



2013 Annual Awards Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

Entry Name Universal Design

HFA Delaware State Housing Authority

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Entry form with description, check(s), and visual aids (optional) must be received by NCSHA by **Monday, July 1, 2013**.

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

HFA Delaware State Housing Authority

Entry Name Universal Design

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
<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"/> Federal Advocacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<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	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

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 better understand the scope and nature of the housing needs for people with disabilities in the state, in order to provide more effective and appropriate responses. One of the significant items that kept coming to the forefront was the importance of universal design.

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.

In recent years, there has been more of a focus on persons with disabilities. DSHA was a lead partner with other agencies to lay a solid foundation for the need of accessibility:

- The 2008-2012 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment included a section identifying the housing needs of persons with disabilities.
- In December 2009, the Housing for Extremely Low-Income Households (ELI) Working group released *Housing Delaware's Extremely Low-Income Households*, which identified those with disabilities as being homeless or at risk of being homeless due to the frequency of being in an extremely low-income household.
- DSHA is a member of the Housing Sub-Committee of the Governor's Commission on Community Based Alternatives for People with Disabilities, which joined with the State Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Delaware Housing Coalition to form a working group that produced the report *Community and Choice: Housing Needs for People with Disabilities in Delaware* in April 2012.

There were some promising legislative efforts in the early stages. 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. House Bill 227 was finally voted out of the Housing & Community Affairs Committee on January 25, 2012.

A session on Creating Affordable & Accessible Homes was included in the 2012 Governor's Conference on Housing, which revealed a number of startling statistics from Alexander J. Rose, a Social Services Administrator with the Developmental Disabilities Council since 1997. These reasons further cemented the need for Universal Design in Housing in Delaware:

- According to the 2010 Census, there are 108,444 Delawareans estimated to have a disability.
- 31% of people over 65 report having one or more disabilities.
- In Delaware an estimated 18,375 people (2.2% of the population) report having difficulty with self-care and 36,108 (5.4% of the population) report having difficulty with independent living.
- 14.5% of the population in Delaware over 65 (17,748) report needing assistance with independent living activities.
- From 2010 to 2040, the percent of Delaware's population over 60 is projected to increase from 20% to 30 % of the population, especially in Sussex County.
- While the population in Delaware is expected to increase about 16% from 2000 to 2040, the population over 60 will increase by 150%.

- AARP reports that the vast majority of their members want to remain in their own homes and “age in place”.
- The percent of the population with any disability is projected to increase from 13% in 2010 to 16.8% of the population in 2040.

People with disabilities are living longer today and want to be integrated into the community to enjoy the same quality of life as the rest of the population. Many people who have been in institutions due to their disability in the past are now living in our communities and need homes with accessible features. 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.

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.

Even though legislation was still in the works, DHSa forged ahead. In 2010, 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 has 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.

http://www.destatehousing.com/Developers/dv_hdf.php

(See 3.b. HDF Universal Design Score sheet)

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.

In the fall of 2011, DHSa representatives met with the sponsor of HB 227, Representative Johnson, on several occasions in preparation for the 2012 legislative season. DHSa expressed general support for the legislation but had to resolve several issues in order to support it completely. 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 DSHA to implement them without dramatically changing our applications for funding. The sponsor agreed to our changes, resulting in a substitute bill being introduced. DSHA agreed to support the bill and actively work to advance it. As a result, DSHA staff worked on making technical suggestions to the legislation that was incorporated into the final version of the bill. DSHA also worked with advocates to educate other legislators and partners on the impact of the bill. Finally, DSHA 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. In addition to the 5% fully accessible requirement for all projects, Delaware law requires that all first-floor multifamily new construction units with state funding be adaptable to full accessibility.

DSHA has, and will continue to work with advocates and partners such as the Home Builders Association, United Cerebral Palsy, the Developmental Disabilities Council and other stakeholders to support legislation and other programs that increase the supply of housing available to people with disabilities.

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.