

SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS IN A POST-MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON WORLD

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Although the federal funding of Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration is scheduled to end, Mercer can help states continue their efforts to transition individuals out of institutions and back into their communities.

When the MFP program was enacted as part of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171), the intent was to increase the use of Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) over institutionally-based services. The program has helped states eliminate barriers in Medicaid that impede efforts to provide supports and services to people with disabilities who choose to transition out of institutions, while providing quality assurance and improvement within the HCBS system.

The last MFP grants were awarded in 2016, enrollment of new participants will end by 2018, and claiming for those community transitions will be complete in 2020. With the end of the program at hand, states are now facing questions regarding the future of transition activities in a post-MFP world and how they will sustain the progress made by their programs into the future. Mercer's team of MFP experts can help! Mercer can assist states with maintaining their momentum towards rebalancing while improving existing MFP operations in preparation for continuing transition activities past the program's expiration date.

BACKGROUND

The first MFP grants were awarded in 2007, and since then all but six states have participated in the program. As of 2016, over 75,000 individuals nationwide have transitioned from institutional settings to the community.

During the grant period, MFP participating states received grant funding for a range of transition related activities, including but not limited to:

- Infrastructure building to support the systems needed to facilitate movement from facility-based to community-based settings
- Personnel to identify and assist participants with transitions, as well as for administrative purposes

- Short-term demonstration and supplemental services such as trial visits to gauge community living readiness and assistance with apartment rental security deposits and home furnishings to facilitate successful returns to the community

As noted in the [MFP report to congress](#), across all MFP participants transitioned from 2007 through 2013, the program generated \$978 million in reduced Medicaid and Medicare costs during the first year after the transition to HCBS long-term services and supports (LTSS). On average, per-beneficiary per-month expenditures declined by approximately 23% for older adults and people with physical disabilities during the first year following transition from a nursing home. For participants with intellectual disabilities, expenditures declined by approximately 30% for the first year following transition.

In preparation for the last MFP grants, which were awarded in 2016, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requested that states submit an MFP Sustainability Plan. The plans describe how systems developed during the life of the grant would be supported or enhanced in order to ensure continued focus on facility to community transitions after the program ends. While legislation is currently under consideration in Congress to reauthorize the program, the ability to sustain the HCBS transition infrastructure is perhaps more important now than ever. Most states are finally operating at a high level and if the program is renewed they will be in a position to move towards continued growth. If the grant funding does not materialize, the momentum of the past can be shifted to the state's Medicaid program over the long term.

Mercer is prepared to help states' current programs by providing practical solutions for sustaining transition related activities into the future, including support to integrate their MFP programs into their Medicaid LTSS infrastructure. Such support may include assistance to determine what Medicaid authorities might be leveraged, how to operationalize those authorities, and how to draw down Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for transition services in combination with existing state match currently associated with MFP.

To help support states with their sustainability efforts, Mercer's team of MFP experts has developed a MFP toolkit that can easily be adapted to state-specific needs to help kick start sustainability efforts.

The Mercer MFP Sustainability Toolkit includes:

- Strategies for effective MFP Sustainability Plan implementation
- Analysis of current and future cost effectiveness of state transition related-services
- Aggregate Minimum Data Set data analysis for states regarding Section Q responses
- Surveys for eliciting feedback and sustainability recommendations from Local Contact Agencies and Transition Coordinators
- Consideration of options available for the continued and effective measurement of the Quality of Life indicators
- Integration of MFP services into HCBS waivers, managed care programs or other LTSS programs
- Federal authorities that can be used to draw FFP for transition coordination activities
- Best practice in diversion and transition practice literature reviews