Aging-In-Place Modification Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start with quick safety installs like grab bars, railings and lighting
- The CAPS designation builds trust with clients and referral partners
- Check contractor licensing; use licensed trades for plumbing and electrical
- Therapists, home health agencies and senior services are your best referrals

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Many modifications count as home improvement or contractor work, and your state may require a contractor license above a set job value. Plumbing and electrical work usually needs licensed trades and permits. Check your startup rules for your state. The Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) designation from the National Association of Home Builders (three courses, a final test and yearly continuing education) is the best-known credential. It isn't a license, but it builds trust with clients and referral partners. Because many clients are older and some are vulnerable, give clear written estimates and never pressure anyone into a sale. The FTC's Cooling-Off Rule gives buyers until midnight of the third business day to cancel many sales of $25 or more made in their home, and you must tell them about that right.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Stud finder and a quality drill/driver with masonry and tile bits
- [ ] Grab bars, mounting hardware and tile/fiberglass anchors
- [ ] Levels, measuring tools and a laser measure
- [ ] Portable threshold ramps and handrail stock
- [ ] Basic carpentry tools for railings and small ramps
- [ ] Tablet with an assessment checklist and camera for documenting the home

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4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge
- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Occupational and physical therapists who assess homes after a fall or surgery
- [ ] Home health agencies, Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers
- [ ] Hospital discharge planners and care managers
- [ ] Adult children: market on Facebook and in local community groups
- [ ] Realtors helping seniors stay in place or prepare a home for sale
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year