



Wild Rivers
Habitat
for Humanity®
Strong Foundations

Building for the Future: Supporting Aging Adults and People with Disabilities Through Accessible Housing

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One of life's universal desires is the peace of mind that comes from feeling safe and secure at home. For aging adults and individuals with disabilities, achieving this sense of security often requires thoughtful adjustments to their living spaces. Accessible housing isn't just a convenience – it's essential for fostering independence, safety, and quality of life. However, as people age or face certain health conditions, making these accommodations can become both financially and physically challenging. For instance, someone might need a ramp to safely enter and exit their home, a handrail to navigate stairs, or even meal preparation services to ensure consistent nutrition. While programs like Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity's Home Repair Program are designed to support some of these needs, proactive planning and smaller adjustments can help address safety concerns before larger, more expensive changes become necessary.



Shown: Home Safety Tips For Adults

Preventing Hazards: Safety Starts at Home

Creating an environment that promotes aging in place begins with addressing potential hazards within the home. Falls, which are among the leading causes of injury in older adults, can often be prevented with simple modifications. Ensuring stair handrails are secure and keeping staircases well-lit are effective ways to reduce the risk of falls (National Institute on Aging, n.d.). Tripping hazards, such as loose rugs or carpets, should be eliminated or firmly secured to the floor to prevent accidents (National Institute on Aging, n.d.). For tiled areas prone to becoming slippery when wet, such as bathrooms or kitchens, installing non-slip strips can provide an added layer of safety (National Institute on Aging, n.d.). These practical adjustments may seem minor, but they can significantly improve the safety and accessibility of a home.

Planning for Lifestyle Changes

In addition to physical modifications, aging in place often requires a shift in how daily life is managed. As people age, tasks such as laundry, meal preparation, home cleaning, hygiene, and toileting can become more challenging. Planning ahead for these changes is crucial to maintaining independence and quality of life. While health and medication management are often top of mind, it's equally important to consider the practicalities of daily living. Establishing a reliable support system, whether through family, friends, or community resources, can ensure that these tasks are manageable, even if assistance becomes necessary in the future (UCHealth, n.d.). Taking time to think through these needs early can provide a sense of control and preparedness as circumstances evolve.

Creating Accessible Homes for People with Disabilities

For individuals with disabilities, accessible housing can play a pivotal role in enhancing overall well-being. Adaptations such as widened doorways for wheelchair access, lower countertops for ease of use, and grab bars in bathrooms are examples of modifications that promote independence. Some other examples include increasing lighting throughout the home and transitioning entryways into zero step entry points. These changes not only make the home safer but also empower individuals to live more comfortably and confidently. By addressing accessibility needs, homes can be transformed into spaces where people feel capable and supported rather than restricted.

The Emotional Benefits of Aging in Place

Aging in place allows individuals to remain in their communities, surrounded by familiar spaces and connections. This continuity can significantly improve emotional and mental well-being. Living in a safe, adapted home reduces stress and provides a sense of security, enabling people to focus on enjoying their daily lives and staying connected to loved ones.

How Wild Rivers Habitat Supports Aging in Place

Whether you're preparing your home for yourself or supporting a loved one, these steps can help ensure that aging in place is not only possible but also safe and enjoyable. Accessible housing allows people to continue living in their communities while maintaining independence and dignity.

If you live in Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Polk, Price, Rusk, Taylor, or Washburn Counties, Wild Rivers Habitat for Humanity is here to help. Our Home Repair Program assists eligible individuals with modifications to make their homes safer and more accessible. Whether you need small adjustments or major renovations, we're dedicated to helping everyone age in place with dignity and security. Contact us at 715-939-1390 to explore how we can support you or a loved one in building a safer, more independent future. Speak with our Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS), Jennifer Johnson, to discover the options that best meet your needs.

Source: National Institute on Aging. (n.d.). Home safety tips for older adults. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place/home-safety-tips-older-adults>
UCHealth. (n.d.). Advice for aging in place safely. Stay in your home as long as possible. <https://www.uchealth.org/today/advice-for-aging-in-place-safely-stay-in-your-home-as-long-as-possible/>