



Project HOME

BY JASON O. HAFEMAN

Home. It's a place where we feel comfortable, make memories with loved ones, have a good night's sleep, and more. But what happens when your home no longer feels comfortable or safe? Physical limitations often come with age and can make it difficult to enjoy and maneuver in your house the way you once did.

For nearly 50 years, Project Home has improved the quality and affordability of homes for income-eligible south central Wisconsin residents, and senior homeowners are our largest

demographic. We perform repairs, maintenance, energy upgrades, and accessibility modifications through a variety of government and privately funded programs. From windows and siding to electrical and plumbing, we focus on health-and-safety related improvements. If you need a ramp built, grabbars installed, a bathtub converted to an easy-access shower, or work on your gutters and doors, Project Home can help.

Most of Project Home's programs have no upfront cost, as they are funded



Wyolanda

through deferred loans, forgivable loans, and grants. We understand that reviewing eligibility requirements and completing applications can sometimes be daunting, so our staff is ready to answer your questions and make it as easy as possible. Intake Supervisor Wyolanda Singleton is our in-house expert on identifying and understanding the services you are eligible for. She wants every applicant to know we are here to support them, including those applying for the Dane County Rehabilitation Program (for residents outside the City of Madison only), which has the most in-depth application.

"When you receive your application, don't feel intimidated," says Wyolanda. "If you simply sit down and look it over, you will already know the answers to all the questions. This program allows us to help homeowners with some of the most expensive and time-consuming projects. We walk you through every step of the process. The program itself is very nuanced, but the application process is super easy for homeowners."



After working with Wyolanda, you'll feel better about the application process, but what about the people who will be working on your home? Everyone needs experienced contractors they can trust. Most of Project Home's employees have decades of construction experience, all hold lead-safe and asbestos-safe certifications, and our home repair coordinator is a Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP) and Master Certified Remodeler (MCR). In addition, Project Home staff receive basic dementia-friendly training.

As homeowners, we develop a fondness and attachment to our homes—they've treated us well, and we want to reciprocate. So in addition to the freedom, lifestyle, and general well-being adaptations offer, it can be significantly less expensive to upgrade rather than move. And as we get older, being uprooted to an unfamiliar place can be stressful; different smells, views, sounds, and neighbors are major adjustments. This may sound overly dramatic, but these are the things many older adults have told us. They are

thankful to be helped so they can stay in the homes they've known and loved.

Project Home's programs exist to improve living conditions and the housing stock, but it's the human side to the work that affects us most—it's why we do it. If repairing or adapting someone's home allows them to retain their independence and comfort, as well as makes long-term improvements to the neighborhood, Project Home will be achieving its mission—one house at a time.

Jason O. Hafeman is the outreach manager at Project Home.

Photographs provided by Project Home.

