

## Ageing in Place

By Laila Pera, CSA

The term “ageing in place” refers to the concept of seniors adapting their homes to meet their needs as opposed to moving somewhere that, while it may be more suitable, is not their ideal choice for their senior years. This topic is not only prominent in our community but is the feature theme for many international conferences, festivals and workshops. Architecture, engineering, robotics, furniture design are just a few key areas being utilized to better living for our senior years. It’s not just about “grab bars” anymore!

There is also financial aid for those that are worried about costs involved in renovating your home for better safety and convenience. My colleague, Dan Nugent of Ease-Ability Renovations & Construction Ltd., detailed these in an April 2007 article and with his permission, I feel its information which bears repeating.

Veterans Independence Program (VIP) for those who have served in the armed forces, or RCMP. Veterans Affairs has many programs from yard maintenance to accessibility funding. Contact: 1-866-522-2122 or [www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp (CMHC) offers a number of programs including the four listed below- qualifications based on income, etc.

HASI- Home Adaptations for Seniors’ Independence –Funds up to \$ 3,500.

For permanently installed handrails; easy-to-reach work and storage areas in the kitchen; lever handles on doors; walk-in showers with grab bars; bathtub grab bars and seats for example.

RRAP- Homeowner Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program- Funds up to

\$ 16,000, for upgrades/repairs to structure, electrical, plumbing, heating, and/or fire safety.

RRAP- Disabilities- accessibility work to modify dwellings occupied or intended for occupancy by low-income persons with disabilities. Forgivable loans range from \$16,000 for owners to \$ 24,000 for rental units.

RRAP-Secondary/Garden Suite. Funds up to \$ 24,000- To create a secondary, self contained suite for occupancy by low income seniors and adults with a disability for up to \$ 24,000.

As Dan points out, it’s important to be sure you qualify before you start any work and a toll free call to CMHC is worth the time. Also, [www.pwd-online.ca](http://www.pwd-online.ca) – look for housing then home repair. This site also has many interesting links to all kinds of services.

While renovations to the home are very important, so is competent, compassionate and caring help either on a continuous basis or occasionally to tackle possibly hazardous or challenging tasks. There seem to be a myriad of agencies offering this help but vulnerable seniors should be very careful when inviting unknowns to work in their home. More about this topic in the next article.