

# Funding Sources for Home Modifications and Repairs



## A Technical Assistance Brief for State Units on Aging

Home modifications are changes to the home to make daily activities easier and safer. These changes can help people to stay in their homes and communities as they age. While many home modifications, such as removing clutter from the floor, are free or low cost, others, such as remodeling bathrooms for accessibility, can be more expensive.

Funding sources for home modification are available but often difficult to identify and access. Home modification service delivery and funding involves professionals and agencies from the aging, disability, housing, and health care sectors, and funding cuts across these sectors as well.

### **Why is Home Modification Funding Important?**

- More than ¼ of all U.S. homes are multi-story and lack a bedroom and full bathroom on the first floor that would help ensure accessibility
- Only 10% of housing units are “aging ready,” with a step-free entryway, bedroom and full bathroom on first floor, and at least one accessibility feature in the bathroom
- 28% of households with an adult age 65+ have at least 1 person who has difficulty using some element of the home (e.g., climbing stairs, using bathtub)
- Unmet housing needs are especially common among older households that are economically disadvantaged

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 (Data from American Housing Survey, 2011)

## How Can SUAs Fund Home Modifications and Repairs?

State Units on Aging (SUAs) can play an important role in home modifications and repairs (HMR) by including them in state plans, providing designated funding, and coordinating with other state agencies such as Medicaid, housing, disability, and health. A 2020 survey of SUAs conducted by the University of Southern California Leonard Davis School of Gerontology and ADvancing States revealed several funding source approaches.

### The Older Americans Act

In the survey of SUAs about their activities in HMR, 25% of respondents indicated that they allocate or designate funds for HMR as part of their Older Americans Act Title III-B services.

Title III-B of the Older Americans Act gives SUAs flexibility to meet the needs of older adults and their caregivers across a wide range of supports and services. SUAs can determine priority areas and establish policies governing the use of these funds. Similarly, Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support funds can serve as another source of home modification funding.

**SUAs can maximize resources for HMR by collaborating on funding and service provision, especially when populations overlap.** The survey found that about 86% of SUAs have HMR funding collaborations with other agencies.

### Examples include:

- **Rehabilitation Services:** HMR services with eligibility linked to rehabilitation services as part of an individual written rehabilitation plan (IWRP) may serve to accommodate persons who are aging with a disability. Thus, SUAs that partner with rehabilitation services can share costs or combine service provision to benefit both agencies.
- **Medicaid Waiver Programs:** Working with these programs that include funds to modify homes of individuals at-risk of institutionalization will meet common agency goals of maximizing self-care and supporting caregivers.

## **SUA Collaboration for Home Modification and Repair Funding**

- **34% State Medicaid Office**
- **10% State Assistive Technology Program**
- **6% State Departments of Rehabilitation**

## **SUAs Can Make a Difference**

**One-quarter of SUAs advocate to increase HMR policies and/or services. Consider these actions:**

- **Request an increase in HMR funds** from the State Housing Finance Agency
- **Educate legislators and community partners** on available services, gaps in services, and the HMR needs of older adults and people with disabilities
- **Prioritize HMR within state general revenue funds** to meet unmet needs

**Waive funding caps on home modifications:** Older Americans Act Title III-B funding can be used to fund HMR, but it is capped at \$150 per person based on a 1988 federal regulation. Some states have received Federal permission to waive that cap. Contact your Administration for Community Living regional administrator for guidance.

# National and State Home Modification Funding Sources

## National Examples

- **Administration for Community Living (ACL)**
  - Grants (dementia, fall prevention, disabilities)
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)**
  - Medicaid Waivers
  - Money Follows the Person Program (MFP)
  - Nursing Home Transition Program (NHT)
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
  - Section 504 Home Repair
  - Section 533 Rural Housing Preservation
- **U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)**
  - Weatherization Assistance Program (can cover safety repairs)
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
  - HOME Program
- **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**
  - Specially Adapted Housing Grant (SAH)
  - Special Housing Adaptation Grant (SAH)
  - Temporary Residence Adaptation Grant (TRA)
  - Home Improvements and Structural Alterations Grant (HISA)
- **CARES Act and ARPA funding** can be used for home modification services

Each funding stream has eligibility categories or requirements such as:

**Target population:** Homeowners, Renters, Landlords, Veterans, Family

**Demographics:** Income, age, disability, level of care required, geographic location

## State Examples

- **Federal Programs administered by the states:**
  - Older Americans Act Title III-B and National Family Caregiver Support Program Title III-E
  - Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waivers
- **State Funding Sources:**
  - State Tax Credits
  - State General Revenues for state funded programs
  - **State Home Care Programs** (State Funded In-Home or Homecare Program; State Home and Community-Based Service Funds; State Senior Community Services)
  - **State Block Grant Funds** (e.g., Aging Services Block Grant; State Housing Bond Program/Housing Bond Fee grant; State Human Services grant; State Development Services Administration Program grant)

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**Survey Report:** Home Modification and Repairs for Older Adults: Challenges and Opportunities for State Units on Aging. (2020). <https://homemods.org/resources/>

### Learn more about your state's home modification funding sources!

The Home Modification Information Network is a state-by-state inventory designed to put details about each state's home modification policies, funding sources, and programs right at your fingertips.

[www.homemods.org/hmin](http://www.homemods.org/hmin)

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**Questions?** Contact [homemods@usc.edu](mailto:homemods@usc.edu).



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