



A Voluntary Universal Design Certification Program

Sponsored by:

Johnson County Livable Community for Successful Aging Initiative
Greater Iowa City Area Home Builders Association

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Your Home for Life...

For many homeowners, creating a place that's safe, easy to access, and comfortable is a priority. This is where Homes for Life comes in. It is the intent of these design features to simplify life for everyone by making homes usable by everyone regardless of a person's age, size, abilities or disabilities—throughout life.

If you are building or remodeling the home you plan to live in for the next few years or for the rest of your life, implementing these design features from the beginning will save you money and give you your dream home forever.

Websites:

www.livablecommunity.org

www.iowacityhomes.com

www.aarp.org/families/home_design/

HOMES FOR LIFE

Introduction and Purpose

Homes for Life is a voluntary home certification program for new home building and renovation in Johnson County. Homes for Life certification will help assure that homes certified by the program will continue to meet the needs of the occupants and be welcoming to their guests for many years.

Features included in the Homes for Life program generally follow principles found in the national Visit-Ability movement the design principle called Universal Design. This program was specifically designed to meet minimal accessibility standards and is not intended to meet the requirements of the Federal Fair Housing Amendments Action of 1988, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or of Universal Design. There are no additional permitting costs, beyond standard fees. This program offers benefits to all parties concerned.

Benefits to the Homeowner/Homebuyer

- Welcomes all visitors
- Easier to live in
- Easier to maneuver
- Provides more comfort for children, adults and seniors with mobility needs
- Reduces the risk of falling
- Enhances everyday lifestyle
- Provides home for life
- Increase re-sale marketability
- Facilitates caregiving in the home to deter the need for institutional living.

Benefits to the Builder

- Targets new emerging markets
- Offers cutting edge features
- Recognition of superior product
- Recognition of attention to buyer needs
- Offers branding opportunities

Benefits to the Community include

- Increased neighborhood continuity
- Promotes inclusion of all population segments
- Promotes green building

Homes for Life is a two-tiered certification program

Level I – Visit-Ability meaning that the home has at least one no step entrance located at the front door, back door, side door (any door), deck or through the garage; 36” wide front door and hallways; a useable bathroom with a 32” wide door; and a place to visit on that level.

Level II – Live-Ability includes all items in Level I, but also requires a circulation path that connects the accessible entrance to at least one bedroom, full bath, and kitchen.

Requirements (Level I Accessibility that provides Visit-Ability):

1. At least one entrance shall have a no step entry at the front door, back door, side door (any door), deck or through the garage on an accessible route. The accessible route shall extend from a vehicular drop off, or parking to a no step building entrance. Accessible routes shall consist of one or more of the following components:
 - Walking surfaces with a slope not steeper than 1:20.
 - Doorways, ramps, curb ramps, elevators, and wheelchair (platform) lifts.
 - Floor or ground surfaces shall be stable, firm, and slip resistant.
2. Dwelling units with a building entrance on an accessible route shall be designed in such a manner that all the doorways are designed to allow passage into and within all areas required to be accessible in item 3 below, have a clear opening width of at least 32" when the door is open 90 degrees, measured between the face of the door and the stop.
3. Dwelling units with a building entrance on an accessible route shall have a circulation path that is at least 36" wide. The circulation paths shall connect the accessible entrance to at least one bathroom (half bath), and one other room that can accommodate visitation.
4. The powder room/bathroom on the circulation path shall be large enough to accommodate a clear space of 2'6" by 4'0" within the room to position a wheelchair or other mobility aid clear of the path of the door as it is closed.

Requirements (Level II Accessibility that provides Live-Ability):

1. At least one entrance shall have a no step entry at the front door, back door, side door (any door), deck, or through the garage on an accessible route. The accessible route shall extend from a vehicular drop off, or parking to a building entrance. Accessible routes shall consist of one or more of the following components:
 - a. Walking surfaces with a slope not steeper than 1:20.
 - b. Doorways, ramps, curb ramps, elevators, and wheelchair (platform) lifts.
 - c. Floor or ground surfaces shall be stable, firm, and slip resistant.
2. Dwelling unit(s) with a building entrance on an accessible route shall be designed in such a manner that all the doorways allow passage into and within all areas required to be accessible in item 3 below, have a clear opening width of at least 32" when the door is open 90 degrees, measured between the face of the door and the stop. Openings more than 24" in depth are not considered doorways.
3. Dwelling unit(s) with a building entrance on an accessible route shall have a circulation path that is at least 36" side. The circulation paths shall connect the accessible entrance to at least one bathroom, kitchen, one bedroom and one other room that can accommodate visitation.
4. Dwelling units with a building entrance on an accessible route shall be designed and constructed in such a manner that the accessible level contains a usable kitchen and bathroom such that a wheelchair user can maneuver about the space.
 - a. A usable kitchen shall comply with the following:
 - i. A clear floor space at least 2'6" by 4'0" that allows a parallel approach by a person in a wheelchair is provided at the range or cook top and sink, and either a parallel or forward approach is provided at oven, dishwasher, refrigerator or freezer, and trash compactor.

- ii. Clearance between counters and all opposing base cabinets, countertops, appliances or walls is at least 36".
 - iii. In U-shaped kitchens with sink or range or cook top at the base of the "U", a 60" turning radius is provided to allow parallel approach, or base cabinets are removable at that location to allow knee space for a forward approach.
5. Bathroom on the accessible level shall conform to the following:
 - a. The bathroom shall contain at least one sink, one toilet and one shower.
 - b. Where the door swings into the bathroom, there is a clear space of 2'6" by 4'0" within the room to position a wheelchair or other mobility aid clear of the path of the door as it is closed and to permit use of fixtures. This clear space can include any knee space and toe space available below bathroom fixtures.
 - c. Where the door swings out, a clear space of 2'6" by 4'0" is provided within the bathroom for a wheelchair user or a person using other mobility aid to position the wheelchair such that the person is allowed to use the fixtures. There shall be clear space to allow the wheelchair user to reopen the door to exit.
 - d. Wall reinforcement shall be provided with wood blocking installed within wall framing, to support grab bars as needed. The wood blocking, when measured to the center, shall be located between 33" and 36" above finished floor. The wood blocking shall be located in all walls adjacent to a toilet, shower stall, or bathtub.
6. Switch and Outlet Requirements. All wall switches controlling light fixtures and fans, shall be located at a height not to exceed forty-eight inches (48") above the finished floor. Height shall be determined by measuring from the finished floor to the center of the switch. All receptacles shall be located at a height not less than fifteen inches (15") above the finished floor. Height shall be determined by measuring from the finished floor to the center of the receptacle. When the receptacle placement is prohibited by the height of a window or design feature, an alternate location can be approved by the Building Official or a duly authorized designee.
7. Lever-style door handles (not round doorknobs).

How to Apply for Homes for Life Certification:

1. Applicant must include on the building permit application that the building design includes: (a) Visit-ability, or (b) Live-ability per these guidelines.
2. Applicant must submit construction drawings including a site plan drawn to scale showing the accessible route from parking to an accessible building entrance.
3. After final building inspection, Home for Life certification will be issued at the time of the Certificate of Occupancy.