



Virginia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Services

Understanding IFSP-Funding: Frequently Asked Questions

A clear guide to help you apply for funding, understand the rules, and learn what to expect.

September 2025

Whether you're applying for IFSP-Funding for the first time or a returning applicant, this guide is here to help. We've organized answers to the most common questions and included step-by-step tips to walk you through the process. Our goal is to make the program easier to understand and easier to use, so you can focus on what matters most: supporting yourself or your family member in living safely and meaningfully at home.

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Important Links

We reference these links several times throughout this guide! Learn more about them here.

- Looking for the official **IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines**? They are posted on the [Virginia TownHall Guidance Document Forum](#).

- **The IFSP-Funding resource page on My Life, My Community:**

<https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding>

Here you will find:

- The link to apply for funding,
 - User guides and guidelines,
 - Training videos,
 - Quick tips, and
 - Information about the funding program in past years!
- **Virginia CSB/BHA Directory:** <https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory/>

Use this link to get connected with your local CSB/BHA! This is your first step to getting connected with services. Read more in our [glossary](#).

Understanding IFSP-Funding

This section is designed to help you understand how the IFSP-Funding Program works without having to read through the full guidelines document. If you still have questions after reading this section, keep going! The next part includes answers to other common questions from individuals and families.

1. Summary of the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP)

IFSP stands for the Individual and Family Support Program. It's a program from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) that helps people with developmental disabilities and their families get support to live safely and meaningfully in their homes and communities.

To learn more about the other parts of the IFSP, please explore our [Resources for Individuals and Families page](#) on the My Life, My Community website.

2. Summary of the IFSP-Funding Program

IFSP-Funding is for people who are on Virginia’s Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waivers Waitlist (the Waitlist) and who live in their own home or with family.

The program offers funding to help with items or services that aren’t already covered by other programs like CCC Plus or EPSDT.

3. IFSP-Funding eligibility

You can apply if:

- You (or your family member) are on the Waitlist, AND
- You live in your own home or with family, AND
- You can’t get help for the same item or service from another program (like CCC Plus or EPSDT)

You can apply for yourself if you are on the DD Waivers Waiting List, 18 years or older and live in your own home or with family.

A family member can apply for you if you live with them and they help you manage your money and make important decisions.

- This is called a “**custodial family member**” in our regulations and guidelines. A custodial family member is a family member who has primary authority to make all major decisions affecting you and with whom you primarily live.

If you are under 18 years old, a family member must apply for you.

4. Funding amounts

- There are two funding levels based on your priority status on the DD Waivers Waitlist.
- You can apply for up to the maximum amount for your priority group.
- Funds are limited, so not everyone will receive funding each year.

Priority status on the Waitlist	Maximum amount	How funds are approved
Priority 1	Up to \$1,000.00	Based on highest critical needs scores in WaMS
Priority 2 and 3	Up to \$500.00	Random selection (with preference for new or previously denied applicants)

5. What IFSP-Funding covers

The official list of items and services is included in Section IV of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

Funds can be used for things that help you:

- Stay safe at home
- Be part of your community
- Improve your health

Examples include:

- Safety rails, ramps or alarms
- Therapy tools or health supplies
- Fees for community activities

You **cannot** use funds for:

- Something that you did not include on your application
- Rent, mortgage or utilities
- Groceries or clothing (unless it's related to your disability)

6. Maintain records of purchases

- Save all your receipts for 3 years.
- You may be asked to show how you spent the money.
- If you don't follow the rules, you may not be able to get funds again.

7. Denials

If your application is denied:

- You'll get a letter explaining why.
- You can ask for a review (called a "reconsideration") within 30 days.
- The department will look at your application again and let you know the final decision.

8. Termination of funding

You are no longer eligible to receive funds when:

- You're approved for a DD waiver
- You're no longer eligible for the Waitlist
- You use the funds for things that aren't allowed.

Still have questions?

The next section includes answers to other common questions. We've grouped them to make it easier to find what you need.

Frequently Asked Questions

Waitlist and Eligibility

1. How do I know if I'm on the DD Waivers Waiting List (the Waitlist)?

To apply for IFSP-Funding, you must be on the Waitlist. If you're not sure whether you're on the Waitlist, contact your local CSB or BHA. They can check your status and help you understand what it means.

Find your local CSB/BHA here: <https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory>

2. How do I get on the Waitlist?

If you're not on the Waitlist but think you might be eligible, your local CSB or BHA can help. They'll talk with you about your needs and guide you through the steps.

3. How do I get help at my CSB/BHA?

If you already have a support coordinator or case manager, your local CSB or BHA can tell you who they are.

If you're on the Waitlist but don't have a support coordinator or case manager assigned—that's okay! Not everyone on the Waitlist has one. You can still contact your local CSB or BHA for help with IFSP-Funding.

They can:

- Confirm your Waitlist status
- Help you understand your options
- Talk with you about whether you're eligible for a support coordinator

To find your local CSB or BHA, visit: <https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory>

4. What if I get a DD waiver or leave the Waitlist before funds are issued?

If you are removed from the Waitlist or if you are enrolled in a DD waiver, you will not receive funding.

However, if you receive your funding card and then leave the Waitlist or enroll in a DD waiver, the funding on the card is yours to use. You were eligible at the time funds were issued, so you may spend the funds as approved.

For more details, please review Section X of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

Application Tips and Troubleshooting

5. How do I prepare to apply?

Before you start your IFSP-Funding application, here are a few steps that can help things go more smoothly!

- a. **Check your eligibility.** Make sure you (or your family member) are on the DD Waivers Waiting List. If you aren't sure, ask your support coordinator. You don't need to know your priority group or funding level before you apply. The system will figure that out for you.
- b. **Decide what you need funding to pay for.** Think about what you need and refer to the list of allowable items and services (please review Section IV in the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).) Only pick things that aren't already covered by other programs like CCC Plus or EPSDT. You'll be asked to select items and services on the application.
- c. **Practice logging into the portal.** Check to make sure you can log in at any time, even before the application open period.

To log in, you will be typing in three things:

- Your last name,
- Your date of birth, and
- The last **six (6)** numbers of your Social Security number.

To log in, you enter the information of the person who is on the Waitlist—not the family member's or the person helping them to apply.

If you can't log in:

- Check with your CSB to make sure your information is correct in the system, or
- Call the My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248 if your information is correct and you still can't log in.

- d. **Set up an email address.** You'll need an email address to apply and get updates. If you don't have one and need help, someone you trust can help you create one or check messages for you.

6. Are there written or video materials that can help me?

Yes! Visit the IFSP-Funding Resources page on My Life, My Community to find helpful tools, training videos, and examples before you apply.

7. How do I apply?

Follow these steps to apply:

- Go to the [IFSP Funding Portal](#).
- Fill out the online application during the open period (30 days).
- For application user guides and tools to help you with the application, visit the IFSP-Funding webpage on My Life, My Community.
- You can apply using a computer, tablet or smartphone, but the computer or tablet will work best. The system is not made for smartphones.

If you need help:

- Ask your support coordinator or case manager, or
- Call the toll-free My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248. This helpline is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Operators cannot complete an application for you, but they will do their best to make the process easier. Wait times may be longer during times of high call volume, so please be patient!

8. What are the next steps after I submit my application?

- You'll get an email telling you that your application was submitted.
- Within 3 months, you'll get a notice by email saying whether you were approved or denied.
- If you are approved, you'll get a debit card in the mail.
- When you get your debit card, it's important to register it right away.
- Only use your IFSP-Funding on the items you chose on your application. You cannot use IFSP-Funding to pay someone back for an item you bought before you were approved.

9. Can someone help me fill out the application?

Yes, you can ask someone to help you understand the questions and submit your application. But the information entered into the application needs to be your information, not the helper's.

- You may ask a trusted friend, family member, or your CSB/BHA/support coordinator/case manager for help.
- You may call the toll-free My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248. The helpline is there to support you. They can answer questions and help troubleshoot any issues. While they can't complete the application for you, they'll do their best to make the process easier.

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

You'll need an email address to apply and receive updates. If you don't have one, ask a trusted person to help you set one up. You can also use a shared email address if someone helps you check it regularly.

11. What if I miss the deadline?

Applications are only accepted during the open period. If you miss it, you'll need to wait until the next funding cycle. Check the IFSP-Funding webpage on My Life, Community for the timeline/schedule.

To get the announcement as soon as it is released, please make sure you're subscribed to [our email list](#).

12. Can I apply for more than one person in my family?

Yes! If you are the custodial family member for more than one person on the Waitlist, you can submit separate applications for each person.

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

Yes. You can still receive IFSP-Funding even if you don't have a mailing address. You'll need to include a reliable address on your application where your funding card can be safely sent.

If you don't have your own address, you can use:

- The address of your local CSB or BHA (with their permission), or
- The address of a trusted friend or family member who agrees to receive and hold your card for you.

Make sure to include their name on the application using "c/o" (which means "in care of"). For example:

Your Name
c/o John Doe, 123 Main Street
City, VA, 54321

14. I need the IFSP application translated into Spanish.

The IFSP-Funding Portal in WaMS has a Spanish translation function. Please refer to the **IFSP-Funding Portal User Guide** for instructions on how to translate the application. It can be found on the My Life, My Community IFSP-Funding page.

15. 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://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org/ifsp-funding>.*

16. I need help in another language besides Spanish.

If English is not your main language, there are ways to get help:

- Ask someone who speaks English to contact the IFSP staff for you. This can help us understand your needs more quickly.
- Talk to your support coordinator, case manager, CSB, or BHA. They may be able to help with translation or explain things in your language.
- Need help in another language? Call the My Life, My Community helpline at 844-603-9248. Friendly staff (through SeniorNavigator) can help connect you to support.

17. 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 the **IFSP-Funding Portal User Guide** for instructions on how to print your application. You can find the User Guide on the IFSP-Funding webpage on My Life, My Community.

18. I live in a rural area and don't have reliable Wi-Fi or a computer. How can I apply? Is there someone who can help me?

All IFSP-Funding applications must be submitted online. You can apply using a computer, tablet or smartphone, but the computer or tablet will work best. The system is not made for smartphones.

If you don't have one of these devices or your internet isn't reliable, here are some options:

- Visit a local public library to use a computer. To find a library near you, go to <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/libraries.asp>.
- Ask your support coordinator, case manager, or someone at your local CSB or BHA for help. They may be able to help you find a safe place to apply.
- To find your local CSB or BHA, visit <https://vacsb.org/csb-bha-directory>.

You can also review step-by-step instructions and training materials on the IFSP-Funding page.

Spending and Card Use

19. What can I purchase with these funds?

You can use your IFSP funds for items and services that:

- Are listed in Section IV of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#),
- Were included in your **approved application**, and/or
- Are purchased **after** you receive your official award approval notice.

20. Can I use the funds for everyday expenses like groceries, clothing, utilities, mortgage, or utility bills?

No. IFSP-Funding **does not** cover general groceries, clothing, shoes, rent, mortgage, or utility bills.

However, there are a few exceptions:

- If a doctor or specialist recommends a specific food or supplement for a disability-related dietary need, it may be covered.
- If food is part of a community activity—like a camp or social event—it may be allowed.
- Specialty clothing related to a disability (like compression garments or adaptive wear) may be covered.

For more details, please review Section IV of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

21. What if my needs change after I submit my application?

You can make changes to your application any time before the funding portal closes. If you've already submitted it, you can withdraw your application and submit a new one before the portal closes. Instructions are in the **IFSP-Funding Portal User Guide**.

After the application deadline, your request can't be changed. Funds must be used for the items or services listed in your approved application.

For a full list of what's allowed, please review Section IV of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

22. What should I do when I receive my card in the mail?

Once you receive your card in the mail, do one of these things right away:

- Register the card right away and then use it as a credit card to make purchases. No PIN is required.
- Use the card as a debit card. Create a PIN to withdraw funds from an ATM.
- Transfer funds from the card into a bank account in good standing. The bank must have a physical location in your area. The bank cannot be online only.

If you do not do one of these things right away, you'll get reminders from the IFSP staff until you do. You also risk the funds expiring and losing them.

23. What if I lose my debit card?

Contact the Way2Go Card customer service line right away to report it and request a replacement. The customer service line is **800-961-8423**. Please note the customer service line is automated. Generally, you should not expect to speak with a live operator.

24. Can I use my funds for something I already paid for?

No. IFSP-Funding can only be used for expenses that happen after you receive your official approval email. That means you shouldn't buy anything before you're approved, even if it's something you listed in your application.

Even though the official rules say to wait until “after your approval notice,” we strongly recommend waiting until your funding card arrives and is activated before making any purchases. This helps avoid mistakes and makes sure your spending follows the program rules.

For more details, please review Section V of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

Decisions and Reconsideration

25. How does the IFSP decide who is approved and who is denied?

IFSP-Funding decisions are based on your priority status on the Waitlist and the total number of applications received.

Decisions are **not** based on your income, when you applied, or the specific items or services you select on your application.

Each application is reviewed using a set of guidelines to make sure the process is fair and consistent. Because funding is limited, not everyone who applies will be approved, even if their request is for something important.

Priority status on the Waitlist	Maximum amount	How funds are approved
Priority 1	Up to \$1,000.00	Based on highest critical needs scores in WaMS
Priority 2 and 3	Up to \$500.00	Random selection (with preference for new or previously denied applicants)

For more details, please review Sections III, VI, and VII of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

26. Can I ask for a second review if I’m not approved for IFSP-Funding?

If you believe your application was denied in error, you can ask the IFSP staff to take another look. This is called a request for reconsideration.

Reconsideration is not a second chance to apply or change your request.

If you choose to submit a request for reconsideration, you must do so within 30 days of your denial notice. You will hear back with a final decision 30 days after that. For more details, please review Section VIII of the [IFSP-Funding Program Guidelines](#).

Glossary

Term	Definition
Behavioral Health Authority (BHA)	Similar to a CSB. BHAs provide the same types of services, including DD waiver screenings and support coordination.
CCC Plus (Commonwealth Coordinated Care Plus)	A Medicaid managed care program for individuals with complex medical needs. It provides coordinated services including medical, behavioral health, and long-term supports.
Community Services Board (CSB)	A local agency that provides services for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health needs, and substance use disorders. CSBs conduct waiver screenings and assign support coordinators.
Custodial family member	A custodial family member is a family member who has primary authority to make all major decisions affecting you and with whom you primarily live.
Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)	A Medicaid benefit for children under 21 that covers comprehensive and preventive health services, including therapies, equipment, and supports when medically necessary.
My Life, My Community helpline	A toll-free number (844-603-9248) that individuals and families can call for help navigating Virginia's DD services, including IFSP-Funding.
Support Coordinator	A professional (often called a Case Manager) who helps individuals with DD access services, develop their Individual Support Plan (ISP), and monitor progress. They are typically based at a CSB or BHA.

Term	Definition
VACSB (Virginia Association of Community Services Boards)	A statewide organization that represents Virginia's CSBs and Behavioral Health Authorities. VACSB advocates for policies and funding that support mental health, developmental disability, and substance use services.
Virginia's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Medicaid Waivers Waitlist ("the Waitlist")	A list of individuals who have been screened and found eligible for one of Virginia's three Developmental Disability Medicaid waivers but are waiting for a slot to become available. Placement on the list is based on assessed need.
Virginia Townhall	A public website where Virginia state agencies post official guidance documents, regulations, and opportunities for public comment. IFSP-Funding guidelines are often published here.
Waitlist Priorities	<p>When someone is found eligible for a DD waiver in Virginia, they are placed on a waitlist based on their level of need. There are three priority levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 includes individuals with the most urgent needs. • Priority 2 includes individuals with significant needs but not in immediate crisis. • Priority 3 includes individuals with less immediate needs.
Waiver Management System (WaMS)	Virginia's secure online system that is used to manage DD waiver waitlist data and IFSP-Funding applications. Applicants log in to WaMS to apply for funding.
Way2Go Card	A prepaid debit card issued to IFSP-Funding recipients. Funds are loaded onto this card and can be used for approved purchases.