



**LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION**  **Implemented on Cape Cod**

## OVERVIEW

Universal design allows for equal access and space appropriate to the needs of users of all abilities and ages. Some examples of universal design include wide doorways and entrances without stairs and with low thresholds, counter/cabinet/appliance heights accessible to all mobilities, open floor space for easy passage, and varying types of information communication tools and indicators. In addition to ensuring spaces are welcoming to people of all ages and abilities, universal design and accessibility can be important in allowing people to age in their homes, eliminating the need to find new housing as they get older.

### CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

-  **Not Allowed to Build Multi-family Housing**
-  **Too Expensive to Build New Housing**
-  **Too Expensive to Secure or Maintain Housing**
-  **Hard to Find Year-round Housing**

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Encourages multi-generational use of homes
- Is adaptable to residents' changing needs
- The cost of adding universal design to new construction is relatively low
- Retrofitting existing structures may be costly but can be accomplished over time and have a lasting value as it allows for better accommodations of all life stages
- Even though the Commonwealth has passed regulations for accessibility to public, and some private, spaces, it may not be commonplace in private residences
- Major renovations may be needed for spaces and homes that are not compatible with, or originally designed for, universal design features

## RESOURCES

**Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD)** - The IHCD promotes the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages, abilities and cultures through excellence in design.

**Universal Design Institute (UDI)** - UDI is a non-profit organization that promotes the concept and practice of accessible and universal design and believes that all environments and products should and can be usable by everyone regardless of age, ability, or circumstance.

**Better Living Design Institute** - As the sister initiative of UDI, Better Living Design aims to change the way homes and home products are designed, built and remodeled to better meet the needs of everyone at every life stage.

## CASE STUDY: LIFELONG HOUSING CERTIFICATION PROJECT

The Rogue Valley Council of Government's Lifelong Housing certification is the voluntary process of evaluating a home against a checklist of universal design standards. Once the home has been determined to meet one of the three levels of universal design, a certificate is issued to the homeowner and, if the home is for sale, the certification is recorded on the Southern Oregon Multiple Listing Service (SOMLS). An important aspect of the program is education about the value of Lifelong Housing to homeowners and professionals in the field of housing. Learn more [here](#).

