

CareBand Writing Prompt

BACKGROUND

According to the Census Bureau, the older population is expected to continue to grow significantly in the future. The population age 65 and over has increased from 37.2 million in 2006 to over 49 million in 2016. People age 65 and over represented 15.2% of the population in the year 2016 but are expected to grow to be 21.7% of the population by 2040. The 85 and over population is projected to more than double from 6.4 million in 2016 to 14.6 million in 2040 (a 129% increase). [i] As a result of these sweeping demographic changes, meeting the *housing-related needs of older adults will require a range of responses*.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines aging in place “as the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.” Older adults overwhelmingly prefer to stay in their homes and communities as they age. According to the AARP Public Policy Institute, 87 percent of adults age 65 and over want to stay in their current home and community as they age[ii]. Studies show that some 70 percent of older adults live in single-family detached homes, and nearly 90 percent intend to remain in their homes permanently. [iii] Over 35% of older adults reported having some type of disability (i.e., difficulty in hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care, or independent living). Millions of these individuals live in homes that lack accessibility features that support the ability to live safely and independently. In fact, the Census Bureau reveals that 1 in 3 older adult has trouble using some feature of their home. Another major concern is the risk of falling among older adults. According to CDC each year, millions of older people fall. In fact, the CDC notes that more than one out of four older people fall each year, but less than half tell their doctor[iv]. Most serious falls occur in and around the home, and can be life-changing.

Home modifications and repairs can help older adults age in place and maintain their independence. In many cases home modifications can also help prevent falls and other accidents in the home. Modifications can make it easier for older adults to navigate through and live in their homes, including brighter lighting, grab bars, stair lifts, and ramps. New technologies are also being introduced to help older adults age in their homes.

PURPOSE

Through this funding opportunity announcement, NIH seeks to address identified barriers to optimal access to and use of home modifications that support aging in place. NIH is seeking applications that propose a range of approaches to address the challenges associated with access to, and use of, home modifications to support aging in place

OPPORTUNITY

Using the background above and no more than 2 hours of research, please prepare a 1-page maximum response outlining some barriers to access as well as possible approaches to address the barriers you have identified (This is not meant to be a comprehensive list, but to present and analyze possible barriers and approaches.). Review existing materials and studies completed in this space and cite at least 3 sources to support your findings.