

Universal Design

Imagine...

a home where people of all abilities can enjoy living

a home where you and your loved ones can age in place

a home where all of your friends and family can visit



Elizabeth Dwyer
City of Albuquerque
Dept. of Family and Community Services
400 Marquette NW, Suite 504
Albuquerque, NM 87102

What is Universal Design?

Universal Design incorporates features that increase the usability of the home by people of all ages, sizes, and abilities. A universally designed home enhances the ability of all residents to live independently in their own homes as long as possible.

What is the Universal Design Initiative?

In October 2001, the Affordable Housing Committee directed one of their members to form a Subcommittee that would begin a “community conversation” about Universal Design. The Subcommittee engaged a small group of builders, architects and a not-for-profit developer to participate in creating the Universal Design Package, the elements of which you will find in this brochure. For a minimal cost, this Package can be incorporated into the design of your home. In 2003, the Subcommittee recognized builders in the Parade of Homes who had incorporated universal design features into their homes. Beginning in 2004, the Home Builders Association of Central New Mexico made Universal Design a competitive category in the annual Parade.

Does a house with Universal Design features look different from conventional housing?

No. Some people think the homes seem more spacious, but these features are virtually unnoticeable. They simply allow the house to be adapted over a lifetime of changing needs.

For More Information

Contact:

Elizabeth Dwyer
505-768-2933
edwyer@cabq.gov

Notice to Persons with Disabilities:

If you have a disability and require special assistance to benefit from this program, please contact Elizabeth Dwyer (505) 768-2933. TTY users may access this number via the New Mexico Relay Network by calling toll-free: 1-800-659-8331.



Martin J. Chávez,
Mayor

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Why Universal Design?

More than 66% of the housing in the United States is owned, and the majority of this is single family housing. Most of this housing has features that limit basic access, such as raised porches, steps at thresholds, and narrow bathroom doors. Retrofitting these features in a home is costly. Sometimes the home cannot be adapted sufficiently for the resident to remain in the home. Universal Design can change that, and incorporating these features at the building stage adds only a minimal cost to a new home.



What are the Benefits?

Universal Design makes a home friendly and easy to navigate for everyone. Steps at the front door pose an equal challenge to a stroller as to a wheelchair. Families are able to welcome relatives and

friends with disabilities. Residents who develop disabilities are more likely to be able to remain in their homes rather than having to move or remodel. The resale of the home is enhanced because home buyers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy use for themselves.

The Future?

Bernalillo County is home to 179,000 baby boomers. Baby boomers want to live well, comfortably, and in familiar surroundings, and according to an AARP survey, 82% of them said they wanted to age in place. By 2030, the 65+ population will double, but 1/3 of that population is projected to live in poverty. Retrofitting the home of a person at the poverty level requires taxpayers to pay the cost. In contrast, the costs of universal design are paid by the homeowner through the monthly mortgage payment.



Universal Design is simply good design. See the enclosed information for more details and ideas about how to incorporate universal design features in your home.