

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal design is 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

The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

Why encourage universal design?

- People with disabilities make up 18.6% of people in Alameda County.
- People over 65 are currently about 10% of the population of Alameda County and are expected to rise to 20% by 2030.

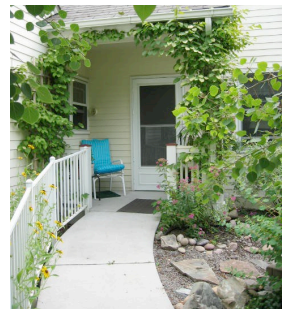


Door lever handle

- Universal design is generally low-cost or no-cost.
- Universal design can save money by enabling people with disabilities and older people to take care of daily activities without paying for outside help.

- Universal design is equally usable by people *without* disabilities. In fact, it can *increase* functionality for users without disabilities. For example, sidewalk curb ramps and ramped homes benefit people with bikes, strollers, or suitcases.
- Recommended by the state Department of Housing & Community Development
- It will cost our communities less to include universal design when possible than to deal with the needs of seniors and people with disabilities as exceptions.

No-step entry



- Universal design supports visitability, allowing friends and family members with disabilities to visit people in their homes.
- A visitable home simply means:
 - one no-step entrance, 32-inch doorways, a bathroom on the first floor
- Universal design increases safety. Falls are the most common cause of injuries to older adults, often causing serious damage. Research suggests that one-third of home accidents can be prevented by modification and repair, according to the National Centers for Disease Control.
- Usable homes can allow older people to remain independent and safe in their homes and active in their communities.
- Universal design homes allow “aging in place” – meaning to continue living in your own home as you age – a major concern for people as they get older.

For more information, please contact CRIL at (510) 881-5743.