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Westchester County Habitat for Humanity Introduces “Aging in Place” Home Renovation and Energy Efficiency Program for Seniors

TARRYTOWN, NEW YORK (March 8, 2023) – [Westchester County Habitat for Humanity](#) (Westchester Habitat) introduced today its inaugural program, Aging in Place (AIP), in partnership with [Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc.](#) The home repair and energy efficiency program aims to improve the quality of life for seniors, enabling them to live safely and independently in their homes, close to family and friends, while saving them money and reducing their carbon footprint.

“Aging in Place grew out of extensive stakeholder engagement that helped us to understand the unique housing needs of communities across Westchester County and determine where Habitat could make the most impact,” said Karen Haycox, CEO, Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County. “The acute and growing demand for resources that empower seniors to remain safely and independently in their homes was a common refrain. Through basic home repairs, energy efficiency and safety improvements, Westchester Habitat’s AIP program will help [to meet the housing needs of Westchester’s growing seniors population while protecting the environment](#). We look forward to partnering with businesses, nonprofits, and policymakers who share our vision of making Westchester a national leader in healthy, safe, climate resilient homes for seniors.”

The percentage change in Westchester residents who are 75-years-old or older jumped more than 52% from 2000 to 2017 according to the [Westchester County Housing Needs Assessment](#): “This is critical for future housing plans, especially when coupled with the fact that over 30% of the homes throughout Westchester County were built before 1940. The housing stock will likely need major repairs and system replacements in addition to physical modifications to mitigate accessibility challenges, as people are aging in place.”

Habitat will identify opportunities for modifications to improve safety and mobility for seniors through an initial home assessment, including a general structural, health, safety, and energy efficiency evaluation. In partnership with WRO, Habitat will conduct an initial education session with program participants to provide information and identify additional needs. AIP staff will make referrals, as needed, to local agencies or other non-profit services that support older adults. Learnings from the initial cohort of AIP participants will inform the scale-up of AIP and be shared with the public.

With the philanthropic support of inaugural partners, the Field Hall Foundation, Bank of America, Con Edison, and M&T Bank, AIP seeks to build a Westchester where all seniors can age safely at home with

family and friends. U.S. Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer and former U.S. Representative Mondaire Jones allocated \$500,000 in Congressionally Directed funds in the FY 2023 Omnibus Budget Bill signed into law in December to further support seniors in need of these services.

“Every senior deserves to be able to live safely and comfortably in their own homes. That is why I am proud to deliver this \$500,000 federal boost to launch Aging in Place, the home repair program to help Westchester’s seniors make the home repairs they need to continue to live independently and save money on their utility bills, all while helping to fight climate change,” said Senator Schumer. “I applaud Westchester Residential Opportunities and Westchester County Habitat for Humanity for helping make this program a reality and will keep fighting to deliver the support needed to lay the foundation for safe, stable and affordable housing for seniors across the Hudson Valley.”

“Westchester Residential Opportunities is grateful to Senator Schumer for supporting Aging in Place,” said Marlene Zarfes, Executive Director, WRO. “As our senior population increases, with the number of residents aged 60 or over expected to rise to 25% by 2030, our existing countywide deficiency of affordable housing for seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes, becomes more acute while the wait for affordable housing grows longer. These funds will help us make necessary aging-in-place repairs that enable seniors to remain safely in their homes while increasing energy efficiency.”

“As a private foundation whose primary mission is to improve the lives of older adults and their caregivers, we are proud to be an inaugural supporter of Aging in Place,” said John R. Ahearn, CEO, Field Hall Foundation. “Through home repairs, safety improvements, and energy efficiency upgrades, Aging in Place will improve the quality of life for seniors across Westchester by enabling them to remain safely in their homes while saving money on energy costs.”

“Safe, stable and affordable housing is foundational to healthy, thriving communities,” said José Tavarez, president, Bank of America New York City and Westchester County. “At Bank of America we’re committed to investing in partners like Westchester County Habitat for Humanity, which continue to deliver innovative solutions for vulnerable New Yorkers. Critical initiatives like Aging in Place will help our New York seniors stay in their homes and in their communities.”

“It’s an honor to support those who have given so much to our community, as former caregivers, educators, officers, servicemen and women,” said Jen Hensley, Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Con Edison. “Con Edison is proud to support the Aging in Place program, so that seniors have optimal quality of life throughout their golden years. These funds help bolster homes against severe weather and optimize energy use to reduce overall costs on heating and cooling.”

Seniors who would like to apply for initial AIP accessibility and mobility modifications should **[email AgingInPlace@HabitatNYCWC.org](mailto:AgingInPlace@HabitatNYCWC.org)** or call **914 240 7003** or visit **www.habitatnycwc.org/aging-in-place** to download an application. AIP seeks to serve homeowners aged 62 and over, whose income is up to 80 percent of area median income, who demonstrate a critical housing need. Potential initial services include:

- Grab bars/handrails installation;
- Light switches and doorknob replacement;
- Lighting and trip prevention modifications;
- Accessibility modifications for hearing and vision impaired homeowners.

As program support and capacity grow, Habitat will expand services to include installation of entry ramps, stair lifts, bathroom remodels, and other repairs and modifications for seniors. AIP will partner with NYSERDA-certified contractor [CentsibleHouse](#) to help seniors access significant weatherization and energy efficiency repairs, including the following:

- Roof repair and air sealing;
- HVAC and boiler repair or replacement;
- Insulation;
- Window and door upgrading;
- Electrification and heat pump installation.

“Aging in Place is a critically needed complement to existing energy efficiency programs, which help reduce energy costs, and will empower seniors with improved safety and greater freedom of movement inside their homes,” said Julie Liu, Founder, CentsibleHouse.

“Aging in Place responds to the acute and growing demand in Westchester County for resources and programs that empower seniors to live safely, and independently in their homes as they age,” said George Latimer, Westchester County Executive. “This partnership between Westchester Habitat and longtime fair housing group WRO is great news for Westchester County’s seniors, because it allows them to improve their quality of life and save money, all while protecting our environment.”

About Westchester County Habitat for Humanity

Westchester County Habitat for Humanity (Westchester Habitat) seeks to create, preserve, and advocate for healthy, affordable, homes for all. A subsidiary of Habitat for Humanity New York City and Westchester County, Westchester Habitat envisions a county that is a national leader in meeting the housing needs of our growing senior population, with homes that reduce their energy costs, promote their health and safety, and protect our environment. Learn more at www.habitatnycwc.org and connect with us on [Facebook](#), and on Twitter and Instagram at @HabitatNYC_WC.

About Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. (WRO)

Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote equal, affordable and accessible housing opportunities for all residents of our region. We have been saving homes, saving families, since 1968. For more information, visit <https://wroinc.org/>.

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