

Helping People Return Home: An Interview with Pam Ramirez About LIFTT's MFP Program



<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/portrait-of-a-senior-woman-and-a-young-female-nurse-royalty-free-image/2228883201>

At LIFTT, one of our goals is to help individuals live as independently as possible in their own communities. One program helping make that possible is the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program. We spoke with Pam Ramirez, LIFTT's Independent Living Program Manager, to learn more about how this program helps individuals transition from nursing facilities back into community living.

What is the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program?

The Money Follows the Person program helps people who are living in nursing homes move back into community settings such as their own homes or assisted living facilities. The program provides support during the transition and helps individuals access the services they need to live safely and independently outside of an institution. For many people, it creates the opportunity to return to a more independent life.

Who qualifies for the MFP program?

The program is designed for individuals who are currently living in nursing facilities and who want to transition back into the community. Participants must meet certain eligibility requirements related to Medicaid services and the length of time they have lived in a nursing facility. LIFTT staff work closely with individuals and their families to determine eligibility and guide them through the process.

What are the advantages of moving from a nursing home to a community setting?

For many people, moving back into the community can greatly improve quality of life. Living in a community setting often allows individuals to have more privacy, greater independence, and more opportunities to participate in everyday activities. People are able to reconnect with family, friends, and their communities in ways that are often difficult in institutional settings.

A Real-Life Example: Mary's Journey Back to the Community

One recent example highlights the impact of the program.

Mary, a 78-year-old woman living in Billings, was referred to LIFTT through the MFP program to receive assistance transitioning from an institutional setting into an assisted living facility. Mary lives with several complex health conditions, including chronic kidney disease and other medical challenges. With support from LIFTT staff, Mary began exploring what kind of living environment would best support her independence and quality of life. Through person-centered planning, she was able to identify what was most important to her in a home and community setting.

LIFTT staff worked alongside Mary throughout the housing search, helping her connect with community resources and ensuring that her preferences and needs were clearly communicated to potential providers. During this process, Mary also learned about additional services offered by LIFTT, including the Peer Mentor Program, Health and Wellness resources, and diabetes education programs.

Through collaboration between Mary, LIFTT staff, and community partners, Mary successfully transitioned into an assisted living facility of her choice, a place where she can continue to live with greater stability, dignity, and support.

What are the most common challenges people face?

Transitioning from a nursing facility back into the community can take planning and coordination. Some individuals face challenges such as finding accessible housing, arranging transportation, or coordinating medical and support services. Programs like MFP help ensure that individuals have the resources and assistance needed to make a successful transition.

Why do you believe in this program?

“I believe in this program because it gives people choices,” Pam says. “Everyone deserves the opportunity to live in the community if that is what they want. MFP helps make that possible.” Seeing individuals regain independence and reconnect with their communities is one of the most rewarding parts of the work.

Programs like MFP remind us that independence is not just about where people live. It is about giving individuals the opportunity to make choices about their own lives.

How to Apply or Make a Referral

Individuals who are currently living in a nursing facility and would like to explore returning to community living may be eligible for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program. Family members, social workers, case managers, and healthcare providers can also help start the process by submitting a referral. To begin, complete the Montana MFP Referral Form at the following link: <https://webapp.hhs.mt.gov/fps/form/392>

After the referral is submitted, program staff will review the information and follow up to discuss eligibility and next steps. If you have questions or would like assistance completing the referral form, LIFTT staff are available to help. Contact:

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