

*Supports Intensity
Scale^{TM1} (SISTM) and
PA Plus Users Manual*

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Public Welfare
Office of Developmental Programs

Table of Contents

Item	Page Number
I. Purpose of the <i>SIS and PA Plus Users Manual</i>	3
II. What are the SIS and PA Plus?	3
III. Administration of the SIS and PA Plus	4
IV. Who is a Respondent?	4
V. Who Will Receive an Assessment?	5
VI. Identifying Participants	6
VII. Scheduling Assessments	6
VIII. Failure to Schedule	7
IX. The Assessment Meeting	7
X. After the Meeting	8
XI. How Will the Assessment Be Used?	8
XII. Annual Review	9
XIII. Roles and Responsibilities	10
A. Individual and Family Role and Responsibilities	10
B. Supports Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities	11
C. Supports Coordination Organization Roles and Responsibilities	12
D. Provider Roles and Responsibilities	12
E. Administrative Organization (AE) Roles and Responsibilities	13
F. SIS and PA Plus Vendor Roles and Responsibilities	13
G. ODP Roles and Responsibilities	14
XIV. Urgent Request	14
XV. What Happens If There Is Disagreement?	15
XVI. Glossary of Terms	15
XVII. ODP Contact Information	17

I. Purpose of the SIS and the PA Plus Users Manual

The purpose of this manual is to outline requirements related to:

- The rollout and implementation of the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and Pennsylvania (PA) Plus as the Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP) standardized needs assessment (herein referred to as the 'assessment' or the 'SIS and PA Plus') for Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support Waiver (herein referred to as the 'Waivers') participants; and
- The utilization of the assessment information in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) process.

The assessment has been designed to gather information about the support needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The assessment reflects a way of thinking that helps us to understand what supports an individual needs in order to have an *Everyday Life* rather than evaluating deficits in skills. By having one needs assessment for all Waiver participants, the consistency and equity of the service system will be enhanced. Having a common structure promotes consistency and accountability for all stakeholders.

II. What are the SIS and PA Plus?

The SIS is a reliable and valid support needs assessment developed and copyrighted by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) formerly known as the American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR). In addition, the Supports Intensity Scale and SIS are registered trademarks of AAIDD. The SIS can be used for individuals ages 16-72 and focuses on the level of support needed by an individual rather than evaluating deficits in the individual's skills. AAIDD has not yet developed a tool for persons under age 16 or over age 72; however, once the tool is developed, ODP anticipates its use. Topics included in the SIS that are covered during the interview include home living, community living, lifelong learning, employment, health and safety, social activities, protection and advocacy, exceptional medical and behavioral support needs, communication, and assistive technology.

The PA Plus, a separate set of additional questions developed by ODP, is administered with the SIS to provide information not included in the SIS. Some of the areas covered in the PA Plus include vision, hearing, ambulation, communication, assistive technology, and safety.

In Pennsylvania, the SIS and PA Plus are used together to evaluate the support needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

The SIS and PA Plus are not routinely used as an annual assessment. The assessment will generally be current for three years. For example, an initial assessment conducted in March 2008 must be reviewed for accuracy by the ISP team in March 2009 and 2010. Using this example, the next full assessment will occur in March 2011. This three-year time frame will capture changes in support need without unnecessarily exhausting resources. ODP recognizes the time and effort of all stakeholders involved in this

process and has crafted these time frames to be respectful of this effort without compromising the purpose and integrity of the process. If a change in support level is experienced prior to the third year, an updated assessment should be requested (see the Annual Review section).

Additional information about SIS and PA Plus is available through Administrative Entities (AE) and Supports Coordination Organizations. You can also call ODPs Customer Service Line at 1-888-565-9435. More information about the Supports Intensity Scale can be found on AAIDDs SIS website (www.siswebsite.org), the ODPs Consulting System's website (www.odpconsulting.net), and through the Training Partnership website (www.TheTrainingPartnership.org).

III. Administration of the SIS and the PA Plus

ODP contracts with AAIDD for the use of the SIS and with an independent vendor to administer the SIS and PA Plus. The vendor and all interviewers working for the vendor must be conflict-free and may not be members of the ISP team. ODP only recognizes the SIS and PA Plus assessment conducted by its independent vendor as an acceptable support needs assessment. Individuals employed by the independent vendor to administer the SIS and PA Plus are known as interviewers or assessors. ODP and AAIDD require that all interviewers have at least a four-year degree and several years of direct work experience with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The selected vendor may specify additional employment requirements.

In order for the assessment to be independent and conflict-free, ODP contracted with an Organization that is not a service or non-service provider of mental retardation services in PA. A non-service provider is an organization that does not provide direct services to the mental retardation system (for example: Independent Monitoring Programs and Health Care Quality Units). Interviewers cannot evaluate members of their own families or those individuals with whom they have a personal or professional relationship. Interviewers cannot evaluate any individual supported by a provider agency, AE or Supports Coordination Organization with which the interviewer is currently employed or has been employed within the last calendar year (365 days).

All interviewers are required to complete ODP and AAIDD training. The ODP training will be specific to the Pennsylvania Service Delivery System (including but not limited to *Everyday Lives*, mental retardation system basics, ODP Medicaid Waivers, ISPs and PA Plus). The AAIDD training will be specific to the SIS instrument and the administration of the SIS instrument in a manner that is reliable and valid.

IV. Who is a Respondent?

In keeping with AAIDDs recommended protocol, a respondent is a person who answers questions and provides information about the individual being assessed during the interview. The respondent must know the individual for at least three months, have direct knowledge about the individual, and be someone (for example, family, friends,

direct support professionals) who can communicate about the individual's support needs and intimate details of a individual's life.

The assessment requires a minimum of two respondents be interviewed. The respondents must meet the aforementioned requirements and be able to provide the best sources of information to assist in completing the most accurate assessment possible. There is not a maximum number of respondents, but size of the group should be considered in order to efficiently complete the interview. The individual chooses whether or not to participate as a respondent. If the individual chooses not to participate or cannot fully participate, then at least two other respondents must be selected. The selection of other respondents must involve collaboration between the individual, his or her family, guardian, or legal representative. If the individual is unable and does not have family available to make this decision, the Supports Coordinator (SC) will enlist the help of the ISP team to choose respondents.

People should be invited as respondents who know about the individual in their various life activities and throughout their daily routine. As a group, the respondents should be able to communicate about the individual in all areas of his or her life. It is okay if a respondent only knows about one part of the individual's life as long as the entire group of respondents can provide the full view of the individual. For example, the group of respondents may include someone who knows the individual at home, at work or day activity, school or volunteer location, and in the community.

V. Who Will Receive an Assessment?

ODP has adopted the SIS and PA Plus as the standardized needs assessment for all Waiver participants. As such, it will replace the current needs assessments conducted by AEs for **participants in the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers.**

According to the current multi-year rollout strategy, all new Waiver participants and some current Waiver participants will begin receiving assessments in the first year. In accordance with Federal Waiver requirements and the AE Operating Agreement, the assessment must occur prior to the initial Waiver service implementation for new Waiver participants. Thus, AEs must give new Waiver participants first priority in determining who will receive an assessment each month.

AEs will continue their current assessment practices for Waiver participants until they have been identified through the aforementioned strategy to receive an initial SIS and PA Plus.

There is also an urgent request process. These assessments will be allocated by ODP above and beyond the normal planned number of assessments. Please see the Urgent Request Process section for additional information.

AEs and County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Programs should continue using their current assessment practices for individuals under age 16 and over age 72 and for non-Waiver participants. Non-Waiver participants include:

- Individuals who only receive base-funded services.
- Individuals who are on the waiting list and are not planned for Waiver enrollment in the current fiscal year.
- Individuals served in public and private Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation (ICFs/MR).

VI. Identifying Participants

ODP will work with the AEs to determine the Waiver participants who will receive the assessment in a given month. New Waiver participants must be given priority.

The number of individuals identified from each AE to receive an assessment will be based on the total number of Waiver enrollees with the AE.

These numbers will be broken down by month and sent to each AEs specified designee via secure email. AEs will then be responsible to verify individuals to receive assessments each month. This gives AEs an opportunity to make changes and substitutions to ensure valid and current information for each Waiver participant.

Benefits of starting with new enrollees:

- Information gathered during the assessment process will be helpful in the development of the initial ISP and subsequent ISPs.
- Individuals who are new to the Waiver will not have to experience different processes. They will only know the new assessment process and will not have to become accustomed to the old process and then switch to a new process.

For current Waiver participants, AEs should coordinate the timing of the initial assessment to correspond with an individual's ISP review date in order to inform the development of the ISP. Subsequent assessments will occur every three years unless there is a significant change in the individual's support needs. (See Urgent Request Process).

VII. Scheduling Assessments

ODP Central Office will provide the names to the vendor electronically via secure email. The vendor will have access to basic demographic information in the Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS), but will not have access to other parts of HCSIS in order to maintain confidentiality. AEs will identify a Point Person for each SC Organization who will be the vendor's contact for scheduling. The vendor will then inform each SC Organization's Point Person of the Waiver participants identified to receive an assessment.

Acknowledging the relationship between the SC and the individual or family, it is the SCs responsibility to introduce the SIS and PA Plus process to individuals, families, and providers. The SC should also make introductory contacts with provider agencies. In addition, the SC should provide the assessment fact sheet to the individual, family, and

providers to help them understand their roles in the SIS and PA Plus process and the next steps.

Prior to scheduling the assessment, it may be necessary for the SC to support individuals and families in the identification of respondents (those people who know the individual and could provide the best possible information for the assessment). If the individual or family cannot identify the best respondents, the SC will enlist the individual's ISP team to support the identification of respondents.

The vendor will schedule the assessment meeting, confirm the respondent(s) with the individual and family, and document this confirmation. The interview may take anywhere from 1 ½ to 3 hours depending on the individual and the number of respondents. The PA Plus portion of the interview will take an additional 15-30 minutes to answer those questions.

VIII. Failure to Schedule

All Waiver participants must receive a standardized needs assessment as per Federal Waiver requirements, the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers, and ODP Policy.

An individual's refusal to participate should be communicated to the SC and to the vendor. If the failure to schedule is due to uncooperative actions of the participant, such as repeated cancellations or no shows, this will be considered as a refusal to participate.

In order to prevent termination from Waiver-funded services, reconciliation efforts must be initiated and documented through the AE, SC Organization, and, if necessary, through ODP designees. Limited attempts to address the reason for the refusal will be made to include personal contact, phone calls, and letters to the Waiver participant.

ODP will make the final determination as to whether the number of cancellations and the circumstances around those cancellations is a valid reason to terminate Waiver services.

IX. The Assessment Meeting

The meeting shall be scheduled at a time and place preferred by the individual and family within the month specified by ODP or within 30 calendar days of the scheduling contact. This may include but is not limited to the individual's home, his or her day service provider, or the home of a family member or friend. If the individual has chosen not to personally participate in the assessment meeting, the respondents may choose the meeting location.

The vendor will begin the interview with an introduction to the assessment process and explain how the SIS and PA Plus are administered. The introduction is designed to provide all respondents with basic information so that they can participate meaningfully in the assessment process.

The SIS and PA Plus will be administered separately, but at the same meeting. The SIS will be completed first, followed by the PA Plus. The same respondents will provide the information needed for both components of the assessment. It is preferred that all respondents attend one meeting to complete the assessment. If this is not possible due to scheduling conflicts, the vendor may interview respondents separately and then develop the final assessment results. If requested by the respondents due to scheduling difficulties, the interview may also be conducted by phone. As the vendor is conducting the interview, the assessment information will be captured on paper.

X. After the Meeting

The vendor will conclude the interview by providing the respondents with a Customer Satisfaction Survey to be returned to the vendor in a postage-paid envelope. The survey will provide valuable feedback on the assessment experience from the respondents' perspective. The vendor will provide unedited results of the survey to ODP.

Information gathered in the SIS during the interview must be entered by the vendor in HCSIS within 7 calendar days of the assessment. The information entered in HCSIS will include the date that the assessment was completed, the assessment results, and the interviewer's notes and summary. The assessment must be finalized in HCSIS within 21 calendar days from the date of the assessment. Once the assessment is finalized in HCSIS, it can be viewed by the SC, AE, and ODP through HCSIS. Prior to the availability of the assessment in HCSIS, a copy of the hand-written assessment can be requested by the individual, family, SC, or SC Organization Point Person. If requested, the vendor must provide a copy within 7 calendar days from the date of the request.

The information obtained through the PA Plus will be maintained by the vendor in a secure database outside of HCSIS until screens are available in HCSIS to input the data.

The vendor is also required to report any person-specific concerns related to an individual's health, safety, and welfare to the AE and through ODPs Customer Service Line. Response to calls from the vendor on the Customer Service Line will follow the established ODP protocol.

XI. How will the Assessment be Used?

A central concept of the SIS is the intensity of support an individual would need to "be successful" at any given task in the general life areas that are identified in the SIS. The SIS measures the type of support, the daily support time, and the frequency of the support needed to engage in the activity or task being measured. The PA Plus asks additional questions about capacities and supports not captured in the SIS.

It is important to note that although activities are scored in the SIS and PA Plus, the scores will not drive the development of the ISP. The assessment will not give information about how the needed supports will be provided. The assessment will,

however, be utilized to develop the initial and subsequent ISPs. The ISP team will prioritize and determine how supports will be provided utilizing all available information. It is recommended that the assessment respondents be included in the ISP team so that the needs captured in the assessment are appropriately addressed in the ISP.

Person-centered approaches are crucial to the foundation of the planning process and in identifying outcomes. SIS and PA Plus do not identify hopes, dreams, desires, or outcomes. The information gathered will be used to guide the team about the support an individual may need to keep them healthy and safe, to achieve personal outcomes, and to have an everyday life.

The SIS and PA Plus is ODPs standardized needs assessment. Per Federal Waiver requirements, the ISP must address all assessed needs. The ISP must be inclusive of all the services and supports that an individual receives and how those needs are addressed whether by the individual, family, community supports, natural support, paid or non-paid supports.

Other assessments might be utilized based on an individual's unique needs that may complement the SIS and PA Plus as part of the information gathering process. Information gathering includes the identification, coordination, and collection of individual-specific information, such as formal and informal assessments, communication and learning styles, social and emotional information, medical and development information, Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) considerations, Health Risk Profiles, incident management information, provider assessments, etc.

Depending on the assessed needs and the team discussion, addressing the needs can be incorporated in many different places in the ISP. For example, how assessed needs are addressed could appear in the following sections of the ISP: Know & Do, Understanding Communication, Health Promotions, What Makes Sense, Behavior Support, Physical Assessment, etc.

The information gathered from the SIS and PA Plus will not be used to diagnose disabilities or evaluate eligibility for mental retardation services and supports. The SIS and PA Plus will not produce or be used in a formula to produce a budget amount. The assessment will not be utilized as the sole basis for determining services and supports to an individual.

XII. Annual Review

A new assessment will be required at least once every three years for all Waiver participants, provided that a change in the level of support is not determined. The ISP team will review the ISP and SIS and PA Plus assessment at least annually to determine if there has been a significant change in the support needs of the individual since the last assessment. The review of the assessment should take place prior to the ISP Annual Review meeting. If there has been a significant change respective to the level of support, a new assessment must be conducted. The SC must document this review in Service Notes and state if a reassessment is needed. If a new assessment is

needed, it should be conducted prior to the Annual Review meeting so the ISP team can consider the results in updating the ISP.

A significant change is any major change in a individual's life that has a lasting impact on his or her support needs, is anticipated to last more than six months, and makes his or her SIS and PA Plus inaccurate and no longer current. Types of changes that may be considered include health status, behavioral issues, skills and ability, or availability of technology. These are changes that the individual experiences that may cause the individual's support needs to increase or decrease. For example, an individual could have a change in their medical condition that requires more intensive supports. Or an individual could get new assistive technology and, therefore, have less intense support needs than before acquiring the new technology.

The ISP team reviews the current assessment prior to the annual review and answers the following question: "Has there been anything that happened in this individual's life during the past 12 months that would make his or her SIS and PA Plus inaccurate?"

If the answer is yes and there has been a change, then a new SIS and PA Plus should be requested. The SC will request a new assessment through the AE. The AE will determine if the assessment should be requested through the regular scheduling process or through the urgent request process.

If an individual's support needs have remained stable, then there is no need to do a new SIS and PA Plus.

In emergency situations, AEs should not wait for an assessment to begin changing the individual's supports and services to meet his or her new needs. For example, if someone experiences a physical or mental health crisis and needs immediate support, this support should be provided regardless of whether or not a new SIS and PA Plus has been conducted. The ISP team should make the necessary changes to the ISP, but should still request a reassessment for this individual. The results of the reassessment must then be used to validate the updated ISP to ensure it is based on assessed needs. Again, the intent of the SIS and PA Plus is not to delay services to individuals, but to assist in ISP development.

XIII. Roles and Responsibilities

The following section will identify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in this process, including ODP, AEs, individuals receiving services and family members, persons supporting the individual, SCs, providers, and the assessment vendor. All stakeholders involved in this process must ensure confidentiality and assure the confidentiality of protected health information as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996.

A. Individual and Family Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals enrolled in the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers must have an assessment completed in accordance with Waiver requirements to identify

the level of services and supports needed. Waiver participants are responsible to:

1. Collaborate with the vendor at the time of scheduling.
2. Identify the respondents.
3. Provide accurate and detailed information during the assessment interview.
4. Participate in the use of the information in ISP planning and implementation through the team process.
5. Communicate to the SC any significant change in an individual's support needs as may result in a reassessment.
6. Participate as part of the ISP team in the review of the assessment at least annually to determine if it is current and accurate.

B. Supports Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

The SC may or may not be a respondent for the assessment, but it is ODPs expectation that the SC attend the assessment meeting. The role of the SC is to use the information gained from the assessment in the development of the ISP. The SC is responsible to:

1. Introduce the SIS and PA Plus process to individuals, families, and providers through discussion and distribution of the ODPs SIS and PA Plus Fact sheet.
2. Support individuals, families, and providers with identifying respondents and provide contact information for the respondents.
3. Enlist input from the individual's team regarding respondents, if the individual and family or both are unable to identify respondents.
4. Assist with coordinating the scheduling of the assessment as appropriate.
5. Share information with the vendor that will assist with the scheduling of the assessment.
6. Identify and share with the vendor any specialized supports necessary for a successful interview process, such as situational sensitivities or the need for a translator.
7. Attend the assessment meeting, if participating as a respondent, to provide information regarding the individual's support needs and glean information that is useful for the ISP process.
8. Attend the assessment meeting to observe and learn more about the individual if not identified as a respondent and to glean information that is useful for the development of the ISP.
9. Capture all SC related activities to the assessment in service notes (for example, initial contact with the individual and family, contact with vendor, scheduling, attendance in meeting).
10. Provide copies of the finalized assessment to the ISP team for reference during the ISP meeting.
11. Ensure the information from the assessment is utilized in the ISP team process.

12. Initiate a request for a new assessment through ODPs urgent request process if the individual experiences a significant life change.
13. Ensure that the individual or family receives a copy of the finalized assessment, if requested.
14. Ensure advocates for Pennhurst class members receive a copy of the finalized assessment.

C. Supports Coordination Organization Roles and Responsibilities

The SC Organization will oversee and support the responsibilities of supports coordination in the assessment process. The SC Organization will be responsible to:

1. Ensure SCs and SC Supervisors are appropriately trained to support the assessment process.
2. Identify the SC Organization Point Person regarding coordination of scheduling the assessment.
3. Assist the SC with communication to individuals, families, providers, and the vendor prior to and after the assessment, as necessary.
4. Review ISPs to promote maximum use of the assessment in the ISP Process.
5. Review and evaluate requests from SCs for reassessments and urgent requests.
6. Track timelines for annual reviews and urgent requests of SIS and PA Plus assessments.
7. Assure requested copies of the assessment are received by the individual or family upon request.
8. Ensure advocates of Pennhurst class members receive a copy of the finalized assessment.

D. Provider Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Provider is to assist individuals receiving Waiver services in the assessment process. The Provider is responsible to:

1. Provide supports, if necessary, to individuals to participate in the assessment.
2. Collaborate with SCs, SC Organizations, and the vendor specific to issues relating to scheduling or rescheduling and the identification of respondents.
3. Provide information about the individual's support needs if identified as a respondent.
4. Communicate to the SC any significant change in the individual's support needs.
5. Participate in the use of the information in ISP planning and implementation through the ISP team process.
6. Participate as part of the ISP team in the annual review of the assessment.

E. AE Roles and Responsibilities

As per the AE Operating Agreement and Waiver requirements, AEs must ensure that all Waiver participants have a standardized needs assessment. The AE is responsible to:

1. Share information regarding the assessment process with individuals and families, advocacy organizations, Supports Coordinators, Support Coordination Organizations, providers, and stakeholders, including Bulletin 00-07-02 entitled "*Overview of the Supports Intensity Scale® and the PA Plus*", and ODPs "SIS© Fact Sheet".
2. Verify demographic information on all Waiver participant names provided by ODP.
3. Identify individuals to receive assessments and send information to ODP Regional Office.
4. Collaborate with SCs, SC Organizations, and the vendor specific to issues relating to scheduling or rescheduling.
5. Notify ODP Central Office of all refusals to participate. AEs must include information regarding their attempt to resolve this issue.
6. Ensure that services provided through the Waiver are based on assessed needs and the individual's ISP.
7. Initiate the urgent request process with ODP, if appropriate.

F. SIS and PA Plus Vendor Roles and Responsibilities

The Vendor is an impartial, unbiased organization whose role is to complete the assessment. The Vendor's roles and responsibilities are outlined in its contract with ODP. Some of the vendor's key functions are to:

1. Ensure that all interviewers complete the required AAIDD training and ODP-specific training prior to conducting assessments.
2. Initiate the scheduling process.
3. Contact the individual, family, and all of the respondents to schedule the assessment.
4. Confirm the respondents with the individual and family and to document this confirmation.
5. Capture information in the notes taken at the time of the assessment meeting in order to provide SCs with rich detail regarding the needs of the individual.
6. Provide interpreters, as needed, to promote full participation from all respondents.
7. Enter the information gathered from the assessment into HCSIS within 7 calendar days of the assessment.
8. Finalize the information entered in HCSIS within 21 calendar days from the date of the assessment.

9. Report any person-specific health and safety concerns to the AE and to ODP's Customer Service Line
10. Ensure confidentiality of personal information.
11. Make necessary accommodations for cultural and physical needs.

G. ODP Roles and Responsibilities

As the State Medicaid Agency for the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers, ODP retains authority over the administration and implementation of the Waivers. ODP is responsible to:

1. Provide AEs with the number of Waiver participants to receive assessments.
2. Provide names to the Vendor upon validation from the AE.
3. Monitor AEs in accordance with the AE Operating Agreement to ensure that all Waiver participants have a completed assessment and that services provided through the Waivers are based on assessed needs and the ISPs of the individuals.
4. Provide training and up-to-date information to all stakeholders regarding the SIS and PA Plus.
5. Provide training and up-to-date information to the vendor on the Pennsylvania Developmental Programs System including but not limited to *Everyday Lives* and ISP development.
6. Conduct oversight and monitoring of the vendor to ensure contract compliance.
7. Monitor the vendor to ensure reliability and validity of the assessment.
8. Manage the urgent request process.

XIV. Urgent Request

The urgent request process will be managed by ODP Central Office and is a process used to request a new (initial) assessment or a reassessment. Although the process will be managed by ODP Central Office, the request must come through the appropriate Regional Office.

This process is used if the change in the individual's support needs is unplanned and time sensitive. If a new SIS and PA Plus assessment is needed immediately and cannot wait to be scheduled through the regular scheduling process, the AE Administrator or Director, ODP Regional Program Manager, ODP Bureau Director, or their designees can initiate the urgent request process. It is anticipated that only a small number of assessments will be scheduled through the urgent request process.

AEs must decide whether to use the regular AE scheduling process or the urgent request process. The urgent request process can be used for arranging new (initial) assessments and reassessments. Requests for assessments made through the urgent request process are not linked to funding. If additional funding is needed, a request for funding should be made through the Individual Emergency Status Form (IESF) process as per the AE Operating Agreement.

ODP will make the final determination on all urgent requests. Requests will be granted based on the need for the assessment as determined by ODP, based on information provided by the AE and the capacity of the vendor to conduct the assessments. As a result, some requests may not be granted.

If ODP determines that a new assessment is needed, ODP will contact the vendor to request an assessment be completed. The Vendor must complete urgent assessments within 30 calendar days of ODP's request. The maximum timeline for completion of the assessment requested through the urgent request process is 45 calendar days from initiation of the request.

XV. What Happens If There Is A Disagreement?

Interviewers will be trained by AAIDD in how to reconcile responses and determine scores if respondents provide conflicting information. At the assessment meeting, the interviewers will explore why these differences of opinion are occurring and encourage consensus. The interviewer will capture these differences in the notes that accompany the assessment results when they are shared with the individual, family, and SC.

In the situation where either the respondents are not interviewed at the same time or there is a conflict of opinions, the interviewer will be responsible to use their training and professional judgment in determining the assessment results. Assessment results are determined by compiling all the information that is shared and discussed during the meeting.

The SIS and PA Plus assessment results cannot be appealed through the Department's Fair Hearings and Appeals process. In accordance with Federal Waiver requirements, Waiver participants retain the right to appeal through the Fair Hearing and Appeals Process if a service is reduced, terminated, denied, or suspended. See Bulletin 00-08-05 entitled "*Due Process and Fair Hearing Procedures for Individuals with Mental Retardation*" for more information.

XVI. Glossary of Terms

AAIDD – The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (formerly American Association on Mental Retardation – AAMR). AAIDD developed the Supports Intensity Scale.

CMS - The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is the agency within the Department of Health and Human Services that is responsible for federal administration of the Medicaid, Medicare, and State Children's Health Insurance Programs.

Interviewer or Assessor – The interviewer or assessor is employed by the Vendor and is responsible for asking questions and documenting responses on the SIS.

Individual Support Plan – The Individual Support Plan (ISP) is a plan of care for each individual developed with the individual and the people they choose. The ISP must

include, at minimum, the estimated duration and frequency of each funded service and the type of provider to furnish each funded service necessary to meet the needs of the individual, as identified through the statewide assessment instrument and the planning process.

ODPs Customer Service Line (888 Line) – 1-888-565-9435. ODPs telephone number is dedicated to the Customer Service needs of its stakeholders.

Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) – The Office of Developmental Programs is the Pennsylvania entity responsible for administering the statewide mental retardation and autism service systems.

New Waiver Participant – An individual who has applied for a Medicaid Waiver and has been notified that funding is available to enroll the individual in a Medicaid Waiver.

PA Plus – A set of questions added to SIS in Pennsylvania. The PA Plus provides additional planning information not covered in the SIS (for example, vision, hearing, ambulation, communication, assistive technology, and safety information).

Person-Specific Concern – Any identified or suspected health and welfare concern for an individual.

Respondent – A person who knows the individual for at least 3 months and who can answer questions and provide information about the individual being assessed during the interview. The respondent must be knowledgeable of and able to talk about the individual's needs. The respondent must be someone who feels comfortable talking about intimate details of an individual's life and support needs.

Significant Life Change – A Significant Life Change is any major change in an individual's life that has a lasting impact on his or her support needs. A significant life change is a change in an individual's support needs that is anticipated to last more than six months and causes his or her SIS and PA Plus results to be inaccurate and no longer current. Types of changes that may be considered include health status, behavioral issues, skills and ability, and availability of technology. These are changes in an individual's life that may cause the individual's support needs to increase or decrease.

Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) – The Supports Intensity Scale was developed by AAIDD as a standardized needs assessment that focuses on the level of support needed by an individual, not deficits in skills. The SIS was designed to measure frequency, intensity, and type of supports an adult with developmental disabilities needs to be successful in a variety of life activities.

To Be Successful – “Successful engagement” in an activity entails a level of performance, involvement, and participation in an activity that is comparable to that of a typically functioning adult without disabilities. (Taken from AAIDD, Supports Intensity Scale, Training for SIS Administrators, 2006)

Urgent Requests - A process used to request a new (initial) assessment or a reassessment. This process is used if the change in the individual's support needs is unplanned and time sensitive. If a new SIS and PA Plus assessment is needed now and cannot wait to be scheduled through the regular scheduling process, the AE Administrator or Director, ODP Regional Program Manager, ODP Bureau Director, or their designees can initiate the urgent request process. The urgent request process is managed by ODP Central Office. It is anticipated that only a small number of assessments will be scheduled through the urgent request process.

Vendor – The independent Organization contracted by ODP to administer the SIS and PA Plus in Pennsylvania.

XVII. ODP Contact Information

ODP Customer Service	(888) 565-9435
Central Regional Office	(717) 772-6507
Northeast Regional Office	(570) 963-4391
Southeast Regional Office	(215) 560-2245
Western Regional Office	(412) 565-5144