



The Individual and Family Support Program

Funding Guidelines

These annual guidelines are developed in collaboration with the IFSP State Council and published in accordance with regulation, Operation of the Individual and Family Support Program [12VAC35-230].

Version Date: 01/09/2023.

NOTE: These guidelines will not be effective until the [emergency action](#) amending 12VAC35-230 is effective.

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If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact My Life, My Community operators at **(844) 603-9248**.

I. Program Description

12VAC35-230-20

Funding through the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' ("department") Individual and Family Support Program ("IFSP") assists individuals on a waiting list for a Virginia Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Developmental Disability Waiver ("DD Waiver Waiting List") and their families with accessing resources, supports, and services. The program supports the continued residence of individuals with developmental disabilities in their own homes or in the family home of the individual.

II. Program Eligibility Requirements

12VAC35-230-35

To be eligible, applicants must meet all of the following criteria when funds are requested:

1. Applicants must be on the Virginia DD Waiver Waiting List, and
2. Applicants must be living in their own homes or in a family home.

Applications may be submitted either by the individual who is on the DD Waiver Waiting List or a custodial family member applying on behalf of the individual(s) on the DD Waiver Waiting List. Individuals on the DD Waiver Waiting List who also receive assistance through other programs like the Commonwealth Coordinated Care Waiver (CCC Plus) or the Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT) may apply for funds if the request is for items that are not available through this or a similar program. IFSP encourages all applicants to maximize assistance by accessing other supports and resources where appropriate.

III. Program Funding Categories

12VAC35-230-45

The amount applicants may request is based upon the applicable funding category.

This year, the program expects to provide no less than approximately \$2.5 million in direct assistance to individuals on the DD Waiver Waiting List.

Funding Categories

- **Priority 1: 50% of funds (\$1,250,000).** A maximum of \$1000 per approved recipient. Application period will be open until funding is exhausted. Funding approval will be given to individuals in Priority 1 who are most at-risk of institutionalization indicated by a Critical Needs Summary score, as well as the date and time of the application is received.
- **Priorities 2 and 3 (combined): 50% of funds (\$1,250,000).** A maximum of \$500 per approved recipient. Application period will be open for a month and then closed. No applications will be reviewed or funds distributed before the application period is closed. Funding approval will be given randomly to applicants within Priorities 2 and 3 based on the number of applications received and funds requested not to exceed predetermined funding amounts. IFSP will award funds to a randomized sample until all applicants in Priority 2 and 3 have had opportunity to access funding before repeating funding for previous awardees.

The funding application schedule, including application deadlines, are posted on the My Life, My Community website at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>.

All applications must be submitted via the department's WaMS IFSP Funding Application Portal located at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/waitlistforms>.

Applications will be reviewed by the department at the following intervals:

- **Priority 1:** Monthly until all funds are exhausted; and
- **Priorities 2 and 3:** One month from the close of the application period. After the one month period, any undistributed funds will be added to the Priority 1 category until all funds are spent.

IV. Covered and Non-Covered Services and Supports

12VAC35-230-55

The following items and services are eligible for funding as allowable expenditures under the IFSP.

Please note: IFSP funds are one-time funds and are not guaranteed to be awarded in future years.

Safe Living

- Backup generator
- Furniture, including beds, sofa, chairs, tables, lamps, and dressers
- Adaptive furniture
- Mattresses and bedding
- Handrails and grab bars
- Home modifications to improve accessibility, including door widening, additional flooring, kitchen or bathroom remodels, and driveway installations and window installation
- Appliances
- Heating, cooling, and plumbing systems conversion, installation, and repairs
- General home repairs
- Location devices and GPS trackers, including Project Lifesaver and AngelSense, personal alarms, locator services, and associated trainings
- Respite
- Fencing
- Home security systems, including home alarms and cameras
- Wheelchair ramp and other ramps
- Stairlifts
- Legal fees, including fees to establish guardianship, power of attorney, microboards, trusts, etc.

Community Integration

- Companion services, peer support, and mentoring
- Childcare and afterschool care
- Community activities/recreation
- Conferences, family education, and trainings
- Day support programs
- Self-advocate education or training
- Summer camp
- Supported employment
- Therapeutic activities and copays
- Transportation services including Uber, Lyft, cabs, buses, etc.
- Sports activities and lessons, including tournaments
- Recreational and entertainment activities that support community integration
- Recreational activities, including art classes, music lessons, dance lessons, gym memberships, etc.
- Recreational equipment, including swings and playset equipment
- In-state vacations
- Passes for recreational activities
- Tuition
- Modifications to a vehicle, including wheelchair lifts
- Reimbursement for transportation costs including gas, tolls, etc.

Improved Health Outcomes

- Attendant care
- Behavior therapy/applied behavioral analysis
- Communication and assistive technology, including computers, tablets, laptops, iPads, apps, mobile phones, mobile phone services, warranties and repairs, internet services, speech applications, and speech products
- Telecommunication services that enhance community access and involvement, including SIM cards, internet, mobile phone service, and applications that link individuals to community activities
- Assistive technology repair
- Dental care, procedures, and equipment
- Hearing care, procedures, and equipment
- Medical care copays
- Medication
- Equipment, including bikes, wheelchairs, strollers, car seats, and highchairs
- Sensory items, including toys
- Nutritional supports, including nutritional drinks like Boost, Ensure, formula, adult formula for feeding tubes, etc.
- Therapies, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, massage therapy, and chiropractic therapy
- Personal hygiene items, including incontinence supplies, skin ointments, wipes, specialized toothbrushes, and costs associated with professional grooming services such as haircuts, manicures, and pedicures
- Therapeutic horseback riding/hippotherapy
- Vision care, procedures, and equipment
- Durable medical equipment, including clothing and compression garments and apparel that simplifies self-dressing and offers solutions to meet a multitude of physical challenges. Eligible clothing items include the following:
 - Bibs and clothing protectors
 - Soft clothing for sensory sensitivity
 - Clothing with Velcro, snaps, or zipping closures
 - Orthopedic shoes

IFSP Funds may NOT cover the following costs:

- Clothing not related to the applicant's disability¹;
- Food (not related to special dietary needs associated with the disability or as part of a recreational experience);
- Installment payments for automobiles and auto insurance; and
- Any services or items not listed in these Guidelines or if covered by another entity.

¹ This does not exclude accessible clothing items (e.g., adaptive clothing or footwear, weighted vests, etc.). These items are covered under the Improved Health Outcomes section.

V. Application for Funding

12VAC35-230-65

The application can be found on the **WaMS IFSP Funding Application Portal** located at <https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/waitlistforms>.

IFSP funds may only be used to cover expenses incurred after the applicant receives the award approval notice.

All program funds will be issued by debit card. Applicants are expected to register the card immediately upon receipt. Failure to register the card may affect the applicant's eligibility for future funds.

By applying, the individual or custodial family member agrees to:

1. Maintain all receipts documenting items or services purchased with IFSP funds for three calendar years from the date of purchase and, upon request, provide the receipts to the department for auditing²;
2. Acknowledge that failure to comply with the program's policies may result in recovery of awarded funds and denial of future funding requests.

VI. Application Review Criteria

Upon receipt of a completed application, the department shall:

1. Verify that the individual is on the waiting list for a Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) DD Waiver;
2. Confirm that the items or services for which funding is requested are eligible; and
3. If applicable, confirm that the applicant complied with past program requirements. Failure to provide all the requested application information shall result in an application denial.

² IFSP stopped requiring receipts in 2020. However, applicants are still expected to maintain receipts documenting expenditures for eligible items and providing them as requested as part of a program audit.

VII. Funding Award Process

12VAC35-230-85

The department shall provide a written notice to the individual or custodial family member who submitted the application indicating whether the application was approved or denied.

Denials

Applications may be denied if the department determines that:

- The requesting individual or custodial family member has not complied with IFSP policies or regulations for previously awarded funds. This includes failure to register debit cards with prior year's awards, or failure to provide receipts for previously received IFSP funds as requested.
- The IFSP funding annual appropriation has been expended.

In future funding cycles, an individual on Priority 2 or Priority 3 who was previously awarded IFSP funding may not be awarded funding in a consecutive funding cycle until all eligible applicants in Priority 2 or Priority 3 have an opportunity to access and be awarded funding.

VIII. Requests for Reconsideration

12VAC35-230-90

For applications denied for the previously listed reasons, the department will provide written notice via email stating the reason(s) why the requested services, supports, or other items were denied, and information on how to appeal the decision.

Application appeals must be submitted in writing using the directions provided in the denial message. Reconsiderations must be submitted no later than 30 days after receiving the denial notice. A determination will be made within 30 days of receipt of the request and provided to the Responsible Party in writing. This decision will be final.

IX. Post-Funding Review

12VAC35-230-100

Department staff may request documentation or verification that funds have been used in accordance with the program guidelines to purchase only approved services or items as described in the application and approved by the department. By receiving IFSP funds, recipients agree to provide all information requested by the department for three years following the funding cycle. Failure to provide information when requested may result in recovery of such funds by the department, or prohibition from receiving future funds.

X. Termination of Funding

12VAC35-230-110 120

Funding through the IFSP shall be terminated when the individual is enrolled in a Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver, if the individual is found to be no longer eligible to be on a waiting list for a Medicaid HCBS DD Waiver in accordance with 12VAC30-122-90 and all appeals have been exhausted, or if approved funds are used for purposes not approved by the department in its written notice. Any funds approved but not released will be forfeited in such circumstances.

If you need answers to questions related to IFSP, please visit the DBHDS My Life, My Community website at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>.



Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services





Virginia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Services

IFSP-Funding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version Date: 10/10/2023

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If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact
My Life, My Community operators at **(844) 603-9248**.

Application and Submission

1. I would like to apply for IFSP-Funding. Where is the application located?

All applications must be submitted using the online application. ***There are no paper applications.*** When the application is open, you will be able to access it on the IFSP-Funding Portal at <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/ifsponline>. The following link will also take you to the login page: <https://dbhds.virginia.gov/waitlistforms>.

2. When can I apply for funding?

Eligible applicants may apply any time between October 16 at 9:00 a.m. and November 14, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. IFSP encourages applicants to take their time to apply anytime during the application open period, so there is no need to rush. Application dates are the same for everyone regardless of waitlist priority status.

Please check the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding> for timelines. If you are signed up for the IFSP email list, you will receive an email with important information. If you are not signed up for the IFSP email list, click on the following link to sign up: <https://tinyurl.com/IFSP-List>.

3. What is the maximum amount of money I can request? Is there a minimum amount?

There is no minimum amount of funding. The maximum funding for individuals with Priority 1 status on the Waitlist is \$1,000. The maximum funding for individuals with Priority 2 or 3 status is \$500. This amount may be divided among multiple funding categories if needed or may be all in one category. Please review the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

4. What is my Priority Status? Do I need to know my priority number to apply?

You do not need to know your priority status to apply. When you are on the DD Waivers Waiting List (or “the Waitlist”), your CSB/support coordinator/case manager completes an assessment, and your priority status on the waitlist is determined based on information you provide. Your priority status is updated as you report changes in your situation and/or needs.

5. If I am signed up for the emails, will I receive the application by email?

No, you will not receive the application by email. If you are signed up for the IFSP

email list, you will receive an update telling you when and how to access the IFSP-Funding Portal where you can apply for funds.

6. How do I log into the IFSP-Funding Portal to fill out an application?

To log into the Funding Portal, you will need your last name, date of birth, and the last six (6) digits of your Social Security number.

Specific instructions on how to log in, navigate, and complete an application are in the IFSP-Funding Portal User Guide. Applicants can also review a step-by-step video guide for completing the application. All materials can be found on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

7. Can I use my smartphone or tablet to complete my application?

For maximum ease of use, IFSP recommends using a computer or a tablet device to complete your application. If you run into problems, please call our toll-free My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248.

8. When will I hear that my application has been accepted into the system?

After you submit your application, you will immediately receive a confirmation email. If you do not see the message, please check your junk mail or spam folders. Please remember all communication about your application will be sent via the email address that you provide on your application. Also, please note that receipt of an application does not guarantee funding. If you apply as a “custodial family member”, the email will be sent to the custodial family member’s email address.

9. How long will it take before a funding decision is reached after I submit my application?

We expect to notify applicants of an award decision within 1-2 months after the application submission period closes. IFSP will communicate all award decisions to you via email.

10. What is WaMS? How do I know if my information is correct in it?

WaMS stands for Virginia Waiver Management System. It is the system that DBHDS uses to store information about individuals who are seeking or receiving Waiver services. Please contact your Community Services Board (CSB) or support coordinator/case manager to confirm your information is correct in WaMS.

11. What do I do if the information that is auto populated in my application is incorrect?

It is possible that your information needs to be updated in WaMS. Information about the person on the Waitlist was entered by your CSB when you were placed on the Waitlist. You must contact your CSB/support coordinator/case manager to make updates to your information in WaMS.

We encourage you to correct the auto-populated information on your application. Changing your information on your Funding application does not change it in WaMS, so you will still need to notify your CSB if your address, birthday, or other important information needs to be updated in WaMS.

12. How much detail do I need to include in my application about my planned use of funds?

When you apply, you will choose from a drop-down menu of allowable items and services. You will not need to type in your planned use of funding. Please refer to Section IV of the Program Guidelines on the My Life, My Community Funding page at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

13. What if my need changes after I have submitted my application?

You may edit your application any time before the application closes on November 14, 2023. However, if you have already submitted your application, you may withdraw it and complete a new one before the application closes. For instructions on how to change and withdraw your application, please review the Funding Portal User Guide on <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

Please remember that all funds must be spent on allowable expenses as indicated in your application. Covered and non-covered services and supports are explained in Section IV of the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

14. Will funds be issued via debit card?

IFSP will continue to provide funds via the Way2Go debit card.

15. Who can help me complete my application?

If you need assistance to complete your application, you may reach out to your CSB/support coordinator/case manager. You may also get assistance from a

trusted friend or family member, or call the toll-free My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248.

16. Can I receive funding if I don't have a permanent address or reliable mailing address?

Yes, you can receive funding. Please include a reliable postal mailing address in your application. If you do not have a personal mailing address, you may designate (with permission) the local CSB where you receive case management services, or a trusted friend or family member to receive and secure your funding card. However, the address of the CSB or friend/family member must be entered on your application. You must also make their name "in care of" (example: c/o John Doe).

17. I need the IFSP application translated into another language.

The IFSP-Funding Portal in WaMS has a Spanish translation function. Please see the IFSP-Funding Portal User Guide for instructions on how to translate the application. It can be found on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

Necesito que traduzcan la solicitud en Español.

El portal de financiación IFSP en WaMS tiene una herramienta de traducción al español. Por favor consulta la Guía del usuario del portal de financiación IFSP para obtener instrucciones sobre cómo traducir la solicitud. Se puede encontrar la Guía del usuario en el sitio web My Life, My Community (Mi vida, mi comunidad) en <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

18. Can I print my application?

Although the IFSP does not accept paper applications, there is an option to print your application if you would like to keep a copy for your own records. Please review our Funding Portal User Guide for instructions on how to print your application. It can be found on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

Allowable Costs

19. What can I purchase and not purchase with these funds?

You can find a complete list of covered and non-covered expenses in the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines section titled *Covered and Non-Covered Services and Supports*. The IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines are located on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

20. Can I buy groceries or clothing with these funds?

IFSP funds can be used to purchase medical supplements and foods prescribed if they are related to special dietary needs associated with the disability. IFSP funds can be used to cover food if they are part of a recreational experience that supports community integration. Specialty clothing related to the disability is an allowable expense. General clothing and footwear are not covered.

For more details, please review the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines, located on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

21. Can I use IFSP funds for rent, mortgage, or utilities?

Rent, mortgage and basic utilities bills are not covered. You can find a complete list of covered and non-covered expenses in the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines Section IV, titled *Covered and Non-Covered Services and Supports*.

The IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines are located on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

22. Do you make exceptions for emergencies to pay for non-covered items?

No, the IFSP program can only cover items listed in the Covered and Non-Covered Services and Supports section of the guidelines.

23. Can I be reimbursed for things I have already paid for before my award notification was received?

The IFSP-Funding Program does not reimburse for items purchased before funds are awarded.

24. Are cost reimbursements okay after receiving funds or after receiving approval?

As in the past, costs must be incurred after the debit card is received and registered.

25. Will I have a better chance of being approved if I request funding for certain items/services, or specific amounts for certain items/services?

General Information

26. What is the IFSP?

IFSP is the acronym for the Individual and Family Support Program. The IFSP assists individuals with developmental disabilities and their families with accessing person-centered and family-centered resources, supports, services and other assistance. The program's primary target population is individuals on the Waitlist for Virginia's Developmental Disabilities' Medicaid Waivers and residing in the community. The goal of the program is to support continued community living. To learn more about all the parts of the IFSP, please watch our informational video or download our "IFSP: First Steps" document. Both are posted on the "Resources for Families" page on the My Life, My Community at <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>.

27. Who is eligible to apply?

Only individuals who are living on their own or in a family home and are on the DD Waitlist are eligible for IFSP-Funding. For more details regarding program eligibility requirements, please review the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines, located on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

28. Is there an age limit to apply for IFSP-Funding?

No, there is no age limit.

29. If I am the responsible party/custodial family member for more than one person, can I apply more than once?

IFSP-Funding applications are connected to the individual on the Waitlist. Applicants can only apply for assistance once during the funding period. However, one person can be the responsible party for multiple applicants. Each approved applicant will receive a separate award issued by debit card.

For example, a father of twins, both of whom are on the WWL may submit an application for each child and be the responsible party listed on each of the two submitted applications. When the application is approved, the father would receive two debit cards, one for each child.

30. What is a custodial family member?

A “custodial family member” is a family member who has primary authority to make all major decisions affecting the individual and with whom the individual primarily resides.

31. I have a CCC Plus waiver. Am I still able to apply for IFSP-Funding?

Yes, you are still eligible to apply for and receive IFSP funds. If you receive this waiver, you should use your IFSP funding to purchase services, supports, or goods that are not covered by CCC Plus.

32. I never got the funds in the past. Am I eligible for IFSP-Funding?

You are eligible to apply for IFSP-Funding if you are on the waitlist and live in your own home or the family home at the time you submit your application, regardless of whether you received funding in the past. For details regarding eligibility, please review the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

33. Whenever I applied for IFSP-Funding, I was not selected to receive funding. How does IFSP decide who gets funding?

Prior to 2023, IFSP funds were available on a first-come, first-served basis. Funding is now awarded based on criteria established in the guidelines, which are posted on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

The IFSP-Funding Program has always had more interest than funds. Unfortunately, requests for assistance outweigh available funding to serve everyone.

34. English is not my primary language, and I need help. Who can help me?

We recommend contacting your Community Services Board (CSB)/support coordinator/case manager for translation assistance with understanding general

information. The IFSP-Funding Application portal in WaMS has a Spanish translation function. Additional IFSP-Funding Program materials are available in Spanish and may be found on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

If you need assistance in another language, please contact operators at our My Life, My Community helpline (operated by SeniorNavigator) at 844-603-9248.

35. I live in a rural area and my Wi-Fi is unreliable. I do not have a computer. How can I apply? Is there someone who can help me?

All applications must be submitted online. In addition to using a computer, you can complete the application using a smartphone or a tablet. If you do not have access to any of these devices, please consider using a computer at a local public library. To find a library where you live, please search online at <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/libraries.asp>.

Your Community Services Board (CSB)/support coordinator/case manager can also provide assistance with completing the application. To find your local CSB, visit <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/map>.

If you need assistance with completing the web application, please review the application training materials. They can be found at the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

36. What if I don't have an email address?

An email address is required for the application to be submitted and for future communications with the IFSP. Notifications may include updates regarding whether your application was received, approved, or denied. If you do not have a personal email address, you may enter the email address of someone you trust who can receive communications from IFSP. This person should be able to accurately respond to inquiries on your behalf.

37. What should I do if I don't have a support coordinator/case manager or don't know who my support coordinator/case manager is?

You should contact your local Community Services Board (CSB). If you don't know your CSB, you can find it here: <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/map>.

38. If I am signed up for the IFSP email list, do I have to sign up again after each funding cycle?

No, you only need to sign up once for the IFSP email list. You will only need to sign up if you have previously unsubscribed.

39. Does the Funding Program end when the Settlement Agreement ends?

IFSP-Funding is available as long as the General Assembly allocates funds for the program.

Returning Applicants

40. If I received the funding on a debit card last time we received funds, will I be able to use the same card this year?

No, a new card is issued for each IFSP-Funding cycle. Funds for a new year cannot be put on a card from a previous year.

41. I applied for and received IFSP funds last year. Can I still apply?

Yes, you can apply again this year.

42. Will I automatically get funds if I didn't get funds last year?

No. Receiving funding in a previous year does not automatically guarantee that your application will be approved. You will need to apply each year that you are interested in the funding and are eligible. Funding is awarded based on criteria established in the guidelines, which are posted on the My Life, My Community website at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

Receipts

43. What do I do with my receipts?

IFSP-Funding recipients should hold on to receipts for three (3) years and be prepared to provide them. As part of our ongoing quality improvement process, IFSP may contact recipients to learn more about how you used your funds.

IFSP-Funding recipients must spend their funds on allowable services or supports. Please refer to Section IV of the IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines for a list of allowable expenses at <https://tinyurl.com/mlmc-funding>.

44. How do I submit receipts from previous funding period?

Please do not send receipts unless you are contacted and asked for them.

DD Waivers Waiting List ("the Waitlist") and Eligibility

45. How can I find out if I am on the Waitlist? How do I get on the Waitlist? How do I find out who my support coordinator/case manager is?

You must be on the Waitlist to apply for IFSP funds. If you have questions about your DD waitlist status, please contact your local Community Services Board (CSB). They can also help you with identifying your SC/CM if you have one. If you are not on the waitlist, they can help you get on the waitlist if you are eligible. If you are on the waitlist, and don't have a support coordination/case manager, they can talk with you about eligibility for that service. To find your local CSB, visit <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/map>.

46. What if the applicant that is on the Waitlist has a part-time job?

We do not take income into consideration for eligibility. An individual who is working can still apply for IFSP-Funding.

47. How long does an individual have to be on the Waitlist before they can apply for IFSP-Funding?

There is no time requirement. You must be on the Waitlist at the time of application submission to receive IFSP funds.

If you have questions or need additional assistance, please visit [the IFSP-Funding page](#) on My Life, My Community or contact My Life, My Community operators at **(844) 603-9248**.

