

Best Practices for Universal Design in Missouri

Universal design is now an integral part of public housing in Missouri. The Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) board of directors formally voted to require that, beginning in 2016, all new construction projects for elderly and single family dwellings supported by MHDC shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the principles of universal design. This collaborative effort between the Governor's Council on Disabilities, Starkloff Disability Institute, Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation (Mohousing), citizens with disabilities, and a group of dedicated citizens supporting individuals with a variety of disability issues made this possible. This action by MHDC opens the door to affordable housing for all citizens in need.

Universal design allows all citizens to live independently, to the fullest extent possible. This is a win-win proposition for the consumer, the marketplace and the builder. It reduces the social and personal cost of aging and disability, adds to the diversity of a community, and builds value in our housing stock.

Through this effort, citizens with disabilities will have access to more publicly subsidized housing that provides a quality, affordable home that allows them to maintain their living standards throughout their life.

As future publicly funded and privately developed homes are built using the principles of universal design, the foundation of full community inclusion for all citizens moves closer to reality.

The current requirements for universal design are:

UNIVERSAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

MHDC requirements for Universal Design of housing for the elderly and single family dwellings.

1. Equitable Use

- a) Flat landing surfaces leading to doorways
- b) Lever action door hardware
- c) Lever action plumbing fixtures controls
- d) No thresholds and/or change of walking surface greater than ½ inch

2. Flexibility in Use

- a) Blocking in bathroom walls to accept grab rails
- b) Blocking in or behind shower/tub enclosures to accept grab rails
- c) Door assemblies and cabinet door assemblies that will accept lever or knob hardware without alteration or replacement

3. Simple and Intuitive

- a) Buttons on control panels that can be distinguished by touch

4. Perceptible Information

- a. Signage with large contrasting print in addition to generally recognized icons
- b. Contrasting colors between wiring devices [receptacles and light switches] and surrounding surfaces
- c. Contrasting colors between steps and landings
- d. Contrasting colors between different floor coverings
- e. Contrasting colors between countertops and flooring
- f. Contrasting colors between plumbing fixtures and flooring/countertops

5. Tolerance for Error

- a. Light switches with large flat pads
- b. Non-slip walking surfaces

6. Low Physical Effort

- a) Self-closing fire rated doors must be on lowest setting while complying with the enforced building code.
- b) No interior ramps

7. Size and space for approach and use

- a. 36 inch wide doors
- b. Goal: 5 feet clear turning circle in kitchen
- c. Goal: 5 feet clear turning circle in bathroom
- d. 42 inch wide residential unit and common hallways