Aging homeowners need a hand up

1 out of 3 adults age 65 or older fall in their home every year because of deferred maintenance needs and inaccessibility in the home.

19 million+ older adults in the U.S. live in homes that need repairs or upgrades to make them accessible.

Habitat has the experience to help

8,121 homeowners were served by Habitat through home repairs in fiscal year 2021.

58% of the repairs were for individuals age 65 and older.

83% of homeowners reported their home is safer after making modifications according to the Housing Plus model.

Aging in Place with Habitat for Humanity

The older adult population is one of the fastest-growing age groups in the U.S., with more than 10,000 Americans turning 65 every day.

Habitat's Aging in Place program partners with families, communities and local organizations to offer products and services that foster safe, livable homes and communities, improving the quality of life for older adults. In many areas, Habitat uses our Housing Plus model and Aging in Place strategies when working with older adult homeowners.

Housing Plus includes two different assessments to make sure we understand each homeowner's needs. The first is completed by a health or human services professional who has a conversation with the homeowners about their activities of daily living. The second assessment includes a home repair evaluation by a construction specialist from the local Habitat organization.

The assessments allow Habitat to provide modifications specific to each homeowner’s lifestyle. Combining repairs and modifications with an understanding of community resources allows homeowners to remain safely and securely in their homes as they age.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis and its increased impact on older Americans, funding to keep these older adults in safe, decent homes is more important than ever.

77% of older Americans want to remain in their homes for the long term, and 34% recognize they may need to make physical changes to their house, such as modifying a bathroom or installing ramps in their homes.

— AARP’s 2021 Home and Community Preferences Survey
BRYANT AND ROSALYN CAN AGE IN PLACE WITH PEACE OF MIND

“We've been married for many, many, many, many years and have grown old together,” Bryant says with a chuckle, sitting beside his wife, Rosalyn, in the living room of their longtime home in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

When the basement siding of the octogenarians’ house needed replacing, a job that Bryant would have previously done himself, he realized that it presented a challenge now with Rosalyn’s growing health care needs. “Though it’s a simple job, it is rather laborious for one person to do,” Bryant says. “Habitat has an excellent reputation, so I gave them a call to see if I could get assistance on the repair.”

Bryant and Rosalyn’s partnership with Habitat for Humanity Wisconsin River Area to make the needed repairs revealed other improvements their home needed. When the affiliate was selected to participate in a pilot study under the Housing Plus umbrella of work, the staff immediately thought of Bryant and Rosalyn, who enthusiastically agreed to participate.

“Coming at it with a Housing Plus approach, we’re looking at the bigger picture,” says Roy Mares, repairs manager at Habitat Wisconsin River Area. “It’s improving the home for better accessibility. It’s connecting people to resources that they can use in their lives. It’s making their homes fit their lives instead of making their lives fit their house.”

That’s certainly been the case for Bryant and Rosalyn. The couple’s home is now equipped with well-placed modifications that help Rosalyn navigate the space, giving Bryant peace of mind as her caregiver. “It’s improved the day to day,” Bryant says. “They’re little things, but they’re game changers when you get older.”

Over the next 20 years, households in their 80s will be the fastest-growing age group. Habitat’s Aging in Place program provides effective, sustainable solutions for elderly homeowners.

Older residents provide stability in our communities. We invite you to honor and assist them today by making a gift to Habitat to help us partner with older adults and support them as they age in place.