

2014 Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name _____

HFA _____

Submission Contact _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Qualified Entries must be received by **Tuesday, July 1, 2014**.

For more information about Qualified Entries, [click here to access the 2014 Entry Rules](#).

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page.

HFA _____

Entry Name _____

Communications	Homeownership	Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Report <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Empowering New Buyers <input type="checkbox"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="checkbox"/> Multifamily Management <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="checkbox"/> Combating Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs
Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

Documented Need

Delaware State Housing Authority's (DSHA) mission is to provide, and to assist others to provide, quality affordable housing opportunities and appropriate supportive services to low- and moderate-income Delawareans. DSHA had been partnering with other advocates, nonprofits and stakeholders for many years to establish new ways to meet the housing needs for people with disabilities in the state. One of the significant items that kept coming to the forefront of needs assessments, studies and conversations was the importance of the implementation of universal design in affordable housing development.

We began exploring the usefulness of legislation that would increase the incentive to include universal design in constructing and rehabilitating the affordable housing stock. Unfortunately, with the myriad of local and national economic issues that were affecting the landscape, it was not a priority for the General Assembly. We turned our attention to building the case for legislative action and other initiatives that complement the Universal Design (UD) strategy.

The 2008-2012 *Statewide Housing Needs Assessment* included a section summarizing the housing needs of persons with disabilities. However, this highlighted the need for a more in-depth analysis of needs for this population. In 2011, DSHA led a partnership with other state and local agencies and the community dedicated to laying a solid foundation statement on the need for housing that is both affordable and accessible. This group, the Housing Sub-Committee of the Governor's Commission on Community Based Alternatives for People with Disabilities, joined with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Delaware Housing Coalition to produce the report *Community and Choice: Housing Needs for People with Disabilities* in Delaware in April 2012. The report documented and emphasized the disproportionately lower incomes of people with disabilities; the extra challenges these households face to secure housing in a market where rental housing affordable to low-income households is already extremely scarce; and the barrier the lack of affordable accessible housing is to comprehensive efforts to prioritize community-based care for people with disabilities. The report summarized accessibility needs in the state with these key points:

As the population ages, the likelihood that a housing unit will house people with disabilities, either temporarily or long-term, increases significantly. National estimates indicate that there is a 60% probability that a newly built single family detached unit will house at least one resident with a disability during its expected lifetime. When visitors are accounted for, the probability rises to 91%;ⁱ

- 1) Accessibility features are a vital support for all people to age in place and live independently and in the community as long as possible: by 2040, 30% of Delaware's population will be over 60. The lack of accessible housing means some people unnecessarily remain in institutions and others who live without needed accessibility features may be at increased risk for injuries that may lead to institutionalization;
- 2) With many varying levels of physical disability and functional limitations, full accessibility may not be needed by all, but the greatest majority of people may find benefit from basic access (visitability) and universal design features that can be supplemented with additional modifications as necessary.

Universal design features can be accomplished using a wide variety of attractive products and designs to create beautiful homes that will work long-term. Furthermore, we advocated that universal design features are not just for people with disabilities or the elderly but are in fact beneficial to everyone and a smart way to design our homes. Universal Design assists people with disabilities but also constitutes generally good design standards that could be useful to any person. Common universal design features include:

- No-step entry. At least one entrance without stairs to gain entry to the home's main living areas.
- One-story living. Places to eat, use the bathroom and sleep all located on one level which is also barrier free. The house itself does not have to be a one-level home.

- Wider doorways to let wheelchairs pass through.
- Extra floor space. Wheelchairs have more space to move and turn.

Legislative Action

There were some promising legislative efforts in the early stages but it took several years and several sessions of the Assembly to make significant progress. Legislation was first introduced in late June 2008 as House Bill (HB) 505, again in June 2010 as HB 426, and most recently on June 20, 2011 as HB 227 by the Primary Sponsor, Representative Quinn Johnson, with Representatives Longhurst and Senator Bushweller as Additional Sponsors.

While the legislative debate continued, DHSa forged ahead by implementing other strategies intended to meet the housing needs of people with Disabilities. One of our most successful programs launched in 2010, as DHSa added five points (out of 135) to its Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP), for utilization of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, in order to reward applications that proposed to increase the percentage of units built to full accessibility standards beyond the required 5%.

In that first year, all of the successfully ranked projects sought these points, for a total of 46 out of 355 proposed developed units to be fully accessible and ADA compliant (13%). Response the subsequent years was similarly strong; 2011 saw 20%, 2012 saw 17%, and 2013 had 15%.

These units are fully accessible which is a standard well above those included in the concept of universal design but demonstrates DHSa's initiative to increase the number of units available to people with various accessibility needs. We believe that the state should be offering a menu of accessible unit options. When it comes to the creation of units affordable to low-income families, the state has a responsibility to set the bar higher than what the market-place is willing to offer.

In 2011, DHSa participated in a Housing Policy Academy focused on providing appropriate affordable housing options for people with disabilities. The Academy was sponsored by the state's Department of Health and Social Services. The themes discussed were customer-focused solutions, communications strategies, needs assessments, access to housing, job training, and community support systems. Universal design was largely supported by the policy academy as a way to offer more housing alternatives and provide a design framework that would allow people to live safely in a community setting and age in place. This convening gave the legislative efforts new energy.

In the fall of 2011, DHSa representatives met with the new sponsor of HB 227, Representative Johnson, on several occasions in preparation for the 2012 legislative season. DHSa expressed general support for the legislation but made several recommendations that ultimately satisfied many of the housing development community's concerns. First, the bill had to apply only to new construction and the costs to retrofit buildings during rehab would be preventative. Second, we recommended that the bill make inclusion of universal design feature incentives in the application process be mandatory rather than making mandatory the number of units created. Third, the mandates of the bill had to be flexible enough for DHSa to implement them without dramatically changing our applications for funding. The sponsor agreed to our recommendations and DHSa staff became very engaged in contributing to the legislative text edits. Eventually, enough changes were made that a substitute bill was necessary. DHSa agreed to support the bill and actively work to advance it. DHSa also worked with advocates to educate other legislators and partners on the impact of the bill. Finally, DHSa provided education and recommendations to the governor.

HB 227 finally passed on June 20, 2012 and was signed into law by Governor Jack Markell on July 27, 2012. Without DHSa's partnership building, coordination, and collaboration efforts the legislation would not have been able to move forward. DHSa found good common ground that both tempered the desires of the advocates and removed the concerns of the opponents while ensuring that the cause was moved forward.

Final Implementation

Beginning in July 2013 (FY14), DSHA added a scoring category to the Housing Development Fund (HDF) Homeownership Production category that allowed applicants to earn up to 6 points for agreeing to address items on the Universal Design score sheet. This category also allowed applicants to earn up to 6 points if they chose, instead, to make a greater percentage of units fully accessible. Applicants could only earn the 6 points in this category once (either UD or full accessibility).

Sussex County Habitat for Humanity was the only applicant to try for the Universal Design points (see attached Exhibit 10) listing the accessibility features. Sussex Habitat was funded at \$175,000 for 7 units with a grant requirement that UD construction standards be followed.

Additionally, in July 2013 we added a set-aside to the HDF funding of \$500,000 to provide funding for shelters that wanted to make accessibility upgrades. We have received proposals in the July 2014 round that include accessibility improvements, which will add to the number of units in the housing stock that incorporate Universal Design.

Nomination Supplemental Support Items:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLgingA_Cgg

Universal Design in Housing from the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

This video highlights the benefits of building houses using the Universal Design concept. It was produced locally in conjunction with the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. Universal Design is just that; "universal" and will improve living conditions in a home for everyone. Universal Design is not geared toward a specific population, but benefits everyone of every age and ability.

TITLE 31

Welfare

Housing and Slum Clearance

CHAPTER 42. UNIVERSAL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Legislation:

<http://delcode.delaware.gov/title31/c042/index.shtml>

Bill Synopsis: This substitute bill requires that the selection process by which public financial assistance is allocated applications for new dwelling units shall include universal design standards. Public financial assistance includes a contract with a state agency, real estate donated by the State, State tax credits, grant assistance from State funds, State loan guarantees, federal funds administered by the State, its agency, local governments or municipalities and funding from local governments and their agencies. The substitute bill clarifies that the requirements do not apply to renovating structures or to homeowners' residences. In selecting a bid, the extent of universal design's use may form a basis to award the contract based on the best value, rather than lowest bidder. The bill sets up a 41-point scale covering the key elements of universal design, and the substitute bill allow for fractions of a point based on the degree to which the project uses a universal design feature.

¹ Smith, Stanley, Rayer, Stefan and Smith, Eleanor. "Aging and Disability: Implications for the Housing Industry and Housing Policy in the United States", *Journal of the American Planning Association* 74, no. 3. 2008: 289-306.

SCHFH September 2013 – HDF Housing Creation Grant

Exhibit 10 – Accessibility Features

Homes in this project and home previously built by Habitat in the Georgetown Point community are accessible homes with the following features:

- Entry doors are 36” wide with standard pivot or hinged doors
- Maximum threshold height is one-half inch beveled or one-fourth inch squared
- No-step entry may be achieved through the addition of a ramp outside or in the garage
- Access route provided through all spaces in the house
- All interior doors are 36” wide
- Hallways are at least 42” wide
- All bedrooms on first floor
- At least one bathroom on first floor
- Kitchen area has more than a 60” turning radius
- Open concept living area and hallways
- Toggle light switches mounted 36 to 42 inches above finished floor throughout the house
- Hard Surfaced driveways and sidewalks
- Driveways wide enough to support wheel chair arrivals
- Public Street Lighting
- Tile and low nap carpeted flooring
- Low or no VOC Paints
- Bathroom design wide enough to go ADA
- Bathroom wall areas re-supported for grab bars