



Toolkit

NAVIGATE THE HOME MODIFICATION PROCESS

The Tompkins County Office of Aging (COFA) wants to help older adults navigate the home modification process. We have developed a comprehensive toolkit that takes users through each step of the home modification process. Each step includes a description, resources, and where to get support. Resources are compiled from local organizations and government offices that are involved in the home modification process.

You have decided to modify your home so you can comfortably age in place. What's next?

AT A GLANCE

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **Home Safety Assessment**
- **Equipment**
- **Contractors**
- Financial Support
- Permit Application
- General Assistance
- Agency Information

HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT DO-IT-YOURSELF OR GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

- **What to Look For**
 - a. Check for things that might cause falls.
 - b. Find places where extra support could help in daily tasks.
- **Useful Checklists**
 - Use the "Aging Adults Safety Checklist" from the National Council for Aging for a general check.
 - For fall risks, use the "Fall Prevention Checklist" from Tompkins County Office of Aging.
- **Getting Professional Advice**
 - Professionals like certified aging-in-place specialists (CAPS) can give advice.
 - Places like Tompkins County Aging Office, Finger Lakes Independence Center, Gerould's Healthcare, and Lowe's Livable Home Services offer free advice.
 - Contact them to plan a visit or find more services nearby.

EQUIPMENT (LOAN/RENT/PURCHASE)

Borrow for Short-Term Needs

- Use the FLIC loan closet for quick needs, testing, or temporary changes in your home.
- Items like wheelchairs, ramps, and shower chairs are available.
- You can also borrow devices for vision, hearing, and mobility issues.

Buying Equipment

- Select professional home improvement retailers, and ask if shipping and installation service is available.
- Shop in-store or online. Call or visit to compare options.

Need help or have questions? Call the provider or contact COFA for guidance.

CONTRACTORS

- **Certified Specialists**
 - Choose Certified Aging-In-Place Specialists (CAPS).
 - Local options: Dean Shea, Gary Slade, Charles Freiburger.
- **Ask for Recommendations**
 - Get names from people who had a good experience.
- **Before Hiring**
 - Compare different contractors.
 - Check their references and insurance.
 - Get a written agreement.
 - Don't pay everything upfront.
- **Need Help?**
 - Contact COFA for assistance.

This work was produced under the direction of Prof. Mildred E. Warner in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. Research was coordinated with the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Partial funding support was provided by USDA NIFA grant #2019-68006-29674.





Toolkit

NAVIGATE THE HOME MODIFICATION PROCESS

The Tompkins County Office of Aging (COFA) wants to help older adults navigate the home modification process. We have developed a comprehensive toolkit that takes users through each step of the home modification process. Each step includes a description, resources, and where to get support. Resources are compiled from local organizations and government offices that are involved in the home modification process.

You have decided to modify your home so you can comfortably age in place. What's next?

AT A GLANCE

YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Home Safety Assessment
- Equipment
- Contractors
- **Financial Support**
- **Permit Application**
- **General Assistance**
- Agency Information

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Local Funding Programs

- INHS offers:
 - Major Repair: For big projects like roofing and energy improvements.
 - Minor Repair: For smaller fixes, like handrails and leaky faucets.
 - FLIC installs temporary ramps.

Government Subsidies

- Check COFA's recent Benefit Checklist for available subsidies in Tompkins County.

Extra Options

- School Tax Relief (STAR) program offers property tax relief in New York State.

Need Guidance?

- Reach out to COFA or your local tax office for help with these programs.

PERMIT APPLICATION

When Do You Need a Permit?

- For changes to systems like electrical, plumbing, heating.

Why Permits Matter

- They ensure safety and compliance with construction standards.

How to Apply

- Each local government has a process:
 - In Ithaca, use the Town of Ithaca Open.gov portal.
 - Instructions are on their building permit application webpage.
 - Check Section 125-5 of the Town Code for exempted work.

Finding Information

- Visit your local government's website for permit details.

Need Help?

- Contact your local code office, COFA, or INHS for guidance.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

• No Internet?

- Visit your local library or government office for online access.

• Where to Get Assistance

- Contact agencies like COFA, FLIC, and INHS:
 - They can help with funding, finding contractors, and paperwork.
 - They are dedicated to helping you safely age in your home.

This work was produced under the direction of Prof. Mildred E. Warner in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. Research was coordinated with the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Partial funding support was provided by USDA NIFA grant #2019-68006-29674.





HOME MODIFICATION AGENCY & CONTRACTOR INFORMATION

LOCAL AGING & HOME MODIFICATION ASSISTANCE AGENCIES

1. Tompkins County Office for the Aging (COFA)

- Location: 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 274-5484
- Website: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa

2. Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC)

- Location: 215 Fifth Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 272-2433
- Website: www.fliconline.org

3. Gerould's Healthcare Center

- Location: 200 South Main St., Elmira, NY 14904
- Phone: (607) 367-6935
- Website: www.geroulds.com

4. Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Service (INHS)

- Location: 115 W. Clinton St., Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 277-4500
- Website: www.ithacanh.org

5. Lowe's

- Location: 130 Fairgrounds Memorial Pkwy, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Store Phone: (607) 254-2000
- Livable Home Services Phone: 1-877-GO-LOWES
- Website: www.lowes.com
- Livable Home Services: [Lowe's Livable Home Services](#)

6. UHS Professional Home Care - Ithaca

- Location: 222 Elmira Rd, Suite 4, Ithaca Shopping Plaza, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 257-1425
- Website: [UHS Professional Home Care - Ithaca](#)
[UHS Professional Home Care - Ithaca](#)

7. Cayuga Health Medical Equipment

- Location: 40 Catherwood Rd; Suite A0, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 339-0414
- Website: Cayuga Health - Ithaca
<https://cayugahealth.org/services/medical-equipment/>

CERTIFIED AGING-IN-PLACE SPECIALISTS (CAPS) CONTRACTORS

1. Crown Construction

- Location: 176 Cortland Rd., Dryden, NY 13053
- Phone: (607) 844-3993
- Website: www.crownconstructioninc.com

2. Sunny Brook Builders

- Location: 2147 Slaterville Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 539-6286
- Website: www.sunnybrookbuilders.com

3. Northstar Lifts

- Location: 493 Route 281, Tully, NY 13159
- Phone: (315) 864-6006
- Website: www.northstarlifts.com

4. Rocco Design & Build LLC

- Location: 415 W Buffalo St, Ithaca, NY 14850
- Phone: (607) 351-6696
- Website: Rocco Design & Build LLC - Ithaca
<https://www.roccodesignbuild.com/>

This work was produced under the direction of Prof. Mildred E. Warner in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. Research was coordinated with the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Partial funding support was provided by USDA NIFA grant #2019-68006-29674.

