

HOW TO CHOOSE A CERTIFIED AGING IN PLACE SPECIALIST (CAPS)

CARING FOR YOUR PARENTS: EDUCATION FOR THE FAMILY CAREGIVER®



 Home
Instead
SENIOR CARE®
To us, it's personal.

Many seniors want to remain in their homes as long as possible. Their memories, belongings and the ability to follow their own familiar schedules all contribute to the desire to spend their later years at home. Following this lifestyle path is called “aging in place”. Ultimately, for the senior, it means the reassurance of being able to call a house a home for a lifetime.

In order for your parents to be able to age in place they’ll likely need to make some modifications to their home in order to increase access and maneuverability. Modifications can range from the installation of bath and shower grab bars to adjustments of countertop heights, to the creation of multifunctional first floor master suites, or the installation of chairlifts or private elevators.

How big is this aging in place movement? Well, according to the National Association of Home Builders, 75% of remodelers have seen an increase in requests for aging in place work and 60% are already performing this type of work.

If you’re interested in helping your parents remain in their home you’ll likely want to consult with a Certified Aging in Place Specialist. During this workshop, we’ll talk about what a Certified Aging in Place Specialist is, how they can help and ways to choose the right one for your project.

Then, we’ll give you seven health considerations to look at to determine what types of home modifications may be necessary in order for your parents to age in place. Finally, we’ll talk about some possible funding sources to pay for the necessary modifications.

WHAT IS AN AGING IN PLACE SPECIALIST AND HOW CAN THEY HELP

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB®) worked in collaboration with its Research Center and 50+ Housing Council and the AARP® to develop the *Certified Aging in Place Specialist*, or CAPS, program.

The CAPS program is the leading national educational designation designed to teach professionals how to modify homes for aging in place. Since 2002, more than 2,200 individuals have completed CAPS, making it one of the fastest-growing educational programs at NAHB.

Most CAPS professionals are remodelers, but an increasing number are general contractors, designers, architects, and healthcare consultants. In general, CAPS can identify or make home modifications and changes to help your senior loved one continue to live independently and safely in their own home.

These individuals can provide solutions to common obstacles that make houses unsafe or uncomfortable. They have been taught the strategies and techniques for designing and building aesthetically enriching, barrier-free living environments. Certified Aging in Place Specialists go beyond design to address codes and standards, common remodeling expenditures and projects, product ideas, and resources needed to provide comprehensive and practical aging-in-place solutions.



Did you know...?

Studies have shown that 89% of people 50 and older wish to remain in their homes indefinitely, regardless of their age or ability level.

Every CAPS graduate pledges to uphold a code of ethics and is required to maintain their designation by attending continuing education programs and participating in community service. All of this is done to protect the consumer and in particular the senior population, which unfortunately is often the target of fraud.

Tip

To find a CAPS remodeler, visit www.NAHB.org

Remember, CAPS professionals are providing a service. So regardless of which Certified Aging in Place Specialist you use to help your parents remain in their home, you may also need to hire a remodeler to help with renovations.

Before hiring a company, the NAHB recommends that you ask the CAPS remodeler some important questions:

1. **Use an experienced CAPS.** Ask how much experience they have with this type of work. Be sure to select a remodeler with plenty of experience and remember the lowest price doesn't always ensure a successful remodeling project.
2. **Check references.** Seek referrals from friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and others who have had similar work done by the remodeler.
3. **Verify license and insurance.** Check that the remodeler has the appropriate license in your area as well as liability and worker's compensation insurance that covers their employees. Also, check with the local or state office of consumer protection and the Better Business Bureau to see if the company has outstanding complaints.
4. **Ask for a written estimate.** Ask your professional remodeler for a written estimate of the work to be done based on the set of plans and specifications.

Certainly, it's common sense to do your homework before hiring a contractor. It is especially important to help your parents with the task to be certain that they are getting legitimate services delivered by reputable companies.

Finally, if your parents rent, they will need to get written approval from the landlord or management company before doing any work. If they are refused, get the denial in writing and contact the local Fair Housing Act (FHA) agency.

While modifying rental housing to make disability accommodations is generally permissible, landlords may require restoration of the apartment to pre-accommodation status when the tenant leaves. Keep that in mind when thinking about budgets.

Notes:

SEVEN THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WITH A CERTIFIED AGING IN PLACE SPECIALIST

Keep these seven things in mind when assessing your parent's aging in place modification needs:

1. **Canes, walkers and wheelchairs.** Are your parents currently using any of these assistive devices? If not, what is the likelihood they might in the future? Increasing a home's maneuverability is a very important aging in place consideration.

Be sure to determine if the entrance doors are at least 36" wide and interior doors are a minimum of 32" wide. Next, look at room features such as sunken rooms, hallways that may be difficult to navigate or ornamental fixtures that are hard to get around that may need to be removed or modified. Also, give thought to new or existing flooring. High-pile carpeting, area rugs or slippery flooring can be a trip-and-fall hazard.

2. **Balance and standing.** As people grow older, physical issues caused by lack of muscle strength, equilibrium and other conditions begin to appear. Making accommodations that prepare for these will help your parents stay in their homes longer.

Two areas where standing occurs regularly are bathrooms and kitchens. Look around each of these rooms to determine if there is sufficient space for grab bars. Also, see if there is enough space to allow for a wheelchair to turn. Are counters in the kitchen and bath at the proper height in order to accommodate wheelchairs? Regardless of the room, work with your parents to ensure there is ample space for chairs or benches so they can perform regular tasks.

3. **Bending and reaching.** The best approach to help your parents is to keep things within easy reach. Some areas of the home that are more prone to be problematic are the kitchen, laundry room and bedroom closets. Look around to see if there are sufficient cabinets, and if counter space is the proper height. If not, it might be necessary to install under cabinet, roll-out shelves or pull-down shelves, or organizing systems.
4. **Hearing ability.** The sounds of door bells, alarms, and telephone rings are often among the first that become difficult to hear. It may become necessary to have phones and doorbell chimes in multiple rooms. Therefore check to see if there are sufficient outlets. Also, make sure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are near where they sleep and spend most of their time. Consider replacing older detection models with ones that have visual indicators or louder alarms.
5. **Grasping and holding.** As our parents age, it may become difficult for them to open drawers and doors, hold items that may be heavy, or turn and hold a fixture. Make sure that cabinet drawers and doors have "D" shaped handles and that all door knobs and faucets are lever-handled.
6. **Eyesight.** Ensuring proper lighting is one of the best things you can do for your parents if they have difficulty seeing. Next, make sure floor transitions are easily distinguishable such as having contrasting colors between levels and rooms.
7. **Sitting and standing transitions.** The last category to look at for modification needs is if your parents are safely sitting or lying down and then getting up. If there are difficulties, check to see if there is plenty of open space where walkers can be stored nearby or grab bars and safety rails installed.

Source: www.ageinplace.com

Notes:

FUNDING OPTIONS

In general, there are two types of funding to pay for remodeling of your parents' home – private and public.

Private Funding Options	Public Funding Options
<p>Your parents may have enough savings to cover the renovations. Or a home equity loan might be a good source of funds, especially if they have sufficient income to cover monthly payments vs. taking out all the cash from their savings.</p> <p>Another option is a reverse mortgage, which could also free up funds to pay for other services such as in-home care. Check with your parents' financial advisor before making a determination on which of these options might be best for them.</p> <p>Sometimes home modifications can be prescribed by your parent's doctor. If that's the case, get the prescription in writing and your parents may be able to claim a medical deduction on their federal income tax return. On the same note, check with your parent's private health insurance company to see if they will pay for the modification. Show them the prescription from the doctor or physical therapist. If the insurance company says no, getting a written letter of denial is suggested.</p> <p>Other private funding options include contributions, donations and in-kind work from family members, community service groups, churches, or other non-profit organizations. Ask your parent's local senior center or council on aging for possible referrals.</p>	<p>Public sources are normally income- and need-based. Funds may be available for home modifications under the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver. Another option is to call your local Social Security office to see if any of the equipment your parents need might be covered under Medicare. Or, if either of your parents is a veteran, contact the local VA to see if funding is available through that agency.</p> <p>Many states and communities also offer home modification programs to help some homeowners pay for necessary changes. Local community development or social service agencies usually administer these programs so contact your parents' town or city hall for information.</p> <p>Some of these community programs have carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and painters on staff to do the work. Other programs furnish free labor, and the homeowner purchases the necessary materials. Low-interest or no-interest loans, usually not repayable until the homeowner sells or leaves the home, are offered by other programs. Some programs simply provide a list of reliable contractors and assist in the process of receiving bids, selecting the contractor, developing a contract and ensuring that the work is performed in accordance with the contract.</p>

