

# Home Safety for Older Adults: Examples of Community Efforts



*The Home SAFE Project is pleased to provide this resource as part of its efforts to increase home safety awareness and activities in Los Angeles County.*

Home safety is critical to allow the growing number of older adults to safely age in place. In Los Angeles (LA) County, almost half a million adults age 65+ have some type of disability and a significant number live in housing with barriers and hazards that compromise their health.

Addressing home safety requires collaboration across agencies and dedicated funding. While every community has specific needs and resources to promote home safety for older adults, successes from other communities can serve as models for your efforts. This document provides information about local efforts across the country that can be used to stimulate home safety program development, advocacy, and consumer education in Los Angeles County.

**For the purposes of this document, home safety includes the following five areas; symbols denote the home safety aspects addressed by each project:**




Fall Prevention = 

Fire Protection = 

Lead Prevention = LD

Home Modification = 

CO Prevention = CO

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## Chicago Home Safety Partnership

Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Phone: (773) 329-4010

Web: [www.nhschicago.org/site/3C/category/safety\\_program\\_overview](http://www.nhschicago.org/site/3C/category/safety_program_overview)



CO LD

**WHO:** In 1998, Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS), the City of Chicago, and insurance providers formed the Chicago Home Safety Partnership (CHSP) to provide services and education on home safety and insurance to low- and moderate-income homeowners.

**WHY:** To raise awareness about fire risk to homes; help reduce injury, loss of life, and property due to fire; and build stronger neighborhoods through the preservation of Chicago's affordable housing.

**WHAT:** Launched as a pilot program, the CHSP is an innovative approach for reducing fire loss and increasing home safety in Chicago. CHSP is a model for multi-sector partnership and shares its experiences with other communities.

**HOW:** CHSP offers workshops throughout the city to educate residents about home safety issues such as fire and carbon monoxide poisoning prevention. It also provides home safety evaluations for homeowners. Its HRAIL program (Home Repair for Accessible and Independent Living) provides grant funds from the City of Chicago to help older adult residents age in place by making home safety repairs and upgrades such as grab bars, carbon monoxide detectors, smoke detectors and wheel chair ramps. NHS also administers the LEAD Safe program, which provides lead detection and abatement services. CHSP markets its services at housing expos and neighborhood meetings. Today, it continues to serve Chicago neighborhoods through loans, grants, education, and preventative services.

## The Environmental Health/Home Safety Education Project: A Successful and Practical U.S. - Mexico Border Initiative

Southern Area Health Education Center (SoAHEC) and

the Border Health Education Training Center, New Mexico State University

Web: <http://hpp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/11/3/325>

Web: [www.soahec-nm.org/](http://www.soahec-nm.org/)



CO LD

**WHO:** SoAHEC collaborated with the Border Health Education Training Center and the Border Environmental Health Coalition.

**WHY:** In 1999, The Environmental Health/Home Safety Education Project, funded by the New Mexico Department of Health, Office of Border Health, was developed in response to preventable injury and environmental health issues occurring in and around homes on the U.S. - Mexico border, including fire and electrical safety, gas safety, lead, and outdoor hazards.

**WHAT:** The project was a health education intervention to address injury prevention and environmental health. In 2007/2008, the program became The Community-level Environmental Health/All Hazards Emergency Preparedness Program, funded by the New Mexico Office of Border Health to address all hazards and flu emergency preparedness at the household level.

**HOW:** Utilizing trained community members called promotoras, homes were visited and assessed for potential environmental hazards. The project was based on the Health Belief Model (Becker, 1974), which suggests that education can contribute to behavior change. Data analyzed from years 2002 to 2005 showed a significant impact in knowledge levels and initial behavior change among participants as it relates to fire and food safety issues. Since the initiation of the project in 1999, hundreds of participants have made their homes safer. A Home Safety Toolkit was created as part of the program and is available on the SoAHEC website.

## Healthy Homes Project Pilot, Baltimore

Baltimore City Health Department, Healthy Homes Division, Baltimore, Maryland

Phone: (410) 396-1064

Web: [www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/ByAudience/Programs\\_Baltimore.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes/ByAudience/Programs_Baltimore.html)

Web: [www.baltimorehealth.org/healthyhomes.html](http://www.baltimorehealth.org/healthyhomes.html)



**WHO:** In 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention granted funding to Baltimore City Health Department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

**WHY:** The goal of the grant was to coordinate a Healthy Homes Pilot Team, including field team representatives, field staff supervisors, and managerial staff that would transition from Lead Poisoning into a comprehensive Healthy Homes Program with the goal of addressing the broad range of housing deficiencies and hazards associated with unhealthy and unsafe homes.

**WHAT:** The pilot project assessed 198 homes for environmental health concerns. Field staff members were trained to become Healthy Homes practitioners that worked with families to assess the environment for potential hazards and make changes for safety.

**HOW:** Healthy Homes provides training and tools for environmental public health practitioners, public health nurses, and housing specialists to provide families education, supplies, referrals, and in some cases assistance to make home repairs and modifications. Assessments and interventions address public health hazards including lead exposure, carbon monoxide exposure, fire hazards and the adequacy of smoke alarms, adequacy of ventilation, heating and cooling, and visible physical hazards. As part of the project, the Baltimore City Healthy Homes team developed two assessment forms (visual and psychosocial/medical) available in English and Spanish; healthy homes protocol; list of recommended trainings for healthy homes implementation staff; healthy homes supply package list; and a CDC Transition Report for use by other public health programs interested in transitioning to a holistic Healthy Homes approach.

## Home Injury Control Program for Older Adults

Oakland-Livingston Human Service Agency, Howell, Michigan

Phone: (517) 546-8500

Web: [www.virtualcap.org/viewprogram.cfm?pid=92](http://www.virtualcap.org/viewprogram.cfm?pid=92)

Web: [www.olhsa.org/home\\_safety.asp](http://www.olhsa.org/home_safety.asp)



**WHO:** The Oakland-Livingston Human Service Agency (OLHSA) established and continues to run the Home Injury Control Program for Older Adults.

**WHY:** To help elderly and disabled adults avoid preventable accidents and injuries by maintaining a comfortable and safe living environment.

**WHAT:** The Home Injury Control Program for Older Adults provides safety devices and installation services for adults age 60+ to promote safety in the bathroom, at night, in emergencies, and for everyday activities. Data on the benefits of devices installed under the program from 2003-2007 are available on the program website.

**HOW:** With priority given to lower income and disabled elderly, core services include the installation of safety devices, dissemination of safety information, and safety skill classes. The program also engages the community with education and advocacy efforts. Staff includes a Program Supervisor and Home Injury/Safety Workers. OLHSA has developed two logic models related to the Home Injury Control Program - Dynamics of Service Delivery to Eligible Elderly Adults and Theory of Change: Proposed Effects from Activities during Ongoing Program Improvement, as well as a Senior Home Safety: Home Injury Control Manual that is distributed to older adults to help reduce falls in the home.

## Housing Rehabilitation Program: Home Safety Grant



Housing and Property Management Division, Monterey, California

Phone: (831) 646-3995

Web: [www.monterey.org/housing/grant\\_safety.html#description](http://www.monterey.org/housing/grant_safety.html#description)

**WHO:** The City of Monterey, Housing and Property Management Division utilizes U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant Funds to fund the program.

**WHY:** To provide assistance to homeowners to maintain home safety.

**WHAT:** Items eligible for funding include: safety grab bars, handrails on stairs, wheelchair access ramps, fire extinguishers, chimney cleaning, small electrical repairs, trip hazards and hard-wired smoke detectors.

**HOW:** Upon successful determination of eligibility, the home is inspected and a list of repairs/modifications is prepared. The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Coordinator obtains and reviews construction estimates with the homeowner from City-screened State licensed and insured contractors. The HCD Coordinator makes the final grant decision. Grants are limited to \$1,250 per household per year. Program eligibility requirements include income limits and the property must be a single-family residence located within the city limits. Applications are accepted in the months of July and August.

## Stop Falls Napa Valley



Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano Counties, Napa County, California

Web: <http://stopfalls.aaans.org/index.php>

**WHO:** In April 2006, the Archstone Foundation awarded a grant to the Area Agency on Aging Serving Napa and Solano with support from the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence to build the fall prevention coalition, Stop Falls Napa Valley (SFNV).

**WHY:** The coalition conducted a needs assessment survey of community providers serving seniors, which revealed significant gaps in fall prevention policies, programs, and services and illuminated interest and priorities for a plan to establish Napa's first fall prevention program, launched in 2007 by the Area Agency on Aging through funding from Queen of the Valley Medical Center and County of Napa Tobacco Settlement Agreement Funds.

**WHAT:** Identified priorities from the needs assessment included community education and awareness, coordination among health care and other providers, provider education and training, centralized resource and referral for fall prevention services, falls surveillance, reporting, and institutional and community policies. The fall prevention program is in its last year of a 3 year grant from The California Wellness Foundation, and received one year funding donations in 2009 and 2010 for home modifications from T.J. Longs Foundation and local funders, Gasser Foundation and Napa Valley Community Foundation Donor Advised Fund. It is seeking additional funding to sustain the program.

**HOW:** SFNV has trained over 200 professionals, 78 of whom participated in a train-the-trainer fall prevention workshop and have incorporated fall prevention education into their practices. In the fall prevention program, trained occupational therapists have conducted 130 home safety fall risk assessments resulting in fall interventions such as ramp and grab bar installation, provision of bath benches and raised toilet seats, rug and clutter removal, and referrals to services coordinated through doctors, physical therapists, and podiatrists. To date, over 6,000 individuals have received education and fall prevention classes, screening and exercise programs, including over 600 seniors residing in low-income housing developments.

## Rebuilding Together Southern California

**Phone:** (949) 278-2911

**Web:** [www.RTSoCal.org](http://www.RTSoCal.org)



**CO LD**

**WHO:** Rebuilding Together has 13 affiliates in Southern California forming part of the more than 200 affiliates that make up the national nonprofit organization, Rebuilding Together.

**WHY:** To preserve affordable homeownership, revitalize communities, and make homes safer, more accessible and energy efficient.

**WHAT:** Rebuilding Together is the nation's largest volunteer organization preserving and revitalizing low-income homes and communities. Recipients served include the elderly, the disabled, the very low-income and, low-income homes with children. Over the last twenty years, Rebuilding Together groups in Southern California have refurbished and rehabilitated more than 2,700 sites with the help 43,000 volunteers providing an estimated value of \$11 million dollars in repairs. Many repairs made are for fall prevention along with a nationwide initiative to make Rebuilding Together projects more environmentally friendly. Rebuilding Together affiliates in LA County cover Greater Los Angeles, Long Beach, Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

**HOW:** Rebuilding Together recruits volunteers with related skills and experience, such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and floor experts. They also depend on local donations and funding provided through the national Rebuilding Together office.

This product is brought to you by the project Home Safety Adaptations for the Elderly (Home SAFE) funded by The Eisner Foundation and administered by the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence (FPCE), University of Southern California. FPCE is funded by the Archstone Foundation. **For more information, visit [www.stopfalls.org](http://www.stopfalls.org).**



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