

Funding Accessibility Modifications in Housing

Finding affordable housing that meets the accessibility needs of a person with a disability is a major challenge in Virginia. However, there are programs which provide assistance to modify housing so it will meet an individual's unique accessibility needs. See the resources below for more information and details on how to apply.

Flexible Funding is available to individuals with developmental disabilities who are making their first transition from institutions, licensed/certified provider-operated living arrangements, OR family homes to private residences where they pay their own living expenses. Individuals must receive a Medicaid Waiver for people with developmental disabilities (e.g., the Building Independence [BI] Waiver, Family & Individual Support [FIS] Waiver or Community Living [CL] Waiver) or be on the waiver waitlist. Flexible Funding covers up to \$5,000 of one-time environmental modifications expenses and transition costs for an individual.

For more information about Flexible Funding, contact your DBHDS Regional Housing Coordinator. Use this link to get a list of Housing Coordinators by region:

<https://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/housing/housing-team>

Livable Homes Tax Credit is a Virginia tax credit of up to \$5,000 for homeowners who purchase and/or construct a new accessible residence. A newly purchased or constructed unit must meet the definition of “visitability” or include at least three accessibility features and meet the requirements of an existing accessibility standard. A unit is visitable if it has a zero-step entrance approached by an accessible route, an accessible bathroom on the same floor as the zero-step entrance, and doors with at least 32 inches of clear width and hallways/passage ways of at least 36 inches of clear width to the accessible bathroom and eating area. Homeowners can also receive up to 50% of the cost to retrofit an existing unit, not to exceed \$5,000. Rental units are not eligible. A retrofitted unit must include at least one accessibility feature (e.g., ramp, chair lift, sensory modification, etc.), must be a permanent part of the structure and must meet the requirements of an existing accessibility standard. The applicant must incur the cost of the accessibility features in order to claim the tax credit, and must file an application with the Department of Housing & Community Development by January 31st of the year following the year in which the purchase or retrofitting was completed.

For more information about the Livable Homes Tax Credit, go to

<https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/lhtc>.

Medicaid Waiver Environmental Modification Services are available to individuals who receive a Medicaid Waiver for people with developmental disabilities (e.g., the Building Independence [BI] Waiver, Family & Individual Support [FIS] Waiver or Community Living [CL] Waiver). Environmental modifications are physical adaptations to the individual's primary home, primary vehicle, or work site that are necessary to ensure the health and welfare of the individual, or that enable the individual to function with greater independence. Adaptations may include, but are not limited to, the installation of ramps and grab-bars, widening of doorways, modification of bathroom facilities, or installation of specialized electric and plumbing systems that are necessary to accommodate the medical equipment and supplies that are necessary for the individual. Modifications may be made to a primary automotive vehicle in which the individual is transported if it is owned by the individual, a family member with whom the individual lives or has consistent and ongoing contact, or a nonrelative who provides primary long-term support to the individual and is not a paid provider of services. The maximum Medicaid Waiver-funded expenditure for environmental modifications is \$5,000 per calendar year. For more information, individuals should contact their Support Coordinators at the local Community Services Boards.

Rebuilding Together is a national organization with local affiliates that engage volunteer groups to repair homes of low-income homeowners. Repairs include accessibility, safety and energy efficiency modifications. To find your local affiliate and learn about eligibility requirements, see <https://rebuildingtogether.org/find-your-local-affiliate>

Virginia Housing's (VH) Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grants are available to tenants with disabilities who earn 80% or less of the area median income. The unit requiring modifications must be the individual with a disability's primary principal residence. VH Rental Unit Modifications will cover modifications directly related to the applicant's disability, including, but not limited to, installation of ramps, chairlifts, widening of doorways and sidewalks, remote entry devices, alterations to bathrooms and kitchens. Currently, \$8,000 is available per individual on a one-time basis for modifications in rental units.

For more information about VH's modification grants, visit <https://www.vhda.com/renters/pages/accessiblerentalhousing.aspx>