

# FallHome



*A special publication of  
The Eagle-Tribune,  
The Salem News, The Daily  
News of Newburyport and  
the Gloucester Daily Times*



## Safe at Home

How to make bathrooms  
safer for seniors

## Meeting Modern Needs

What to expect of  
in-law suites



## Curing Cramped Quarters

Signs it might be time  
for a room addition

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# How to make bathrooms safer for seniors

Maintaining a sense of independence throughout retirement can inspire seniors to live their golden years to the fullest. For many seniors, nothing is more emblematic of their ability to stay independent than remaining in their homes. A number of variables can affect how long seniors stay in their homes, including the layout of the property and any potential safety threats that may arise as men and women age. Some small, safety-centric tweaks to a property can help men and women remain in their homes for as long as possible.

• **Increase lighting in bathrooms throughout the home.** Lighting is easily overlooked as a safety measure, but a well-lit space is easier to navigate. Increasing lighting in the bathroom and upgrading existing features to LED lighting can make it easier for seniors to navigate bathrooms at night. That's a notable benefit, as seniors may need to make routine bathroom trips overnight.

• **Install grab bars.** Grab bars are often found in public restrooms, but they're equally useful in the bathrooms or private homes, particularly in seniors' residences. Grab bars can be installed on both sides of all toilets and in the bathtub/shower stall so seniors can get up and down easily and reinforce their stability on wet surfaces.

• **Invest in bathroom storage systems.** A cluttered bathroom is a potential safety hazard. Items in cluttered bathrooms can easily end up on the floor, and that goes for bathing items like shampoo and soap as well. A bathroom storage system

for a vanity and an organizer for bathing items inside a shower or tub can decrease the chance that items end up on the floor, where they can pose an injury risk for seniors who might struggle to bend over to pick them up or slip on fallen items when bathing.

• **Renovate your existing shower.** Seniors whose current bathrooms house a traditional shower setup that requires them to step over a tub can renovate the space and replace that feature with a walk-in shower. A walk-in shower does not require seniors step over a bathtub, greatly reducing the risk of falls while bathing. Some additional shower renovations include installing a bench so seniors can sit down while bathing, ideally while using a hand-held shower head.

• **Purchase non-slip materials for the bathroom.** Non-slip floor mats in a bathroom are essential for anyone, and especially beneficial for seniors. A non-slip vanity storage bin and toothbrush holder also can ensure daily accessories remain accessible.

• **Elevate toilet heights.** Elevating toilet heights in bathrooms throughout the home can make it easier for seniors to sit down and get up when going to the bathroom. Toilets compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are roughly 18 inches taller than standard toilets, which can make a big difference for seniors.

These are just a handful of ways seniors can make their bathrooms safer as they aspire to stay in their homes longer.





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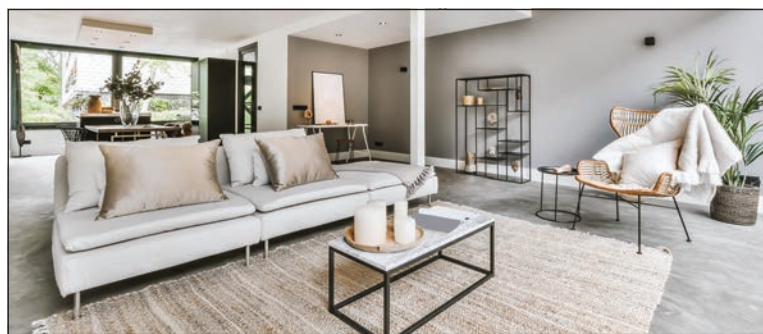
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# What to expect of in-law suites

The modern real estate market has led millions of aspiring home buyers to reconsider their approach to buying a home. Low inventory has led to high home prices. When paired with mortgage interest rates that have remained north of 6 percent for years, the high sticker price of homes has made many buyers wonder if homeownership is simply beyond their means.

It's impossible to know if or when home prices will come down, but some buyers have chosen to seek homes that can accommodate multiple generations. According to the Pew Research Center, the share of multigenerational homes rose from 7 percent in 1971 to 18 percent in 2021. A multitude of factors have contributed to that increase, and housing affordability is one such variable. In 2024, researchers studying multigenerational households at the Wharton School at the



University of Pennsylvania noted that housing affordability declined considerably in recent years but also had been on the decline for decades. As homes become less affordable, the number of multigenerational households tends to increase, and that's something modern buyers can keep in mind as they look for a home.

In-law suites that accommodate multigenerational households can provide a pathway to homeownership for buyers who otherwise may be priced out of the market. Buyers considering

homes with an in-law suite or those who want to add one to their existing homes can familiarize themselves with these convenient and potentially cost-saving features.

• **Note the significance of a separate entrance.** Whether you're looking for a home with an in-law suite or hoping to add one on to your existing home, a separate entrance for suite residents can allow them to come and go as they please. That sense of independence is significant. In addition, a separate entrance can make a home seem

less like a multigenerational residence, which at times can feel crowded, and more like a single-generation home. That can afford all residents a little more peace and quiet in a typical day.

• **Expect an increase in taxes if you're adding on.** As with any addition to a home, adding an in-law suite to an existing home is likely to result in an increase in homeowners' property taxes. The amount of that increase is contingent upon variables unique to each residence, like location and the size of the addition. When shopping for homes with existing in-law suites, buyers can request existing tax information so they are not surprised by the number like they might be if they add on to an existing home. Despite that, it might still be in prospective buyers' best interest to add on to an existing property and pay the additional taxes than it would to buy a new home.

• **Try to include features residents**

**have come to expect when living independently.** An in-law suite should include its own private bathroom, a washroom for a washer and dryer and a kitchen or kitchenette. If everyone in a multigenerational household is forced to use the same bathrooms, washers and dryers, and kitchens, then the home might begin to feel cramped rather quickly.

• **Try to secure off-street parking.** Though it might not affect the ambiance within the in-law suite itself, an off-street parking spot is a convenience residents will appreciate. Such a space will allow residents to come and go as they please and save them the headache of moving their vehicles for snow plows and street cleaners.

In-law suites could be an in-demand feature as more homeowners and aspiring buyers seek to reduce housing costs by embracing multigenerational living arrangements.

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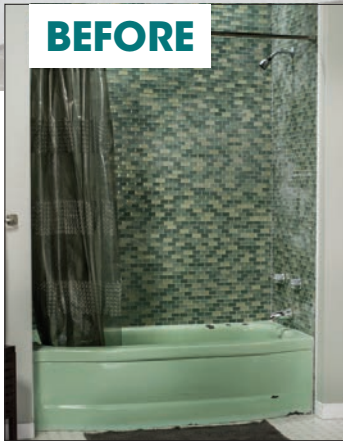
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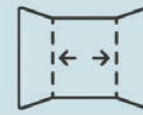
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## WHAT TO EXPECT OF A ROOM ADDITION PROJECT

There are many reasons homeowners consider adding a room to their current homes. Some outgrow an existing space, while others take up new hobbies or have different needs that were not apparent when purchasing the home. Indeed, a room addition can remedy a host of issues affecting a home.

Those considering adding a room may wonder what is involved in this type of project. According to The Spruce, no home improvement project is more complicated or expensive than building an addition. The National Association of Realtors says building an addition can cost between \$90,000 and \$270,000, depending on the size and intended purpose of the room. An addition structurally changes a home, which requires the work of professionals whether homeowners plan to build upwards or outwards.

With so much to ponder when considering a home addition, here's a look at what homeowners can expect of the process.

• **Design and planning:** Homeowners must determine the purpose behind the addition and how it will integrate with the existing home. A bedroom design likely will be different from a garage addition or family game room.

• **Hire an engineer and contractor:** An addition changes the footprint of a home. Homeowners

will require professional contractors and structural engineers/architects to properly design the addition and ensure that it will not compromise the existing structure. Detailed architectural plans will be drawn up considering the layout, size and integration with the existing structure. The home may require a new property survey as well.

• **Comply with building codes:** The project will have to meet with local zoning regulations, building codes and homeowners association rules.

• **Timing involved:** Adding a room is a major overhaul of a space. It may require months of a home being in upheaval. If the renovations are particularly extensive, homeowners may need to temporarily move out of the space. Electrical, plumbing and HVAC must be considered, and drywall and finishing the interior are some of the last steps to make the room habitable.

• **Demolition:** Adding a room may involve taking down walls or modifying existing spaces, necessitating hiring a dumpster to remove debris. This is an added consideration and expense.

Putting an addition on a home is a complex process that will take time and money. Such a project requires careful planning and consultation with an array of experts.



# Signs it might be time for a room addition project

**N**o one enjoys being in cramped quarters. Whether a person battles a legitimate case of claustrophobia when confined in tight spaces or simply prefers a place to stretch out, there's no denying the appeal of a little extra room. That's particularly so at home, where cramped spaces can make it hard to unwind.

When homeowners feel their walls are closing in on them, many choose to build space via a room addition. Room addition projects are extensive and expensive undertakings, with the home renovation experts at Angi estimating the average add-on costs \$48,000. But Angi estimates such projects can cost as much as \$72,600, or even more depending on the size of the space and the features chosen.

The financial commitment when adding a room is significant, but homeowners and residents also

will need to prepare for a potentially lengthy disruption to their daily routines. Various online resources, including Angi, suggest room addition projects typically take around three to four months. With so much at stake, homeowners who think they might benefit from a room addition can look for various signs to help them determine if such a project is right for them.

• **Increasingly cluttered spaces:** Cramped quarters without much space for people are perhaps the most notable sign that residents can benefit from some additional space in a home. Cluttered spaces suggest homeowners may have run out of room for their stuff, and a custom addition can provide that extra room while contributing to a more calming ambiance in common spaces that may no longer be overwhelmed by papers, toys and other items that

can quickly take over a home that lacks space.

• **Lifestyle hurdles:** Millions of homeowners like to entertain friends and family, and that's more manageable for some than it is for others. If interior or exterior spaces do not accommodate hosting, a room addition that expands an existing kitchen or living room might be the ideal renovation project.

• **Functionally challenged:** A home that no longer has enough space to meet your needs is another sign a room addition might be in order. This very issue emerged for millions of professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic and has remained a challenge ever since. Indeed, an increase in days spent working remotely has left many homeowners grateful to work from home but desirous of a designated remote work space. A room addition to accommodate a home office can be just what remote

workers need to restore fully functional status to their homes.

• **Cost:** While the sticker price of a home addition may (or may not) raise an eyebrow, the project is almost certain to prove more cost-effective than moving. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the average sale price of a home in the United States reached \$503,800 in January 2025. While that marked a roughly \$16,000 decrease from a year earlier, it's still a high figure that many homeowners aren't willing to pay. A cost comparison detailing the price to move versus the price to build an addition may indicate that the latter option is a homeowner's best bet.

A room addition could be the perfect renovation project for homeowners who need more space but still prefer to stay put.





## Cooking up a kitchen remodel

A successful kitchen renovation project requires careful planning and a detailed vision of what the space will look like upon completion. Whether a homeowner is thinking about giving the kitchen a major overhaul or just a minor refresh, bringing that vision to life doesn't happen overnight. There is a process that must go into a kitchen renovation. Embarking on a kitchen remodel can be an exciting venture and homeowners may be eager to dive right in, but familiarizing oneself with what to expect prior to the start can help property owners navigate the process more smoothly.

• **Inspiration and design:** The first phase involves dreaming up kitchen plans and making practical decisions regarding efficiency and functionality. Considerable time may be spent working with a designer and architect, which will involve choosing materials and a color scheme.

• **Creating a budget:** According to Angi, the average kitchen remodel costs \$26,934, but price ultimately varies depending on the scope of the work. Costs may be less or more depending on the size of the kitchen and the materials chosen.

• **Demolition:** Before a homeowner can have a new

kitchen, the old one must be removed. The real physical transformation begins with the demolition, which tends to be quick but messy. It is essential to set up an alternative "mini kitchen" elsewhere, or expect to be dining out throughout the remodel. The demo process may reveal any issues that will need to be remedied before the real work can begin, such as structural damage, leaks, mold, or other hiccups.

• **Contractor work begins:** It can take one to three weeks for contractors to install plumbing, mechanical components, electrical wiring, ductwork, and more, followed by structural needs and drywall, according to sink and faucet manufacturer Blanco. Flooring and cabinets will follow, and can take another week or more. Fabricating custom countertops is a lengthy process and can represent the bulk of a kitchen renovation timeline. Expect a few weeks for countertops to be measured, made and then installed.

• **Appliances and finishing touches:** Appliances will be delivered and hooked up at the tail end of the renovation. Finally, the backsplash, fixtures and lighting are put into place. The last leg of the remodel will include painting, trim work and installation of hardware on cabinets and drawers.

# A guide to fall lawn care for cool-season grasses

Spring is the season most often associated with lawn care, and for good reason. Grass starts growing in spring, and the season is a great time to fertilize many grasses in the hopes lawns can look their best and endure the hotter, dryer weather of summer.

Spring might mark the time when many homeowners begin tending to their lawns each year, but it's important to recognize the significance of fall lawn care as well. Grasses vary, and homeowners are urged to identify which type of grass is in their lawn so they can ensure it gets the care it needs before winter's first frost. Cool-season grasses like perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass are common in various regions, and the following strategies can help homeowners with these types of grasses tend to their lawns this fall.

• **Stick to your recommended fertilization schedule.** Homeowners who have been fertilizing since spring are urged to continue doing so in fall at the recommended interval. It's easy to forget to fertilize in fall thanks to cooler temperatures that don't call lawn care to mind and busier schedules after school starts again and summer vacation season

ends. But many fertilizer manufacturers advise users of their products to fertilize several times over the course of the year, including in fall. Stick to the intervals recommended on the packaging of the fertilizer you've been using, making sure not to forget to fertilize this fall.

• **Conduct a soil test.** A soil test can determine if the soil is lacking any nutritive elements it needs to come back strong in spring. Certain amendments can restore pH balance if necessary and foster stronger growth when lawns come back in spring.

• **Aerate, if necessary.** Soil can become compacted over time, and that can cause a range of problems for a lawn. Compacted soil can make it harder for water to reach the roots of grass, which weakens grass and makes it more vulnerable to damage during adverse weather events like drought. Compacted soil also makes it harder for nutrients in fertilizer to get into the soil. Aeration is best left to professionals, particularly in larger lawns, as the job can foster strong root development when done properly.

• **Remove thatch where it's excessive.** Thin layers of thatch can benefit lawns by delivering nutrients from grass clippings and leaves to a lawn. However, when thatch is excessive, it can block air, water and even fertilizer from reaching the soil. Thatch often can be removed with a rake, but lawns with especially thick layers of thatch may need to be scarified. Homeowners can take a DIY approach to scarifying or hire a landscaping professional to dethatch the lawn and remove the thatch from their properties.

• **Continue to water the lawn.** A cool-season grass will continue to require water into the fall. Though the lawn won't need to be watered as frequently in fall as in summer, various lawn care professionals note cool-season grasses still need roughly an inch of water each week in fall.

• **Remove leaves as they fall.** Fallen leaves can affect a lawn in much the same way as excessive amounts of thatch, blocking water and nutrients from reaching the soil. So it's best to remove fallen leaves, especially when they begin to fall in large quantities.

Fall is an opportune time to tend to a lawn to increase the chances grass grows back strong in spring.

Cool-season grasses still need watering even after summer gives way to fall.





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- Website: andoverma.gov
- Population: 36,485 (2023 Census)
- Median household income: \$167,591 (2019-2023)
- Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$813,800 (2019-2023)
- Tax rate: \$12.49 residential; \$24.31 commercial (FY2025)
- Town Hall: 36 Bartlet St., 978-623-8200
- Police Department: 32 North Main St., 978-623-3500
- Fire Department: 32 North Main St., 978-623-3700
- Department of Public Works: 978-623-8700
- Youth Services: Cormier Youth Center, 40 Whittier Court, 978-623-8360
- Elder Services: Robb Center, 30 Whittier Court, 978-623-8320
- School Department: 978-247-7000
- Library: Memorial Hall Library, 2 North Main St., 978-623-8400

## LAWRENCE

- Incorporated: 1853
- Website: cityoflawrence.com
- Population: 88,172 (2023 Census)
- Median household income: \$57,903 (2019-2023)
- Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$393,500 (2019-2023)
- Tax rate: \$8.80 residential; \$18.41 commercial (FY2025)
- City Hall: 200 Common St., 978-620-3000
- Police Department: 90 Lowell St., 978-794-5900
- Fire Department: 65 Lowell St., 978-620-3400
- Department of Public Works: 200 Common St., 978-620-3090
- Recreation: 155 Haverhill St., Second Floor, 978-620-3252
- Elder Services: Senior Center, 155 Haverhill St., 978-620-3540
- School Department: 255 Essex St., 978-975-5905
- Library: Lawrence Public Library: 51 Lawrence St., 978-620-3600

## METHUEN

- Incorporated: 1725
- Website: cityofmethuen.net
- Population: 53,455 (2023 Census)
- Median household income: \$103,270 (2019-2023)
- Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$472,200 (2019-2023)
- Tax rate: \$10.58 residential; \$20.55 commercial (FY2025)
- City Hall: Searles Building, 41 Pleasant St., 978-983-8505
- Police Department: 90 Hampshire St., 978-983-8698
- Fire Department: 250 Howe St., 978-983-8940
- Department of Public Works: 10 Ditson Place, 978-983-8545
- Youth Services: Recreation Department, 41 Pleasant Street, 978-983-8589
- Elder Services: Senior Center, 77 Lowell St., 978-983-8825
- School Department: 978-722-6000
- Library: Nevins Memorial Library, 305 Broadway, 978-686-4080



# TOWN HIGHLIGHTS

## NORTH ANDOVER

- ▶ Incorporated: 1855
- ▶ Website: northandoverma.gov
- ▶ Population: 31,615 (2023 Census)
- ▶ Median household income: \$134,319 (2019-2023)
- ▶ Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$670,000 (2019-2023)
  - ▶ Tax rate: \$11.26 residential; \$15.82 commercial (FY2024)
  - ▶ Town Hall: 120 Main St., 978-688-9500
  - ▶ Police Department: 1475 Osgood St., 978-683-3168
  - ▶ Fire Department: 795 Chickering Road, 978-688-9590
  - ▶ Department of Public Works: 978-685-0950
  - ▶ Youth Services: 33 Johnson St., 978-682-9000
  - ▶ Elder Services: Senior Center, 481 Sutton St., 978-688-9560
  - ▶ School Department: 978-794-1503
- ▶ Library: Stevens Memorial Library, 345 Main St., 978-688-9505

## HAVERHILL

- ▶ Incorporated: 1750
- ▶ Website: townofsaalemnh.org
- ▶ Population: 30,089 (2020 Census)
- ▶ Median household income: \$101,339 (2019-2023)
- ▶ Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$438,500 (2019-2023)
  - ▶ Tax rate: \$17.60 (2024)
  - ▶ Town Hall: 33 Geremonty Drive, 603-890-2000
  - ▶ Police Department: 9 Veterans Memorial Parkway, 603-893-1911
  - ▶ Fire Department: 152 Main St., 603-890-2200
  - ▶ Department of Public Works: 21 Cross St., 603-890-2150
  - ▶ Youth Services: 1 Sally Sweets Way, 603-890-2190
  - ▶ Elder Services: 1 Sally Sweets Way, 603-890-2190
  - ▶ School Department: 603-893-7040
- ▶ Library: Kelley Library, 234 Main St., 603-898-7064

## WINDHAM

- ▶ Incorporated: 1742
- ▶ Website: windhamnh.gov
- ▶ Population: 16,086 (2023)
- ▶ Median household income: \$189,450 (2019-2023)
- ▶ Median value owner-occupied home/condo: \$684,700 (2019-2023)
  - ▶ Tax rate: \$22.64 (2024)
  - ▶ Town Hall: 4 North Lowell Road, 603-432-7732
  - ▶ Police Department: 4 Fellows Road, 603-434-5577
  - ▶ Fire Department: 3 Fellows Road, 603-434-4907
  - ▶ Highway Department: 603-216-5676
  - ▶ Youth Services: 4 North Lowell Road, 603-965-1208
  - ▶ Elder Services: Senior Center, 2 North Lowell Road, 603-434-2411
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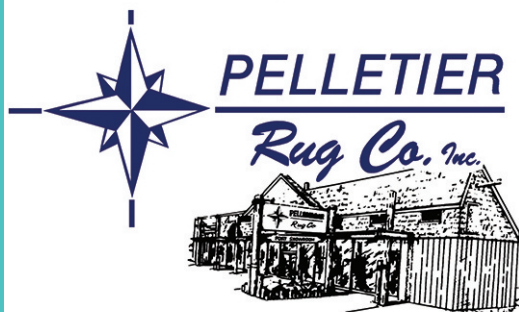
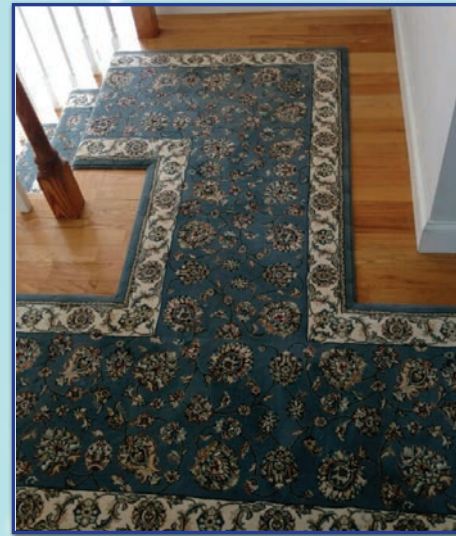
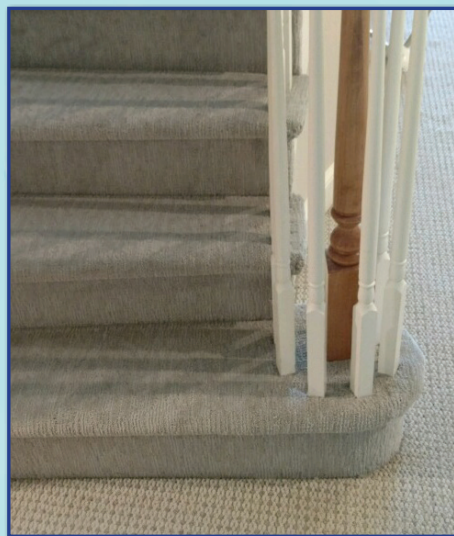
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**Easy Directions:** Route **128** to Danvers, **Exit 42**.  
Turn to Route **35 South**. Go 1/4 mile to **Water St**.  
**Turn right**. We are 100 yards down on the right.



**Hours:**  
Mon-Thurs 10am-6pm  
Fri-Sat 10am-5pm