



## Guide to the Design-Build-Remodel Process





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As a 2nd generation, family owned Design Build & Remodeling firm, Reliable specializes in creating stress-free designs and remodels for our clients in the Birmingham metro area and the Jefferson/Shelby County areas.

Our personal reputations rely on our higher standard of customer service. Since 1992, Reliable, with dedication and commitment, built the processes that ensure we deliver work with exceeding quality and craftsmanship.

We take great pride in our team's ability to cultivate a reputation for excellence, while assembling a family of highly skilled, accomplished, and passionate designers, builders, and craftsmen. At Reliable, we have established long-standing and trusted relationships with our subcontractors and tradesmen, who have been working with us on consistent terms for an average of 15 years.

We pride ourselves on being different from other remodeling companies. One of the things that sets us apart is our deep and long-standing relationships with vendors in the industry. We believe that our success is built on personal involvement and interactions with people at every stage of a project.

We created this guide in an attempt to explain the way our business operates in great detail, as well as addressing some questions and problems homeowners can expect to find during their remodeling journey.





**RELIABLE**  
DESIGN | BUILD | REMODEL



# Chapter Two: The Other Guy's Process



## *The Design-Bid-Build process vs. the Design-Build-Remodel Process:*

If you've downloaded this guide, you are probably deciding on whether you want to remodel your home. There are many common contractor mistakes that can cause numerous headaches for any homeowner, so we're going to explain Reliable's Design-Build-Remodel process, so you can understand just exactly how many hazards there really are in this industry; we'll teach you about some of the most common problems someone getting a remodel can encounter, how to recognize when you do have problems, and how to avoid them like the plague. If you just want to learn about Reliable Design-Build-Remodel's process, skip to page 9.

The key element that is present in all failed remodeling projects is this:

### *Homeowners lose control.*

Sure, the work produced by a remodeler or renovator is important, but the homeowner is the one that allows a remodeler to ply their trade, it's the homeowner's house that is going to be changed by their work, and it's the homeowner that has to pay for it all; A remodeling project isn't a success just because a more expensive countertop is now in the kitchen, or a new deck patio is installed.

These are great additions to any house, but that's not what makes a successful remodeling project.

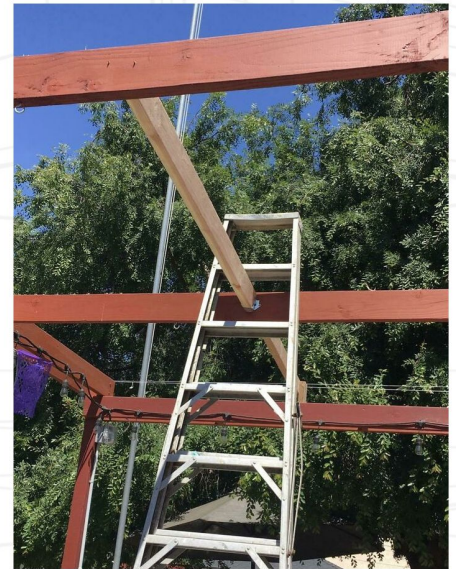
The only way to truly have a successful project *is to have the end result be something that fulfills the homeowner's needs and wants.* This is something often overlooked, as basic as that may sound.

Too often we get horror stories about the homeowner being sidelined by the people they worked with, and if you're researching this topic, then you probably have as well. If you haven't already experienced it yourself, here's what most likely you'd encounter:

- *Disreputable contractors upcharging prices*
- *Buying materials outside or way below your budget*
- *Installing things for reasons you don't understand*
- *Inconvenient or random work hours*
- *Lack of communication*

These factors are a horrible equation that produces only one result: a failed remodeling project, *because the homeowner lost control.*

It's *your* house, *your* property. You are the one that gets to define what does and does not occur within its borders. But sadly, the most common process used by remodelers in the industry often neglects this crucial fact. So let's discuss that process: **The Design-Bid-Build process, AKA the Bid-Build Process**, and why it's so terrible that you should never go near it.





# Chapter Two: The Other Guy's Process



## 1 Hiring Process

You contact an Architect/Designer to provide the plans and drawings for your dream home remodeling project.



The Bid-Build process is what some people may directly think of and start finding when they search for remodelers in their area. We want to specifically highlight the key weak points in this process that create those common contractor mistakes which, as we stated before, results in massive headaches for the homeowner.

## 2 Project Drawings

You get your hands on the blueprints for your project, after paying the Architect/Designer for their services.



The Bid-Build process is popular among contracted, unaccredited, and/or disreputable remodelers because it is decentralized; aside from the homeowner, there is no one person that is in charge of the project from start to finish, so when things go wrong there's little to no accountability for anyone the homeowner hires.

## 3 Bidding Process

By bidding your remodeling project to a number of candidates for the lowest price, you encourage the prospective contractors to continue lowering their bids.



Bid-Build is alluring to homeowners because it appears cheaper, at least initially. This kind of project usually starts when a homeowner asks several different companies or individuals to give them their offer on the project.

*Every step of the Design-Bid-Build process can lead to failure, and/or wasting time, money, and energy.*

## 4 Bidding Completion

The firm that wins the bid said they could do the project for the least amount of money; this encourages them to then cut costs on the project to make up for their low bid.



Here's an example: Let's say you're wanting to begin a remodeling project and you hire an architect and/or designer. They're the one responsible for taking your input and creative ideas and translating them onto paper. The issue here is that since every stage of the project is handled by a different entity, the architect/designer has no motivation or incentive to consider the future of the project, they're only there to draw up the plans based on what you tell them.

## 5 Construction

Your low-bid contractors begin constructing your dream home remodeling project. You must make sure everything is up to code.



Sometimes an architect/designer will give you a cost estimate of the project based on their drawings, but since they're not responsible for anything that comes afterwards, their estimations can be outrageously different from reality, which often comes as a shock when construction begins and things are suddenly far more expensive than you expected!

## 6 Completion/Fail

The project continues until it has entirely failed, ruining your vision of a dream home, or until completion.



But since that hasn't happened yet, you don't realize anything is wrong! You then go and find a couple of contractors and ask them to bid on the project based on the architect/designer's drawings. Many times each contractor will provide you with information that can further alter or influence your overall goals, making the remodeling experience a confusing jumble of timetables, industry jargon, and micromanagement.



# Chapter Two: The Other Guy's Process



Many times also in this system, the contractors will explain and give reasons why the designs the architect/designer created cannot be utilized, here are a few:

## Structural or Permitting Issues

An architect/designer isn't required to certify that a building *\*can\** support a new deck or home addition, or if it follows zoning regulations or area mandates, all they do is create the drawings. An engineer or other certified inspector can look at the plans and point out several logistical and structural problems, and in the worst case scenario, ask you to completely scrap the idea you had in the first place and go back to the architect.

## Budgeting and Cost Problems

The architect/designer, in the Bid-Build process, is only concerned with the design aspects of the project, since that is all they're getting paid for; they're completely detached from the future of the project, including any potential costs the homeowner will have to pay for their vision to be realized. They are not in any way required or responsible for providing fair and/or accurate estimations for the entire lifetime of the project, which can come as a massive shock further down the line.

For example, if you want high-end marble countertops for your kitchen and bathrooms, the architect/designer will not argue for or warn you about staying within your budget, which can easily lead to going into the black. The greatest issue is that you, the homeowner, will not find out about this until the bidding phase or construction on the project has already begun.



Additional costs, of money, time lost, or further compromise on the project will occur if you are required to go back to the architect/designer for another set of plans.

But let's say that you've hired the perfect architect/designer and the plans you bought from them are completely spotless, so now you're ready to bid the project; there are still a multitude of pitfalls that can sink a remodeling project:

*The Bid-Build Process encourages the contractors a homeowner hires to be less concerned about the health of the project or the wants and needs of the homeowner, and more concerned about only making money off of the project.*

*The homeowner simply takes on too much risk utilizing the Design-Bid-Build Process*



# Chapter Two: The Other Guy's Process



## The Bidding War

The actual bidding phase of the Bid-Build process is rife with suspicious and untrustworthy figures and numbers; since the general idea is that you hire the contractor that will give you the lowest pricing, the process encourages these entities to provide an extremely low bid, then once they “got the job” they utilize extremely cheap and poor-quality tradesmen and materials, in order to offset the low-cost bid they gave you for the project in the first place. Sometimes they will also upcharge for these materials and services over the course of the project through change orders, which would end up costing the same amount you would pay for a better quality contractor and/or materials.

Something important to mention is that a great amount of remodeling projects will never make it past these initial phases; this occurs for multiple reasons, including inaccurate information and poor-quality, or miscalculated, cost estimations. Although the turnaround for a project design ending up in your hands is extremely fast in the Bid-Build process, that’s only because only the design was considered; the potential costs are almost never completely evaluated until it comes time to start spending on materials.



A lot of money, time, and energy can be invested in a poorly conceived design concept that will never see the light of day, but thanks to the Bid-Build process, since there is no accountability, the architect/designer and the bidden contractors won't address any issues or make you aware of them until the problem is right in front of you. This of course results in you having to waste even more money, time, and energy to address the problems.

This is a good time to address the industry myth that the Bid-Build process is the money saving option. For all the reasons mentioned above, and yet to come, this is completely false. The Design-Bid-Build process is notorious for creating unexpected costs and draining the bank accounts of any homeowner who dares to go near it; bidden contractors cut costs to win the project, architects/designers don't give advice about future problems their designs could have, subcontractors utilize cheap materials, etc.

Another example of unexpected costs can be when you receive a vague estimate from a contractor, regardless of market and supply conditions. This can be for anything from materials to scheduling, and because it's vague, the contractor is under no obligation to provide a truthful number.

This leads to contractors providing rough estimates and assumptions, because they weren't involved at the very beginning of the project. These estimates often include many loopholes and to-be-decided additions as well, which erodes trust between the homeowner and the contractor, which is never healthy for the overall project.



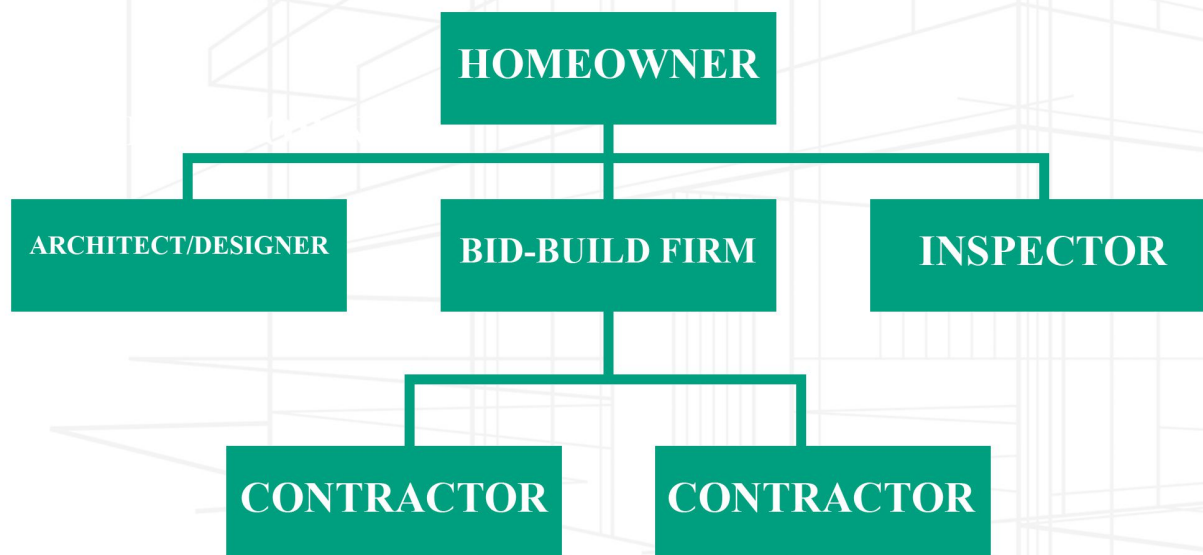
# Chapter Two: The Other Guy's Process



The most egregious fault of the Design-Bid-Build process is that the homeowner has to wrangle the architect/designer, contractors, subcontractors, inspectors, and anyone else involved in the project by themselves; you are the only person that is totally responsible for what happens, *and what usually happens in a Bid-Build project are mistakes.*

Further, you have to sign multiple individual contracts with each party, meaning that legally if something goes wrong with the architect/designer's blueprints, *you are the one that has to pay for a redrawing.* If something goes wrong with the contractor's work, *you are the one that has to pay for it to be redone.* If the inspector notices your project doesn't meet regulation, *you are the one that has to pay for it to be torn down and rebuilt from scratch.*

There is a significant lack of trust that is internally present in the Bid-Build process, which causes most homeowners to experience extreme delays, surprise costs, and a traumatic remodeling experience.



**The homeowner is entirely responsible for overseeing their remodeling project, and it's often difficult to understand what's going on when so much is happening at the same time.**

Like we stated above, this horrible process produces only one result: a failed remodeling project. But there is an actual solution to this equation:

By not participating in the Bid-Build process, your chances of a successful remodeling project increase exponentially! So now let's talk about the Design-Build process, which Reliable stands by and is proud to endorse and utilize every day.





INITIAL STAGE  
(NO CHARGE)

## 1 Onboarding

Our collaboration begins with your very first Onboarding Call. We will listen carefully and help you define your core goals.



## 2 Bracket Cost Estimate

After your Onboarding Call, we will create a Bracket Cost Estimate, "low to high", allowing you to compare and create true value.



## 3 On-Site Measuring

With an on-site consultation fee, we offer selective on-site appointments for our clients to measure their project(s).



## 4 2D-3D Designs

After measuring the space(s) you're looking to make alterations to, Reliable creates a digital design and scope-of-work for your project before the Construction stage.



## 5 Construction

Reliable Design-Build-Remodel's skilled team of subject matter experts works to make your vision a reality.



## 6 Completion

Clients are kept in the loop about the status of their project(s) until completion.



The Design-Build process is the complete antithesis of the Bid-Build process, and is what we think to be the embodiment of good industry practices. The Design-Build process is the complete opposite of Bid-Build because instead of the homeowner having to wrangle many different contractors in a decentralized system of no accountability, there is only a single other party you have a direct point of contact with: the Design-Build firm.



A Design-Build firm is 100% completely responsible for all goings on in the project from start to finish; this is why it is called "the Design-Build" process, because the same company provides the services for both the designing \*and\* the building parts of the projects. This is not only more convenient for both the homeowner and the firm, it increases turn-around, provides more accurate estimates, and most importantly increases trust in the process, and fosters a good working relationship between all parties involved.

*Every step of the Design-Build-Remodel process is an opportunity to communicate and think about how to accomplish our client's goals*

Passing the buck and shirking responsibility is something that is completely removed by the Design-Build process, *because the Design-Build firm literally cannot do that without severe consequences.* A genuine Design-Build firm's single goal is realizing the dreams and vision of the homeowner, and that means involving the homeowner in every step of the project to address budgetary and feasibility issues.

By hiring a Design-Build firm, the homeowner saves time, money, and energy by consistently being on-schedule and within their budget, and any potential problems are almost immediately addressed by the firm.

DEVELOPMENT

CONTRACT





Since the Design-Build firm is responsible for providing their clients with complete cost estimations of their project based on vetted figures, the homeowner deals with far fewer surprises when it comes to their budget. There are far fewer change orders as well.

In the Bid-Build process, change orders can be a massive stress on the homeowner because of the lack of transparency on where their money is going. In the Design-Build process, unless there's a legitimate concern by the firm, or if the homeowner wants to actually change something, a change order is unnecessary, and never becomes a truly massive problem because of the crystal-clear transparency intrinsic to the process.

There's also little to no chance of going back to the drawing board on projects due to feasibility issues because a Design-Build firm is present from the start, and there's no reason to pay for redesigns when things go over budget because it will be caught in the pre-construction phase, when you're still deciding on the design anyway.



The CII, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and independent research conducted at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Texas A&M University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Texas, and other institutions showed that *“Design-Build projects took less time, had less cost growth, and were less expensive to build in comparison to Bid-Build or DBB projects.”*

Design-Build-Remodel firms work typically subcontract to speciality tradesmen. Many firms have had long standing working relationships with these kinds of tradesmen for years, and by creating these relationships with hard-working, reputable, and certified craftsmen, instead of hiring cheap fly-by-night contractors, the quality of service to clients is extremely higher than the Design-Bid-Build process. Through open communication and quality work, the Design-Build-Process saves everyone involved in the project time, money, and energy.

The Design-Build experience saves homeowners time, money, energy, and increases peace of mind when it comes to the stressful experience of altering their home. Reliable Design-Build-Remodel exclusively uses this process not only because it's the best industry practice, but because it allows us to educate homeowners on the industry itself, and lets us create long lasting relationships with our clients through constant communication and the highest quality projects.





Now that we've gone over exactly why Reliable Design-Build Remodel's process is the best in the Jefferson and Shelby County areas, here's a more specific explanation of what to expect when you want a project done with Reliable:

**Phase I: Initial Stage  
(NO CHARGE)**

**Intake Assessment Form:** *Reliable asks all our clients to fill out our Intake Assessment Form, to more accurately detail your project specifications. We will listen closely to better serve your needs.*



**Client Photos:** *After you fill out the Intake Form and are in our system, we ask that you send us pictures of the space(s) where you are looking to make improvements/alterations to. Our New Client Coordinator then will reach out to schedule your Onboarding Call.*



**Onboarding Call:** *Using all the previous steps, we will schedule a phone meeting to discuss your project in greater depth. You will receive an SMS text to confirm the time of the meeting.*



**Bracket Cost Estimate:** *After your Onboarding Call, we will create and provide to you a Bracket Cost Estimate, "low to high", based on your Intake Form, your pictures, and our Project Cost Analysis.*



**Phase II:  
Development**

**On-Site Measuring:** *With a Project Development and Design consultation fee, we offer selective on-site appointments for our clients. We will measure the space(s), create cad drawings to depict the as built and the future and/or proposed plans for interior and exterior renovations. For kitchens and bathrooms, we add 2d and 3d cabinet design and renderings to the process. We then create detailed line item scopes of work. Finally, we generate allowance schedules for the items our clients are responsible for selecting. The only agreement needed to enter this step of our process is our "Design Agreement". Options to build and construct will come after approvals of all the drawings, allowance schedules and scopes of work.*



**Phase III:  
Contract**

**Construction:** *After signing all the necessary legal contracts, Reliable Design-Build-Remodel's team of subject matter experts works to make your vision a reality.*



**Completion:** *Clients are kept in the loop about the status of their project(s) until completion.*



Our comprehensive Design-Build process allows for our clients to be completely aware of the status of their project(s) at all times, and in addition to saving their time, money, and energy, gives them peace of mind that their project will be a complete success.



Even after we explained the money saving power of the Design-Build process, we still understand that a remodeling project is an enormous investment, and for a lot of people is a financial hurdle that is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to overcome.

So to help this problem, Reliable Design-Build-Remodel has partnered with Synchrony bank to offer credit solutions for homeowners in the Birmingham, AL metro area! The application process is simple and quick, and if accepted you'll be able to start using your approved loan to finance your dream home remodel!

**25 MONTHS  
PROMOTIONAL FINANCING AVAILABLE\***  
on purchase of \$2500 or more with your Home Design credit card

\*Subject to credit approval. Minimum Monthly Payment Required. See store for details.

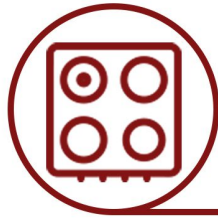
## Application Process:

*To Apply, Click the Link Below, or Scan the QR Code*

<https://www.mysynchrony.com/mmc/Q1214943500>







## Kitchen Remodeling

Ever looked around your kitchen and wished that it was bigger? Does your kitchen need to be brought into the 21st century? The kitchen is an integral part of your home. You use it for cooking, connecting with family and entertaining guests. If this area of your home just isn't right for your needs, it might be time to invest in a kitchen renovation project.



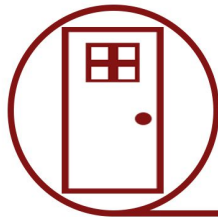
## Bathroom Remodeling

A remodeled bathroom does more than simply make your home look better. It can also increase the overall functionality of one of the most-used rooms in the house. For many people, bath remodeling is one of the top-requested home improvement services – and for good reason. Our bathrooms play a major role in our lives. They are where we get ready for the day and wind down at night.



## Exterior Renovations

The facade of your home is what people see before they ever step foot into your home. As your home ages, however, siding, windows and even the driveway can begin to show wear and tear. When this happens, your home may lose more than its curb appeal. You may also be dealing with issues like insect or animal infestation, reduced energy efficiency and more.



## Interior Renovations

We understand how important it is for homeowners to have an inviting living space where they can relax and entertain guests – that’s why we pay attention even down to the smallest details such as paint colors or furniture placement. Our goal is not just meeting but exceeding expectations by delivering superior quality results that will leave you satisfied for years on end.





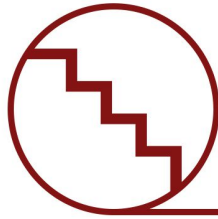
## Home Additions

Are you looking to expand your home, but don't want to move? A custom home addition might just be the solution for you! Home additions not only add more space to your living area, but they also increase the value of your property. Custom home additions can be designed to fit any style or need. Let's explore the world of custom home additions together.



## Whole House Remodel

Transforming your house into a place you love can have countless benefits, from increasing the value of your property to improving functionality and overall enjoyment. A whole house remodel is a major undertaking that involves transforming every inch of your living space. It's an opportunity to create a cohesive and personalized environment that caters to your tastes, needs, and lifestyle. Our experienced team specializes in transforming every room in your house into something spectacular.



## Basement Remodeling

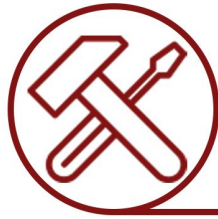
Transforming your basement into a functional and stylish living space is an investment that will pay off for years. Whether you want to add value to your home or create more usable square footage, renovating your basement is the perfect solution. We offer a comprehensive range of services to help you achieve the ultimate basement development experience.



## Painting

While the interior often gets all the love, improving the look of your exterior can improve curb appeal and also potentially increase the overall value of your home. An exterior painting job by a reliable general contractor can dramatically improve your house's appearance. In addition, exterior repairs are often needed as part of an exterior painting project, and Reliable Remodeling is also happy to provide repair services.





## Other Services

All of us wish that something was different about our home – perhaps you want more space, or maybe the flooring is just old and worn out. Whatever the reason, investing in a home update can dramatically improve the look of your space as well as potentially increase its value.

### Jefferson County:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Adamsville     | Hoover         |
| Bessemer       | Hueytown       |
| Birmingham     | Irondale       |
| Cahaba Heights | Leeds          |
| Center Point   | McCalla        |
| Eagle Point    | Mountain Brook |
| Forestdale     | Trussville     |
| Fultondale     | Vestavia Hills |
| Gardendale     |                |
| Homewood       |                |

Reliable Design-Build-Remodel is proud to have served the greater Birmingham, AL metro area for over three decades. We offer our services in the following locations:

### Shelby County:

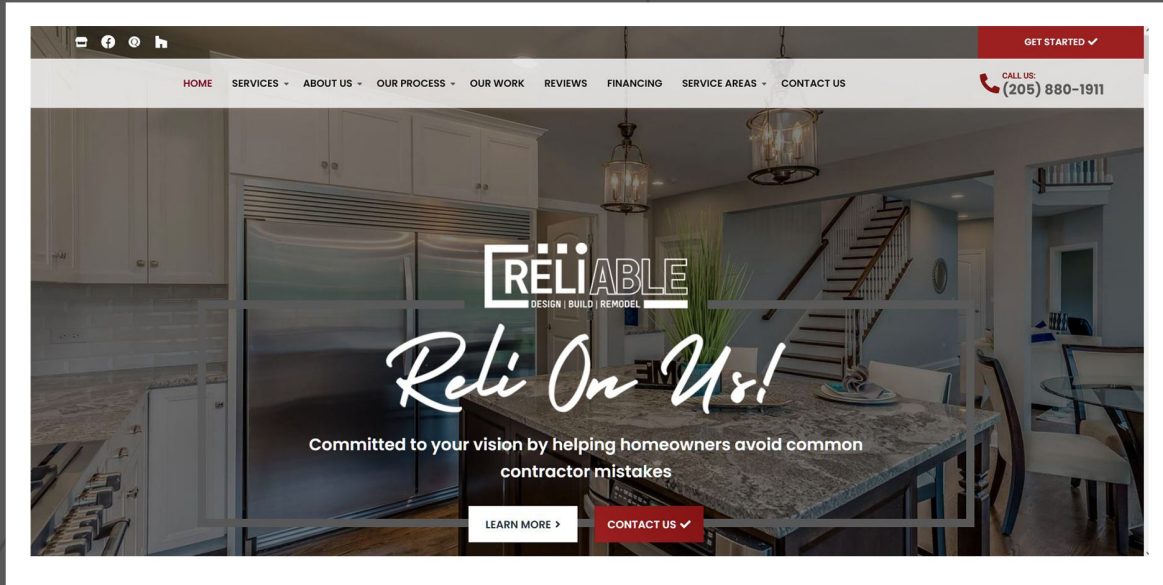
- |             |                        |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Acton       | Indian Springs Village |
| Alabaster   | Maylene                |
| Birmingham  | Siluria                |
| Calera      | Lake Purdy             |
| Chelsea     | Meadowbrook            |
| Columbiana  | Montevallo             |
| Helena      | Pelham                 |
| Highway 280 | Shoal Creek            |

### Other Locations:

- |                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Abbot Springs  | Westover |
| Aldrich        | Ryan     |
| Brantleyville  | Vandiver |
| Dunnivant      |          |
| Fourmile       |          |
| Highland Lakes |          |
| Saginaw        |          |
| Sterett        |          |

# Thanks For Reading!

# Homeowners *Reli On Us!*



We hope you've enjoyed reading this guide to the Design-Build-Remodel process. We're committed to excellence not only in our construction and remodeling projects, but also in how we present ourselves.

Now you can look at project photos from areas in the Jefferson and Shelby County areas, read blogs, and schedule an estimate on our newly redesigned website!

We hope to hear from you soon!

