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nyc.gov/builditback

Repair: Choose Your Own Contractor FAQ

If you are eligible for the NYC Build it Back Repair program, you have the option to use a Build it Back contractor OR the option to choose your own contractor. Here are some facts to help you decide which option is best for you.

How does Choose Your Own Contractor work?

If you would like to use your own contractor to make repairs to your home as part of the NYC Build it Back Repair program, your selected contractor must first register with Build it Back. If your contractor meets the minimum requirements, Build it Back will schedule an appointment with you, your contractor and a Build it Back Design Specialist to visit your home and create a complete list of eligible repairs. Just like using a Build it Back Contractor, when you choose your own contractor, you can still receive design assistance from Build it Back if you use the design options available through the program. However, if you would like to stray from the program options, you must work directly with your own contractor on the design. If you use the program design options, Build it Back Design Specialists can help you with any kitchen and bath designs, and also work with you to make any final style and color selections from the “Build it Back Home Design Selection Brochure.” You and your contractor will then sign a contract agreeing to the work to be completed and then your contractor can start construction.

What’s different when I choose my own contractor instead of using the Build it Back contractor?

- **You’re the Boss:** You will be responsible for managing your own contractor’s day-to-day activities. Build it Back will perform periodic progress inspections including a final inspection. The purpose of these inspections is to make sure your contractor is complying with the program requirements. The inspections also allow Build it Back to pay your contractor for the completed work. All other communication and coordination with your contractor will be entirely up to you. Build it Back has a “Home Improvement Contract” that you and your contractor complete together and sign. It includes repair costs, construction start and end dates and other legal responsibilities of you and your contractor. Even though Build it Back doesn’t sign this contract, the program can terminate this contract if either you or your contractor fail to meet the conditions agreed to at signing.
- **Greater Flexibility of Options:** The Build it Back program includes several options for you to customize your home. However, some homeowners may want even greater flexibility than what is offered. With Choose Your Own Contractor, you will be able to expand your options beyond the program offerings (See the Home Design Selection Brochure for the range of options in the program). However, any deviation from the program offerings must still meet the minimum program standards in order to be reimbursed. In some cases, your contractor may want to charge you more for these changes.



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I want to choose my own contractor, what do I do next?

1. Find a home improvement contractor that you would like to work with to repair your home. Here are some minimum requirements to consider. **The contractor MUST:**
 - Have a Home Improvement Contractor license from the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs.
 - Agree to the Terms of the program, available at nyc.gov/bibcontractorinfo (**click on Repair**).
 - Complete the online registration form and meet the minimum requirements for the NYC Build it Back Repair program.

If you don't have anyone in mind, there are few places you can look for help finding a contractor.

- Check out the list of "Registered Contractors" for the "Choose Your Own Contractor" program at nyc.gov/builditback. They have already been selected by homeowners and are registered to participate in the NYC Build it Back Repair program. This list will be updated regularly as new contractors join the program.
- Go to the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) website at nyc.gov/consumers. They have a list of all Home Improvement Contractor license holders.
- Call your local Chamber of Commerce.

REMEMBER: If you choose a contractor that is not on the list of "Registered Contractors," they will still need to have their application reviewed by the program.

2. Once you choose a contractor, **fill out the "Choose Your Own Contractor Selection Form"** (available at the NYC Build it Back Centers and at nyc.gov/builditback) with your contractor's business name and DCA License Number. When your contractor is cleared, the Build it Back Repair program will contact you to schedule your Design Consultation. If you choose a contractor who is not yet cleared for participation and they are determined not to meet the minimum requirements, you can choose another one at any time.

3. Before your Design Consultation, make sure you **review the Build it Back Home Design Selection Brochure**. This brochure includes design options for customizing items like kitchen cabinets and appliances, flooring, lighting and exterior finishes. If you prefer a style or color other than what is included in the brochure, your own contractor may allow you to customize these items. But, please consider the following before choosing an item outside of our approved selections:

- **The items must comply with our standards:** Any item installed under the Build it Back program must meet the minimum program standards in order to be reimbursed. For example, if you choose a refrigerator that is not offered by the program, it must still comply with the Five Star energy efficiency rating in order to be reimbursed. Your contractor will not be reimbursed if the item does not meet our minimum program standards, and you may be required to pay for such items.
- **You must pay for any upgrades:** Your contractor may want to charge you for any changes that cost more than the program will pay. You will need to decide if you want to pay more for the item, or stick to the options in the program brochure – which won't cost you a dime. In some cases, your change may not be an upgrade and the contractor will agree to do the work for the program price. If that happens, you will not need to pay anything for your selection.



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I already started my repairs. What should I do?

If you have already started repairs with your own contractor, you should stop any additional work after your damage assessment takes place and immediately direct your contractor to register with Build it Back. If your contractor is cleared with the program and you are eligible for the Repair program, we can schedule a Design Consultation and develop the list of eligible repairs under Build it Back so that you can move forward with repairs through the program.