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Iowa COMPASS News

A Program of the Center for Disabilities and Development

A Practical Guide to Universal Home Design

“Universal design” or UD is a way to make a home open to everyone. UD makes the home comfortable and easy for different people at different stages of their lives. The changes are common sense. Make your home a more accessible place to live now, and avoid costly changes in the future. An average home is designed for a healthy, fit man of average height. UD uses simple ideas to make any home open to:

- Families with young children
- Baby boomers who want to stay in their homes as they grow older
- Seniors who want to simplify their housekeeping
- Individuals who are taller or shorter than average
- People who use wheelchairs or walkers

The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) has created a new guide on UD. Use the guide to work with a contractor to build a new house or remodel your existing home. It has a checklist for each area of the house:

- Site planning and landscaping
- General floor plan
- Step-free entry
- Entrance; Kitchen
- Bathroom; Laundry
- Bedrooms, living and dining and storage
- Garage, doorways and hallways
- Floors and windows
- Stairs
- Electrical outlets and controls

The booklet shows essential ways to adapt your home with limited resources. Most of these features are low cost and do not require any changes to the structure of your home. The guide also lists

additional, non-essential ways to modify each room to make it even more livable.

This booklet is free. Download a copy at: www.uiowa.edu/infotech/universalhomedesign.htm. There are some print copies left. You can get one by calling Iowa COMPASS at 800-779-2001.

Funding News

Home Ownership for Iowans with Disabilities

Are you a person in Iowa with a disability? Do you have a family member with a disability? Would you like to own your own home? Call Iowa COMPASS for information on these two programs:

- 1) **Iowa HomeChoice™** is a single-family loan program for Iowans with disabilities. It also is for Iowans who have a family member living with them who has a disability. For most, your income must not exceed 100% of the average family income in your area. In rural areas this can go up to 115%. There is no income limit in a central city or in an HUD-underserved community. You must have an income so you can make mortgage payments and qualify for a mortgage.
- 2) **Section 8 Home Ownership** programs are now available through 14 Public Housing Agencies in Iowa. Renters can use Section 8 housing vouchers for mortgage payments as part of a plan to own a home.

You can contact the Funding Information Services Coordinator by calling 800-779-2001. You can email her at compassfunding@uiowa.edu.

Iowa Contractors Network

Are you are thinking about building an accessible home or modifying the one you live in now? You may have a hard time finding a contractor who understands accessibility. The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) decided to change that. First, we hired a company called Facility Management Resources (FMR) to train contractors around the state of Iowa. They learned about building accessible homes, universal design, and home modification. Then we created the Iowa Contractors Network to list all the contractors who got the training. We now have over 150 listings across the state.

Call Iowa COMPASS at 800-779-2001 to find a contractor near you.

Services

Rental Assistance

Rental assistance is a resource for people with low income. It helps by setting your rent to 30% of your income, no matter how low.

There are several ways to get rental assistance. Where you apply depends on where you want to live. You can check for units that are accessible. You may be able to make changes to a unit to make it accessible. You may also have a right to have the landlord make those changes.

Some programs have waiting lists, but you can apply for more than one program at a time. Call Iowa COMPASS and talk to the services specialist or email her at iowacompass@uiowa.edu. She can point you in the right direction.

You can also go to www.hud.gov/renting/index.cfm for a lot of great information.

Iowa COMPASS is a project of the Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Disabilities. CDD is a component of the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, University of Iowa Health Care. No endorsement of products or services is intended.

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