



westchester residential opportunities

Since 1968

Saving homes, saving families™



Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc.

Funding for Accessibility Modifications Program

A. Introduction to WRO

Westchester Residential Opportunities ("WRO") is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote equal, affordable and accessible housing opportunities for all residents of the Lower Hudson Valley region of New York, including Westchester, Putnam and Rockland counties. Since 1968, WRO has championed the expansion of non-discriminatory housing opportunities in our region for low- and moderate-income people, minorities, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

B. Program Description

WRO's Funding for Accessibility Modifications Program (the "**FAM Program**") is supported by a grant from Enterprise Community Partners ("**ECP**") and its funders. The FAM Program is designed to make housing more accessible for individuals with disabilities.

FAM Program grants may be made in an amount not to exceed \$25,000. FAM Program funding is paid directly by WRO to the contractors or other service providers, not to the grantee. Grant funding may be used to:

- pay architects, contractors, and/or experts who are retained to evaluate reasonable modification requests made, inspect housing units to assess and report on feasibility of the requested modification, and obtain related cost estimates.
- pay qualified contractors to make the requested modifications, including any associated costs and fees.

FAM Program funding is limited, and there is no assurance, even if your project and household meet the eligibility requirements below, that grant funding will be made available for your project. WRO reserves the right to reject any application for grant funding for any or no reason.

C. Project Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible for a FAM Program grant, WRO must determine that the requested accessibility modification project meets these criteria:

1. If the prospective grantee is a tenant (i.e., does not own the home), that the landlord or other housing provider is not legally responsible to pay for the modification¹;
2. That the requested modification is both feasible and reasonable;

¹ Generally speaking, under New York law landlords are required to pay for reasonable modifications to areas of their buildings that are available for *common use*. Common use areas would include, for example, a main entrance, or lobby or laundry area that are used by multiple tenants (as opposed to areas that are for a tenant's personal use, like within their apartment units).

3. WRO and the prospective grantee agree on a contractor who is qualified to perform the work; and
4. The work to provide the modification is satisfactorily completed.

Note: During the continuance of the Covid-19 pandemic, WRO may in its discretion prioritize for the FAM Program projects that allow for increased social distancing and additional safety protocols for WRO's staff and/or contractors.

D. The Process of Selecting a Contractor

Prior to selecting a contractor for any project, WRO shall, in coordination with the prospective grantee, prepare or have prepared bid instructions for the project and solicit project bids from at least three qualified contractors. WRO and the prospective grantee shall agree up on a qualified contractor with which to contract for the project, which contractor may not necessarily have submitted the lowest cost project bid.

E. Household Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for FAM Program grant funding, the prospective grantee must demonstrate to WRO's satisfaction that it meets the following criteria:

1. Be a person with a disability (or have a person with a disability in your household) who is requesting a physical modification to a dwelling, building, or complex in which you reside and the need for the modification requested is related to the disability;
2. Satisfactorily complete WRO's intake and eligibility documentation, including documenting the need for the requested modification;
3. The residence in question is the prospective grantee's primary residence and is located in Putnam, Rockland or Westchester County;
4. Provide a written affirmation to WRO's satisfaction of grantee's intention to remain in the home for at least two years from the date of the modification;
5. Have a household income which is at or below 120% of the New York State median family income based on the most recently completed American Community Survey 1-year survey; and
6. Fully cooperate with WRO throughout the process, including, but not limited to, providing documentation requested and allowing inspections to evaluate the modification sought to determine whether the modification is feasible and reasonable.

Also, FAM Program grants are not available if:

1. You or other members of your household own other real estate that you do not occupy;
2. You or other members of your household have previously received FAM Program funding in an amount that, together with your current request, would exceed \$25,000; or
3. WRO determines that the requested modification is not feasible or reasonable.

F. How to Get Started

If your household meets the criteria described above and you would like to learn more grant funding under the FAM Program, please contact our Accessibility Modifications Manager, Nneka Reed, by email at payroll@wroinc.org.

Program Disclaimers

Neither WRO, ECP nor any of their agents or employees take any responsibility for, guarantee nor warrant the work of any contractor or other service provider involved in providing a modification funded by the FAM Program. Housing providers' and grantee households' sole recourse for any defect in workmanship or failure of a contractor or service provider to perform shall be directly to the contractor or service provider.