

DEMENTIA HOME MODIFICATION

Cost Calculator

2025–2026 Edition · Evidence-Based Estimates · Medicaid Eligibility Guide

42%

Reduction in weekly care hours

3%

Quarterly fall admission drop

\$752K

Home equity limit (Medicaid)

59.78%

Of remodel costs is labor

What Is the Dementia Home Modification Cost Calculator?

This dementia home modification cost calculator is a clinical and financial planning tool for families, occupational therapists, and Certified Aging-in-Place Specialists (CAPS) managing home environment modifications (HEMs) for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. It synthesizes 2025 Verisk remodeling cost indices, 2026 Medicaid eligibility thresholds, and peer-reviewed fall-prevention evidence to produce itemized cost estimates and return-on-investment projections.

According to environmental press theory, when environmental demands exceed a person's functional capacity, quality of life and safety decline rapidly. HEMs lower this 'press,' bridging the gap between clinical decline and the need for institutional placement.

SECTION 1

Modification Cost Reference Guide

The following estimates reflect Q1 2025 national averages. Regional multipliers apply — the South Atlantic region carries a 1.047x surcharge. Labor represents 59.78% of all costs.

Modification	Category	Est. Cost Range	Priority	Labor %
Grab Bars (per bar)	Bathroom Safety	\$150 – \$400	CRITICAL	55%
Non-Slip Flooring	Bathroom Safety	\$200 – \$800	HIGH	45%
Shower Conversion (walk-in)	Bathroom Safety	\$1,500 – \$5,000	HIGH	65%
Threshold Removal	Mobility	\$100 – \$600	HIGH	70%
Doorway Widening	Mobility	\$800 – \$2,500	MEDIUM	68%
Stair Lift Installation	Mobility	\$3,000 – \$10,000	HIGH	55%
Ramp Construction	Mobility	\$1,000 – \$4,000	HIGH	60%
Sensor Night Lighting	Cognitive Support	\$50 – \$300 per zone	HIGH	40%

Modification	Category	Est. Cost Range	Priority	Labor %
Color-Contrast Edge Marking	Cognitive Support	\$30 – \$200	MEDIUM	50%
Glass Door Decals	Cognitive Support	\$20 – \$80	MEDIUM	10%
Rug Removal	Hazard Mitigation	\$0 – \$150	CRITICAL	20%
Stove Dial Covers	Hazard Mitigation	\$20 – \$60	HIGH	5%
Cord Relocation	Hazard Mitigation	\$0 – \$200	HIGH	40%
Exit Door Alarms	Wandering Safety	\$50 – \$300	HIGH	20%
GPS Identification Device	Wandering Safety	\$30 – \$100/mo	HIGH	N/A

* All costs are national estimates. Obtain 3 contractor bids. CAPS or OT assessment recommended before finalizing scope.

SECTION 2

2025 Regional Cost Modifiers

Remodeling costs are rising at 3.97% annually — outpacing CPI inflation (2.4%). Apply the appropriate regional multiplier to base estimates from Section 1.

Region	Annual Growth Rate	Multiplier	Notes
South Atlantic (excl. FL/GA/SC)	4.72%	1.047x	Highest national growth
Mountain States	4.05%	1.040x	Sustained high demand
Northeast	3.60%	1.036x	Dense urban labor costs
Midwest	3.20%	1.032x	Stable moderate growth
Florida / Georgia / S. Carolina	1.62% → 0.66%	1.015x	Apply moderation offset
Pacific West	3.40%	1.034x	High labor, lower materials

SECTION 3

ROI & Projected Savings Model

Use this framework to calculate projected annual savings from HEM implementation. The model is based on a 42% reduction in caregiver hours and a 3% quarterly reduction in fall-related ER visits.

Savings Category	Basis	Annual Estimate	Notes
Caregiver Hour Reduction	42% of weekly hours × \$25/hr × 52	\$13,650 – \$27,300	Range: 20–40 hr/wk baseline
Fall-Related ER Avoidance	3% qtrly reduction × avg ER cost \$5,300	\$636 – \$1,908/yr	Per CMS average 2024 data
Delayed Nursing Home Placement	Binary event avoided	\$54,000 – \$108,000/yr	Median nursing home: \$9,000/mo
Reduced Home Health Hours	From improved ADL function	\$3,600 – \$7,200/yr	Based on 2–4 fewer hrs/wk

Total Projected Annual Savings: \$71,886 – \$144,408

Typical total HEM investment: \$8,000 – \$35,000 | Average payback period: < 6 months

SECTION 4

2026 Medicaid & Funding Eligibility Guide

Many HEMs qualify for Medicaid HCBS waiver reimbursement. Use the thresholds below to determine your eligibility before contracting any modifications.

Eligibility Factor	National Standard	California	New York
Monthly Income Limit	\$2,982	\$2,982*	\$2,982*
Countable Asset Limit	\$2,000	\$130,000	\$33,038
Home Equity Interest Limit	\$752,000 – \$1,130,000	Same	Same
Community Spouse Resource Allowance	Up to \$162,660	Up to \$162,660	Up to \$162,660
Program Type	ABD (entitlement)	ABD / HCBS waiver	ABD / HCBS waiver

Medically Needy Pathway	Qualified Income Trust (QIT)
<p>If your income exceeds the monthly limit, you may "spend down" on qualifying medical/care costs each month until reaching your state's Maintenance Needs Level. Documented HEM-related care expenses can count toward the spend-down.</p>	<p>For HCBS waiver programs, excess monthly income is directed into an irrevocable QIT. This diverts income above the limit to maintain Medicaid eligibility for nursing home or home-based care programs. Requires an elder law attorney.</p>
<p>■ HCBS Waitlist Warning: Unlike ABD Medicaid (entitlement), HCBS waivers have capped enrollment. Families should apply well before care needs peak.</p>	<p>■ State-Specific Logic: If in CA or NY, the calculator automatically applies the higher asset thresholds (\$130,000 / \$33,038). Consult a benefits specialist.</p>

SECTION 5

Clinical Assessment Tools & Safety Protocols

Tool	Full Name	Items	Best For
HOMEFAST	Home Falls and Accidents Screening Tool	25	Environmental hazard screen
Housing Enabler	Housing Enabler Assessment	Multi-scale	Accessibility problem analysis
WeHSA	Westmead Home Safety Assessment	Validated	Clinical OT practitioners
TUG / Tandem Stance	Timed Up & Go / Balance Assessment	Performance	Mobility outcome tracking

Safety UX Checklist

General Safety

- ✓ Store medications and chemicals in locked cabinets
- ✓ Remove furniture with sharp corners from walking paths
- ✓ Eliminate low coffee tables outside user's visual field

Fire & Burn Prevention

- ✓ Set water heater to 120°F or below
- ✓ Install stove dial covers / disable burner controls
- ✓ Insulate accessible hot water pipes

Wandering Management

- ✓ Install exit door alarms/buzzers on all exterior doors
- ✓ Provide GPS identification device or bracelet
- ✓ Use motion detectors to alert caregivers of nocturnal movement

This dementia home modification cost calculator is intended for planning purposes only. All cost estimates should be validated by a licensed contractor, Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS), or Occupational Therapist (OT). Medicaid thresholds are based on 2026 federal guidelines and vary by state. Consult an elder law attorney for benefits planning. Sources: Verisk 2025 Q1 Remodel Index, CMS Medicaid Guidelines, Environmental Press Theory (Lawton & Nahemow), HOMEFAST / WeHSA clinical instruments.

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