

What is Universal Design?



UNIVERSAL DESIGN: THE DESIGN OF PRODUCTS AND ENVIRONMENTS TO BE USABLE BY ALL PEOPLE, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WITHOUT THE NEED FOR ADAPTATION OR SPECIALIZED DESIGN – RON MACE, PIONEERING ARCHITECT, ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN VISIONARY*

Universal design is a set of principles used by builders to enable people with and without disabilities to have increased access to their living spaces. Examples of features found in a universally designed home might include 36” wide doors, five-foot diameter clearance in kitchens and bathrooms, adjustable closet and pantry shelving, side by side refrigerator/freezer, adjustable countertops, hardwood floors and low pile carpet that allows ease of access, no more than half-inch threshold between flooring surfaces, no step entrances, sloped walkways, etc.

Universal design can benefit people of all ages and abilities. It is a design that is adaptable to life’s changes. Universal Design adapts environments so people do not have to move when their life changes or as they age.

SHARING SUCCESS



This universally designed home was built for three individuals who moved from a habilitation center to the community. The kitchen features lowered cabinets and counters, with foot space under the cabinets. The home also features zero thresholds, extra wide hallways and doors, polished concrete floors, roll-in showers, and many other features that make the home totally accessible for the occupants.

To share the success of other individuals and families, visit www.dmh.mo.gov/dd/spotlight

The concept of Universal Design is constantly evolving. More information regarding Universal Design can be found at the following websites:

- The R. L. Mace Universal Design Institute at <http://udinstitute.org>
- The Center for Universal Design at: <http://www.ncsu.edu/www/ncsu/design/sod5/cud/>
- The Starkloff Disability Institute at <http://starkloff.org/s/>
- The Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation at www.mohousing.com/

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