

# National Association of Home Builders

## Learn About Aging In Place and What a Professional Can Do for You

### A Safe, Accessible Home for All Abilities and Ages

If you're like the majority of Americans over the age of 45, you want to **continue living in a familiar environment** throughout your maturing years.

*Make Your House a Home for a Lifetime!*  
[Go here](#) to find a CAPS in your area.  
Choose CAPS under "Designation."

According to the AARP, older home owners overwhelmingly prefer to age in place, which means **living in your home safely, independently and comfortably**, regardless of age or ability level.

The NAHB Remodelers of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) in collaboration with the NAHB Research Center, NAHB 50+ Housing Council, and AARP developed the **Certified Aging-In-Place Specialist (CAPS) program** to address the growing number of consumers that will soon require these modifications. While most CAPS professionals are remodelers, an increasing number are general contractors, designers, architects, and health care consultants.

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*I feel better about being able to stay in the familiar surroundings of my own home now that it has been fixed up by my CAPS contractor. The changes I made to my house – like grab bars and better lighting, were cheaper than moving to an assisted living apartment!"*  
--Elsie Peterson, Houston, TX

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**Questions to ask as you consider remodeling or modifying your home:** (click on the link to go to that question)

- [How should you modify your home to make it more comfortable?](#)
- [Who can you rely on to modify your home?](#)
- [What is the CAPS designation?](#)
- [How should you choose a remodeler?](#)
- [What information should you think about?](#)

### How should you modify your home to make it more comfortable?

To age-in-place you will probably need to modify your house as you mature to increase access and maneuverability. These modifications range from the installation of bath and shower grab bars and adjustment of countertop heights to the creation of multifunctional first floor master suites and the installation of private elevators.

## Who can you rely on to modify your home?

CAPS professionals have the answers to your questions. They have been taught the strategies and techniques for designing and building aesthetically enriching, barrier-free living environments.

The CAPS program goes beyond design to address the codes and standards, common remodeling expenditures and projects, product ideas, and resources needed to provide comprehensive and practical aging-in-place solutions. CAPS graduates pledge to uphold a code of ethics and are required to maintain their designation by attending continuing education programs and participating in community service.

## What is the CAPS designation?

A Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) has been trained in:

- The unique needs of the older adult population
- Aging-in-place home modifications
- Common remodeling projects
- Solutions to common barriers

Keep in mind that when you hire a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist, you are buying a service rather than a product. Each CAPS professional draws from a different knowledge base and will approach your project in a different way. No matter where you start in the process, you will eventually need to hire a professional remodeler to actually make the modifications to your home.

## How should you choose a remodeler?

- Figure out how much money you have to spend on the home modification project.
- Seek referrals from friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and others who have had similar work done.
- Contact trade associations such as your area's local Home Builders Association or Remodelers™ Council.
- Check with your local or state office of consumer protection and the local Better Business Bureau.
- Verify the remodeler has the appropriate license(s) in your state.
- Look for professional designations such as CAPS, Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR), or Graduate Master Builder (GMB).
- Ask your professional remodeler for a written estimate of the work to be done based on a set of plans and specifications. Be prepared to pay for this package.
- Select a professional remodeler with plenty of experience with your type of project. Remember, lowest price does not ensure a successful remodeling project.

## What information should you think about?

- Do I want to add a bathroom and possibly a bedroom to the main level?
- How can I make my kitchen more functional?
- Am I worried about preventing falls?

- How much money can I budget for this project?
  - Will I need to get a home equity loan?
  - Will other members of my family benefit from modifications?
  - Will remodeling increase the energy efficiency of my home?
  - Where do I find a professional I can consult with about my needs?
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*My mother was 80 years old and losing her vision. I had a CAPS remodeler build an addition onto my home. The barrier-free bathroom and the new, wide walls have made all the difference for her. The impact on my mother's life was profound. She became more self-sufficient, more confident, and happier."*

--Roy Liard, Denver, CO

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#### **Additional Information:**

- Find a CAPS: [NAHB CAPS Directory](#) choose CAPS under "Designation"
- Learn more about [remodeling your home](#)
- Learn more about CAPS and [how to earn the CAPS designation](#)
- To see examples of award winning CAPS projects, visit [www.nahb.org/homesforlife](http://www.nahb.org/homesforlife).

For more information about this item, please contact The NAHB Remodelers at 800-368-5242 x8216 or via email at [remodel@nahb.org](mailto:remodel@nahb.org).

<http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?sectionID=717&genericContentID=46799>