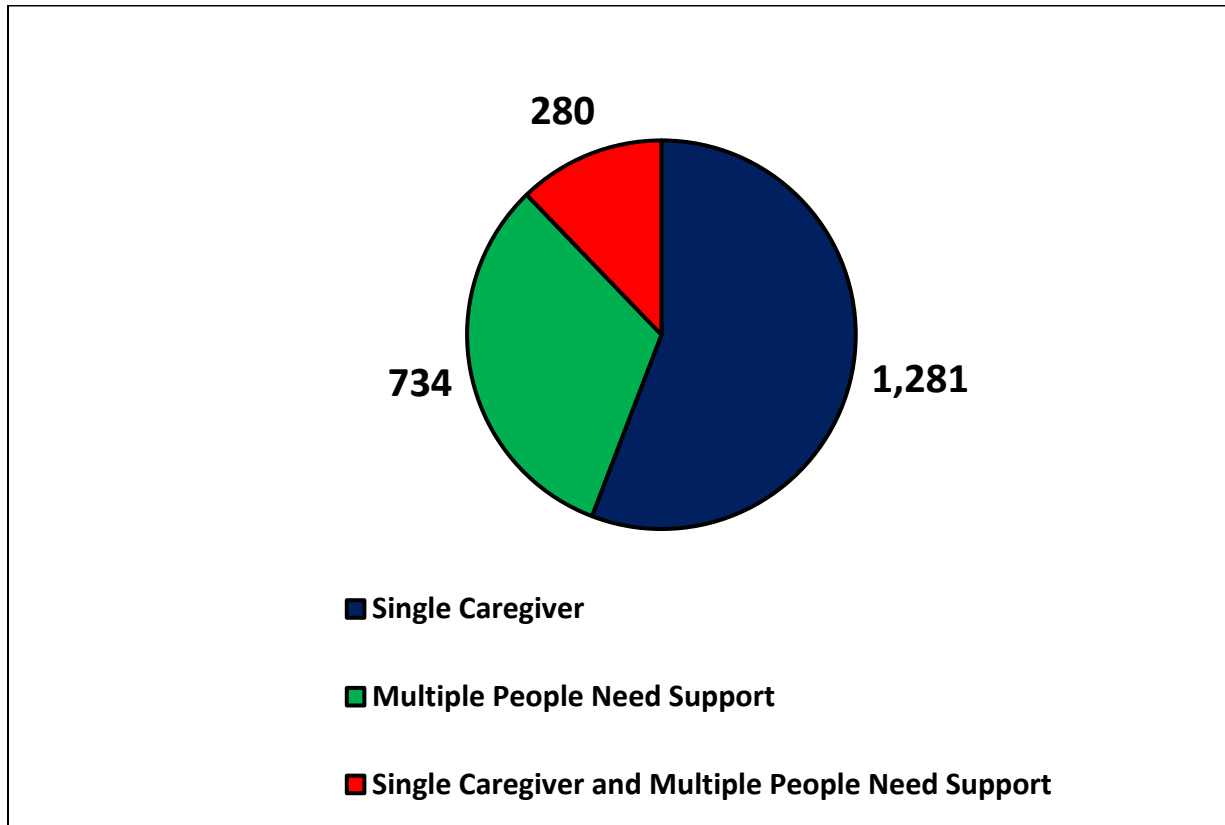
Race	Emergency		Critical	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
American Indian Or Alaskan Native	<11	0.2%	<11	0.3%
Asian	63	2%	62	2%
Black Or African American	596	19%	460	15%
Multiracial	14	0.4%	13	0.4%
Native Hawaiian Or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	<11	0%
Other	237	7%	211	7%
Unknown	21	1%	24	1%
White	2,269	71%	2,265	74%

Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Note: Data greater than zero and less than 11 is not shown in the table for privacy purposes.

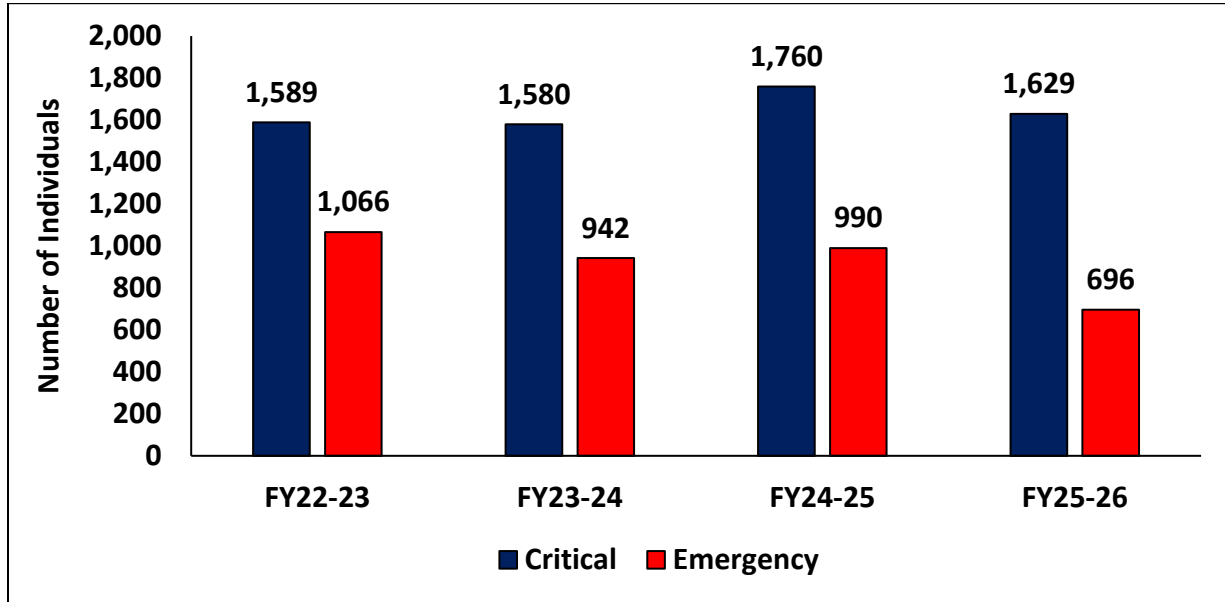
Individuals on the Waiting List & Their Caregivers

Figure 17: Individuals of All Ages, in Emergency PUNS Category, in Homes with a Single Caregiver, or with Multiple People Needing Support, or with a Single Caregiver and with Multiple People Needing Support



Source: HCSIS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Figure 18: Individuals Statewide with Caregiver Age 60+, by Need Category



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Note: FY25-26 data in this graph is YTD as of 12/31/2025. It is not a complete year of data.

Figure 19 Individuals with Caregiver Age 60+ by Program Enrollment & Need Category

Program Enrolled	Emergency		Critical	
	Number of Individuals	% In State	Number of Individuals	% In State
Base	138	8%	53	8%
Community Living Waiver	389	24%	210	30%
P/FDS Waiver	573	35%	185	27%
Private ICF/ID	0	0	<11	--
SC Services Only	529	32%	245	35%

Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Note: Data greater than zero and less than 11 is not shown in the table for privacy purposes.

Figure 20: Individuals with Caregivers Age 60+, Newly Enrolled from PUNS Category into All Waivers

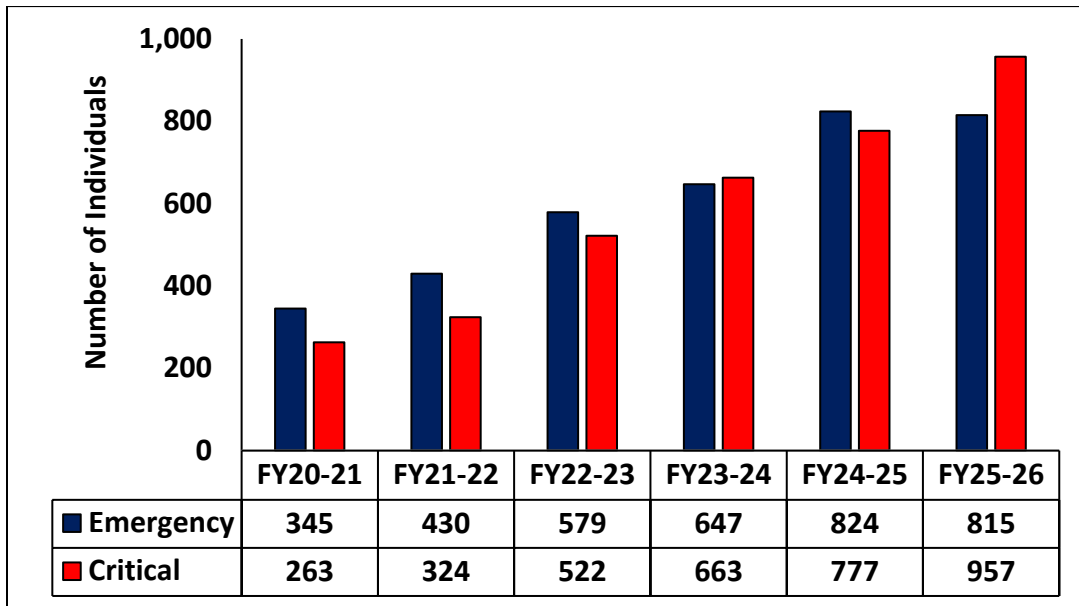
Emergency	FY21-22	373	FY22-23	409	FY23-24	671	FY24-25	531
Critical	FY21-22	44	FY22-23	66	FY23-24	85	FY24-25	57

Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 12/31/2025

Autism-Only Level of Care (LOC) Determination

This chart shows statewide totals for individuals on the waiting list with a LOC determination of “Individuals with Other Related Condition (ORC) related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)” by Emergency and Critical PUNS needs categories. These individuals do not have a co-occurring ID diagnosis.

Figure 21: Individuals on Waiting List with Autism Only, by Needs Category



Source: HCSIS/PUNS Snapshot Date: 02/05/2026

The Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) “interest list” was established at the launch of the waiver in 2010 and it prioritized enrollment for the AAW on a first-come, first-served basis. Beginning in July 2017, the ODP ID/A waivers (Consolidated, P/FDS and in 2018 Community Living) included “autism only,” as an eligibility category. This eligibility expansion meant that individuals with ASD only, of any age, who met LOC requirements, could receive targeted supports management, and be enrolled in an ODP ID/A waiver as capacity becomes available.

In December 2019, ODP began transitioning the 2,228 individuals on the AAW interest list to ODP’s waiting list, so that eligible individuals could be assessed for their urgency of need and prioritized accordingly for waiver enrollment. Since December 2019, 1,982 individuals have been either enrolled into an ODP or OLTL home and community-based waiver, were no longer interested, did not complete intake by the required deadline, or no longer met the eligibility requirements. Of the remaining individuals, 246 have had their eligibility determined by the county and were placed on the ODP waiting list.