

New Hampshire

Housing • Single Family Home Repair Grant

Never Alone: Neighbors & Pros Help Carry the Load

When Joe Aguilar of Woodsville, NH, found out about USDA 504 Single Family Housing repair grants, it was a life-changing discovery that helped him get back on his feet after he'd been knocked down.

Joe wasn't ready for life without his beloved wife, Charlotte. But when she passed away in April 2020, he had to face that reality head on—and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of his personal tragedy, the home they'd bought the year before needed crucial repairs, and as a recent widower adapting to life on his own, he wasn't sure where to seek help.

So he reached out to the State of New Hampshire and came into contact with social worker Debra Tuck, a "wonderful lady," according to Joe. She advised him on various aspects of his needed repairs, which included new windows, doors, insulation and weatherization to reduce his high heating bill, and a complete bathroom floor replacement. Then Debra referred him to USDA Housing Specialist Theresa Zowasky, who took over from there.

"Theresa was very patient with me," says Joe. "She was never in a hurry like a lot of people I talk to on the phone. It was a good experience dealing with her because she was always ready to help."

[USDA RD's 504 Single Family Housing Repair Loan & Grant program](#)

provides loans to low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes, and grants to elderly low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.

Contractor Steve Burbank from Bath is making the repairs, a natural choice given his previous experience. "Steve is a great guy who's helped me before," says Joe. "He had put a second roof on, and a new commode and safety bars for the master bathroom, so I look forward to seeing his work completed on this new project."

Joe Aguilar has seen his fair share of life's downside, but it's good to know he has friends who can pick him up when he needs it most.



With memories of his late wife Charlotte always near, Joe Aguilar received essential repairs to his home with help from the USDA and State of New Hampshire.

Date of Obligation: 4/19/21

Congressional District: Rep. Kuster, New Hampshire 2nd; Sen. Shaheen and Sen. Hassan

Partners: Debra Tuck - State of New Hampshire, Contractor Steve Burbank

Demographics:

Impact: After losing his wife in April 2020, Joe Aguilar had to face life alone and all the curveballs that come with it—like a rotting bathroom floor and inadequate doors, windows and weatherization. With help from the State of NH, USDA RD and a local contractor, Joe is back on his feet again.