Advanced Certificate in Universal Design for Disability Housing

Adaptable Housing Features and Modifications

Adaptable housing features and modifications: physical features and design elements that can be added or altered in housing to make it more accessible and usable for people with disabilities. These features can be incorporated during new construction or retrofitted into existing homes.

Accessible design: a design approach that seeks to create environments that are usable by people of all abilities, including those with disabilities. Accessible design considers the full range of human abilities, taking into account the diverse needs and preferences of users.

Assistive technology: devices, software, or equipment that help people with disabilities perform tasks that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Examples include wheelchairs, hearing aids, and speech-to-text software.

Barrier-free design: a design approach that aims to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society. Barrier-free design is closely related to universal design, but has a stronger emphasis on accessibility and disability rights.

Building code: a set of regulations that govern the design, construction, and maintenance of buildings. Building codes may include requirements for accessibility and may vary by jurisdiction.

Curb cut: a sloped or beveled section of sidewalk that allows wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments to transition smoothly from the sidewalk to the street.

Door hardware: the components of a door that allow it to be opened and closed, such as handles, locks, and hinges. Door hardware can be designed to be accessible for people with disabilities, for example by using lever-style handles that are easier to grip than round knobs.

Elevator: a device for moving people and goods between floors of a building. Elevators are essential for accessibility in multi-story buildings.

Flexible design: a design approach that allows for easy adaptation of spaces to meet changing needs over time. Flexible design is closely related to adaptable design, but focuses more on the ability to reconfigure spaces rather than on specific accessibility features.

Grab bar: a horizontal or vertical bar installed in a bathroom or other wet area to provide support and stability for people with mobility impairments.

Handicapped-accessible: a term that was once commonly used to describe environments that are accessible to people with disabilities. However, the term is now considered outdated and is being replaced by more inclusive language, such as "accessible" or "universally designed."

Home modification: any structural or design change made to a home to improve its accessibility and usability for people with disabilities. Examples include installing grab bars, lowering countertops, and widening doorways.

Inclusive design: a design approach that seeks to create environments that are welcoming and usable by people of all abilities, including those with disabilities. Inclusive design considers the full range of human diversity, taking into account factors such as age, ability, gender, and culture.

Levers: a type of door handle that is easier to grip and operate than a round knob, making it a good choice for accessible design.

Lighting: the use of artificial or natural light to illuminate a space. Good lighting is essential for accessibility, as it can help people with visual impairments to see better and can reduce the risk of accidents.

Lever-style handles: a type of door handle that is easier to grip and operate than a round knob, making it a good choice for accessible design.

Maneuvering clearance: the amount of space required for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aid to turn around or change direction. Maneuvering clearance is an important consideration in the design of accessible spaces.

Multisensory design: a design approach that engages multiple senses, such as sight, sound, and touch, to create a more immersive and accessible experience.

Natural light: the light that enters a space through windows, skylights, or other openings. Natural light is an important consideration in accessible design, as it can help people with visual impairments to see better and can improve overall well-being.

Non-slip surfaces: surfaces that are treated with a texture or coating to prevent slipping, such as in a bathroom or other wet area. Non-slip surfaces are an important consideration in accessible design.

Open floor plan: a floor plan that is open and spacious, with few interior walls or partitions. Open floor plans can improve accessibility by allowing for greater maneuverability and better visibility.

Pocket doors: doors that slide into a wall cavity when opened, rather than swinging out into the room. Pocket doors can improve accessibility by eliminating the need for clearance around the door swing.

Ramp: a sloped surface that allows wheelchair users and others with mobility impairments to transition smoothly from one level to another. Ramps are essential for accessibility in buildings and outdoor spaces.

Roll-in shower: a shower that is designed to be accessible for people who use wheelchairs. Roll-in showers have a threshold that is level with the bathroom floor, allowing the user to roll their wheelchair directly into the shower.

Sensory room: a space designed to stimulate or calm the senses, using elements such as lighting, sound,

and texture. Sensory rooms can be especially helpful for people with disabilities who have sensory processing difficulties.

Single-story design: a design approach that focuses on creating buildings with a single level, rather than multiple stories. Single-story design can improve accessibility by eliminating the need for stairs or elevators.

Skid-resistant surfaces: surfaces that are treated with a texture or coating to prevent slipping, even when wet. Skid-resistant surfaces are an important consideration in accessible design.

Switch plates: the covers that protect the electrical switches and outlets on a wall. Switch plates can be designed to be accessible for people with disabilities, for example by using larger or contrasting colors to make them easier to locate and operate.

Threshold: the raised edge or step that separates two different floor levels, such as at the entrance to a building or room. Thresholds can be a barrier for people with mobility impairments, so they should be minimized or eliminated in accessible design.

Tactile paving: a type of pavement that includes raised patterns or textures to provide information to people with visual impairments. Tactile paving is often used at crosswalks, transit stops, and other places where pedestrians need to navigate complex environments.

Transfer bench: a type of bench used in a shower or bathtub to help people with mobility impairments to transfer from their wheelchair to the shower or tub.

Universal design: a design approach that aims to create environments that are accessible, usable, and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities. Universal design is closely related to accessible design, but takes a more proactive approach to creating inclusive spaces.

Visually impaired: a term used to describe people who have difficulty seeing, due to a wide range of conditions such as blindness, low vision, or color blindness. Visually impaired people may require specific design considerations, such as good lighting, contrasting colors, and tactile elements, to help them navigate and use spaces more easily.

Wheelchair accessible: a term used to describe environments that are designed to be usable by people who use wheelchairs. Wheelchair accessible environments typically include features such as ramps, elevators, and wide doorways.

Widened doorways: doorways that are wider than standard to accommodate people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Window sills: the ledges or shelves that run along the bottom of a window. Window sills can be a barrier for people with mobility impairments, so they should be designed to be low or eliminated in accessible design.

Zero-step entry: a type of entrance that is level with the ground outside, eliminating the need for stairs or a ramp. Zero-step entries are essential for accessibility in buildings and outdoor spaces.