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Background

26% of people have a disability, yet it's estimated that less than 6% of the national housing supply is designed to be accessible. As housing communities are created, they don't often meet the diverse accessibility and inclusion needs of people with disabilities. While basic code and compliance measures require specific features, no holistic set of guidelines and standards define an implementable, progressive approach to design truly accessible and inclusive housing communities. Equipping designers, builders, and developers with a set of standards and a new framework for accessibility-forward design can drastically improve housing quality and housing options for all people.

Accessible design standards first appeared in October of 1961 in a publication by the American Standards Association with the purpose "to make all buildings and facilities used by the public accessible to, and functional for, the physically handicapped." In 1968, with the Architectural Barriers Act's passage, the federal government identified specific accessibility requirements

to receive federal funding. Federal laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 affirmed equal access to accommodations and spaces. The dominant impacts of the ADA's accessibility prioritized public facilities such as parks, recreation centers, schools, and government buildings.

For the most part, accessibility in multifamily housings is driven by a baseline of federal, state and local codes, layered with requirements from funding sources. This baseline can vary greatly across geographies and project type, construction date, and size. They often emphasize physical access, with some addressing sensory related access needs, but do not have a 'cross-disability' approach to support the diverse needs of those with disabilities. And, in all of these cases, code compliance is too often seen as the baseline requirement and as a risk the design team must mitigate by 'checking the box' rather than a mission-oriented design choice to benefit the people with disabilities who will eventually use or visit the spaces being created. As a complement to existing code, the goal of the Inclusive Design Standards is to define a set of guidelines for the diverse community of people with disabilities that is applicable and aspirational, creating implementable tools to be used for multifamily housing of all sizes and locations while serving as a springboard for housing success and increased creativity in inclusive building design. These Design Standards are a guide, a philosophy, and a tool for advancing the field.

The Design Standards are purposefully aspirational. With the rich history of disability activism and accessibility advances, there is a clear arc of continued evolution and pushing past what was previously defined as possible or attainable. These Design Standards are no different; rooted in what is implementable today, the aim is to drive towards a future where people have full access in places with inclusion as the norm.

Goals

The Design Standards define multifamily housing elements throughout the development process and address everything from the design approach to physical spaces, to mobility and reach to healthy materials selection, to amenities, outdoor spaces, on-site staffing, and resident supports. A cross-disability approach provides elements that are specific to individualized access needs and others that benefit a diversity of disabilities. The elements were assessed on intersectional benefits alongside affordability options, considerations for residents, racial equity, sustainability, and a better resident experience. The below goals were embedded throughout the creation of the standards.

Cross Disability

Support access and inclusion for the broad and diverse needs of people with disabilities.

The first guidelines for accessibility in design only centered on physical and mobility access; subsequent standards have included design for blind, deaf, and cognitive disabilities. In recent

years housing organizations have published design guidelines for specific types of accessibility — people with specific needs such as those with autism and with mental health disabilities, as well as for healthcare and wellness settings, deaf space, and beyond. The difference in these Design Standards is its intention to maintain cross-disability accessibility — to address multiple disability access needs. The elements and scoring support projects to meet a threshold for cross-disability access and provide elements where design teams can expand accessibility focused on specific impact areas and access needs. A key feature of cross-disability design is to recognize that one size does not fit all, and to consciously discuss and pinpoint when access needs may not be met, such as why the access needs could not be fully met for certain individuals. At times, there may be conflicting access needs that should be acknowledged and addressed where possible.

Multidimensional

Address the many elements of housing development, design, and operations that impact accessibility and inclusion.

Often accessibility discussions are limited to physical spaces — only considered once it's too late — in certain moments within the design process or among certain project team members. Design and development teams must consider strategies at all phases of the project to support accessibility and inclusion that accommodates more people. Members of the team must recognize and address multiple dimensions of a housing community's needs, understanding conflicts and creating solutions that address a resident's access needs. Development teams can use them to direct their designers and engineers on project access targets and goals. Architects can use them in the design development and value engineering processes. Funders can set funding requirements for projects to meet threshold scoring. Cities can direct new affordable housing developments to utilize them in their communities. Advocates can drive policy to advance access with these as a guide. Property managers can create operations strategies that support more inclusion and equity for their residents. The Design Standards aim to anchor access and inclusion as fundamental, throughout housing design and operations; and by all members of a team or community.

Implementable and Expandable

Provide standards that can be clearly and swiftly adopted into projects and policies while evolving and expanding over time.

These standards are meant to be immediately usable by project development teams, including funders, designers, project managers, city officials, community members, engineers, and owners. Some people will come to these standards with a mission-oriented approach to inclusion and access, and others will be thinking about these issues for the first time beyond basic code requirements. The Design Standards are simple, digestible, and recognize that these design goals addressing access and inclusion are complex and evolving. There will be

opportunities for feedback and refinement of these standards over time as projects implement them and residents experience their effects.

Value Creation

Disability-forward design supports better, more efficient, equitable, building development.

In addition to the explicit goals outlined above, the standards are developed with an eye towards value creation for the communities they inform and the ultimate future residents of those communities. Too often accessibility is seen as a risk projects face, by not meeting code, or risking lawsuits around compliance. Modifying units are costly for owners and managers, and burdensome for residents. Needless to say, institutions and hospitals, where many people are stuck because of the lack of accessible community living options, are always more costly and less desired. Embedding access and inclusion as a fundamental design strategy is an opportunity for value creation in a resident-centered approach. It mitigates the risk of needing to adapt or modify homes in the future, creates more cost-effective outcomes, and incorporates community-based housing for people with disabilities. It also pushes innovation, creativity, and planning to the forefront of design. Ultimately, disability-forward design creates better homes and opportunities for all people.

2. Approach

- › Defining the Elements
- › Design Categories
- › Impact Areas
- › Additional Benefits
- › Process

Defining the Elements

The creation of the Inclusive Design Standards began with defining key terms and element categories, researching existing standards and design strategies, soliciting expert and lived-experience feedback and compiling the standards into a usable format. The entire process broke down design choices, development processes, and operation strategies into elements. Elements were then categorized by Design Categories, Impact Areas, and Additional Benefits.

Design Categories

Choices throughout the development, design, and operations process impact access and inclusion. The area or phase of the process in the Design Standards is defined as a Design Category. Outlined below, Design Categories help outline when in the process an element can be implemented, and what member or part of the development or design team should own that

elements implementation. Project scoring requires implementation of elements across all Design Categories.

- **Design Process:** Elements that the project team will utilize to support comprehensive access and inclusion goals for residents; everything from building the team to community outreach-strategies to processes that provide access and define an inclusive building program.
- **Site:** The location of the community related to retail, transit, parks, employment and educational opportunities, and other amenities and the physical characteristics of the site itself that allow easy access from the Public Way to the front door, accessible walkways through buildings or amenities, and opportunities for usable outdoor spaces like gardens, playgrounds, or gathering spots.
- **Building Components:** Physical features that might occur both on the site and in the building, or in various types of interior spaces. They span multiple categories and are grouped together to support team implementation.
- **Interior Spaces:** Interior features of the building, excluding the dwelling units. This includes spaces like the lobby, corridors, and special rooms like mailrooms, and gyms, as well as broader ideas about overall design approaches and program elements for the building.
- **Dwelling Units:** Specific room-by-room features that improve the interior of the dwelling units for residents. Features provide guidance to the project team for design of the overall dwelling unit.
- **Operations and Amenities:** Operations guidelines, building staffing, on-site services, and resident experiences. Services that create connections between residents and the community that feel natural to the resident, and are centered on the resident's housing goals.

Impact Areas

As standards designed to support cross-disability accessibility, each element supports one or more impact areas. These impact areas are intentionally not named after a diagnosis or type of disability, but instead link to access needs that different design or program choices can support

Mobility and Height

Individuals who have limited use of their limbs, limited range of motion or dexterity, who use mobility supports (i.e., wheelchairs - manual and motorized; scooters; walkers; canes; grab bars), who are of short stature, and/or who use assistive tools (i.e., reachers, step ladders, stools, etc.) to access spaces.

Hearing and Acoustics

Individuals who are hard of hearing (HOH), use hearing supports and devices to engage in surrounding environments (i.e., voice amplification devices, hearing aids, video relay services, cochlear implants, ASL, etc.), and/or who have auditory sensory sensitivities.

Vision

Individuals who are blind, who have low vision, and/or who use visual supports and devices to engage in surrounding environments (i.e., Braille, screen readers, magnifiers, lightboxes, etc.). This can also include people with high sensitivity to glare, or rapid changes in light levels.

Health and Wellness

Individuals who have chronic health conditions, who have allergies and chemical sensitivities, are immunocompromised, and/or regularly utilize medical and/or and/or therapeutic services. Aspects of the building that promote wellness for all, such as connection to nature and natural light, are also included.

Cognitive Access

Individuals who process information differently, who have alternative language reception and/or communication preferences and needs, who need items or materials presented in different ways or speeds of information, and/or who use supports in understanding and content retention, information processing, and decision making or choice selection. Includes wayfinding support for memory or orientation.

Support Needs

Individuals who use support services in their home and/or the community including but not limited to: direct support professionals, health aides, nursing support, behavioral supports, and individualized therapies. Can also include individuals using in-house family support for mobility or other assistance.

Additional Benefits

Choices made to support the accessibility and inclusion of individuals with disabilities often result in greater benefits and better housing for all people. All elements in the Design Standards advance multiple and various benefits for diverse groups of residents and neighbors, but some elements are specific to the following additional benefits.

Affordability

Individuals with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, and those reliant on SSI as their primary source of income would have to pay, on average nationally, 131% of their entire income to afford rent. Elements that meet additional affordability goals support project feasibility and increased affordability goals.

Racial Equity

Centering on the most marginalized is essential to expanding inclusion and access. Elements address specific ways to increase anti-racist strategies in design and operation, broad equity goals, accessibility and inclusion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, and strategies to support the inclusion of individuals with intersectional identities.

Environmental Sustainability

Choices made to improve materials selection, climate reducing strategies, daylighting, site selection, space planning, and overall design; most often also achieving sustainability and environmental impact goals. Beyond providing direct impacts with healthier environments for all residents, environmental sustainability approaches even provide positive externalities to the greater society, including community members with disabilities.

Safety

Design strategies that support access and inclusion not only keep residents with disabilities safe, but support overall community safety for all people in and around the building. More navigable spaces, safe walking surfaces, good lighting, clear communication systems, robust staffing, and community-based programs all help keep people safe in their homes and communities.

Beauty and Better Design

Inclusive and accessible design provides an opportunity for creativity, innovation, and rethinking spaces in a more identity-rich, resident-centered way. A focus on sensory related access creates spaces with increased harmony. Wayfinding strategies make for more graceful navigation. Cross-disability inclusion builds more interesting and meaningful communities. Elements support diverse definitions of artistic design, housing innovation, beauty in placemaking, and experiences that improve the lives of all residents.

Process

As a starting point to this work, the research of elements supported the development of accessible, affordable, and inclusive housing projects, and led to the framework and approach for its successful implementation. The method included the input of multiple industry professionals, people with disabilities as partners and leaders, and support of housing organizations interested in building a pipeline of inclusive housing throughout the U.S. The creation of the Design Standards included research and discovery, focus groups, project reviews, and expert feedback.

Research and Element Compilation

Existing projects and guidelines currently available to developers, architects, contractors, and property managers include strategies for greater inclusion and accessibility. These are often created for a specific type of disability or access needs, or for certain parts of building design. Each of these existing resources were reviewed in detail. Items from these publications were broken down into singular elements, which were categorized in design categories and noted based on their impact areas and additional benefits. Similar elements that appeared in different forms were consolidated, edited, paired with diagrams, or expanded upon. Each source where an element appeared is referenced in that specific element, and all references are listed in the sources section.

Alignment with Other Standards

Federal law and guidance require a baseline of accessibility standards for people with disabilities (see appendix). On top of that baseline, architects must follow state and local building codes when they design buildings to increase accessibility and protect occupants' health and safety. However, there is a heightened need for a set of housing design standards that increase accessibility and inclusion for all.

Moreover, there are other solution-oriented standards to create better buildings from organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), International Living Future Institute (ILFI), and the International Well Building Institute (WELL). They have each created

their own sets of standards and performance-based systems to build and transform housing communities that are healthy and environmentally sustainable.

The Design Standards are meant to complement existing standards to support multifamily housing projects and to think beyond code compliance, ultimately increasing accessible, inclusive housing design.

Expert and Lived Experience Feedback

Transforming existing design strategies as compiled into elements, input was solicited from leaders in the building development industry, future potential residents, and intersectional partners. Preliminary 1:1 meetings supported early direction pathways and led to the assemblage of two important groups: the Inclusive Design Council, and the many architects and designers who attended Designer Workshops for feedback and input specific to identifying the standards' usability and implementation. The goals of the designer workshops were to bring designers' insights to bear on the applicability of the tool, solicit feedback on the approach

to element categorization, and identify strategies to increase adoption of the standards once published. Beyond giving feedback on elements compiled and overall structure, these groups also helped define new elements and additional sections of the final structure of the Design Standards.

Project Application

Simultaneous to research and focus groups, with Mikiten Architecture as the Universal Design Consultant, The Kelsey applied these standards with the development teams at The Kelsey Ayer Station (San Jose, CA) and The Kelsey Civic Center (San Francisco, CA). With over 240 homes in the pipeline, they were able to utilize these as ongoing reference projects at critical developmental points to understand how The Kelsey Civic Center and The Kelsey Ayer Station could be applied to future projects. In addition to fully applying elements to these two projects, other project developers and design teams were consulted on how these Design Standards could be applied to their existing or planned housing development efforts.

Planning for Adoption and Roll Out

As the Design Standards are implemented, they will be tested against projects and updated with partner feedback. New design strategies will continue to influence the Design Standards, and elements will be periodically updated. On an ongoing basis, they will be refined to reflect changes in disability related supports and services, and the multifamily building development processes. To support adoption, Design Standards could be linked to funding incentives supporting project development and design, policy standards, and land use incentives to promote project teams in their efforts to build multifamily housing that is inclusive and accessible.

3 Implementation

- › Scoring Approach
- › Full Certification
- › Exemplary Badges
- › Focused Certifications
- › Self Certification

Scoring Approach

Multifamily housing communities of all sizes can be certified using the Inclusive Design Standards. Development teams can score their project comprehensively and as 'Exemplary Badges' in specific impact areas. There are also opportunities for focused certification, especially for projects already developed or addressing access and inclusion in a more limited scope of Design Categories. Scoring supports cross-disability accessibility across all Design Categories with Exemplary Badges for impact areas to support a project's ability to showcase their efforts to increase access in innovative ways, for target communities, or within certain phases of design.

Certification under these Design Standards demonstrates that broad accessibility and inclusion in multifamily buildings is achievable, and promotes others to do the same. Stepping through the certification process is a rich learning process that will prepare teams to incorporate more accessibility in future projects of all types.

The entire team benefits from an inclusive and accessible process. Having the important mission of inclusion can help unify a team, from project engineers to city planners and building department personnel to the entire contractor team, under a shared purpose, leading to a stronger team in every respect. This certification also provides benefits to project teams and housing owners: it allows developers, architects, and other project members to demonstrate their social consciousness and commitment to inclusion; it shows potential renters that the building is designed more carefully and thoughtfully for them; and it makes the community a more desirable and usable place for everyone to live.

Full Certification

Projects can either become certified by meeting Essential Elements or achieve a higher certification level of Silver, Gold, or Platinum by implementing more elements in each Design Category, as shown below

Exemplary Badges

An idea driven by the Inclusive Design Council, Exemplary Badges can be achieved in design or operation in addition to full certification. They allow projects to showcase their choice to emphasize strategies for a specific impact area. While cross-disability access is captured in the overall certification, and important for designing inclusive communities, Exemplary Badges demonstrate when certain projects have deployed additional features to support a target population or local need.

The below summarizes the required points in an impact area to be considered exemplary. Points can be distributed across any design categories.

Focused Certifications

Very often existing projects undertake a partial remodel, such as rehabilitation of all the dwelling units or a refresh of outdoor spaces. For these types of limited-scope projects, there are targeted opportunities to achieve excellence in accessibility and inclusion through a focused certification.

Due to the underlying philosophy that an inclusive project can't happen without an inclusive process, scoring for all four types of focused certifications require a certified level of scoring in

the design process category. For instance, a Gold level certification is required for the area of focus

Self-Certification

Project teams can self-certify and utilize The Kelsey for Technical Assistance through the process. Details on the certification process can be found at thekelsey.org/design. There you can also find resources for project consultants, advisors, and other strategies to support inclusive, accessible design. Questions on the process or project-specific support needs can be directed to design@thekelsey.org.

Evaluate your project by utilizing the Self-Certification spreadsheet, starting prior to project kickoff. Self-certification tool provides access to consultants, and Technical Assistance; more information can be located at thekelsey.org/design.

4 Elements

- › Element Details - [Design Process](#)
- › Element Details - [Site](#)
- › Element Details - [Building Components](#)
- › Element Details - [Interior Spaces](#)
- › Element Details - [Dwelling Units](#)
- › Element Details - [Operations and Amenities](#)

› Conclusion and Considerations

Overview

The elements are organized by Design Category and Impact Area. Each element includes additional details, access needs, additional benefits, imagery and source information. The element detail sheet shows how each element sheet is built and supports improved accessibility and inclusion. A sortable database of all elements is available at thekelsey.org/design

Conclusion

Designing disability-forward communities does not only meet the overlooked and undersupplied housing needs of 1 in 4 people with disabilities, doing so also creates better housing for all

people. An approach focused on cross-disability access, choices throughout the design process, and intersection benefits all support the creation of truly inclusive housing that meets diverse community needs.

The creation of this initial publication of the Inclusive Design Standards is not the completion of such work. Rather, as projects are designed, developed, and occupied, the Design Standards will continue to evolve and be modified to reflect the most progressive and innovative disability-forward designs. Just as this first version of the Design Standards was created with insights from existing project owners and developers, architects, disabled advocates, and other standards and guidelines, future versions will be shaped by the same.

The Design Standards can and should also be utilized in alignment with funding sources and policy development. Regulations, policies, and public funding can support projects to utilize such accessible and inclusive design. Land use policies can align to support disability-forward projects. Predevelopment and permanent housing finance can incentivize and support projects who choose to design their projects using the Inclusive Design Standards. The Design Standards are developed to be more than a collection of elements and a project certification tool. Beyond being an implementation guide for inclusive housing today, the Design Standards can be a tool to drive next phases of innovation around accessible design and advance a disability-forward housing future.

To participate in future versions email design@thekelsey.org

[5 Sources and Partners](#)

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- › [References](#)
- › [Workshop Participants](#)
- › [Inclusive Design Council](#)
- › [Terms of Use](#)

Overview

The Design Standards were shaped by input from industry and community partners over 12-months. During this time the team qualified and selected ten members to participate in The Kelsey's Inclusive Design Council (IDC) to provide input as consultants. Representing different states, backgrounds, identities and disabilities, the IDC supported thinking beyond current limitations to envision elements that could influence multifamily housing communities for years to come.

Two workshops held with architects and designers supported the implementation of the Design Standards against each goal with project teams that are working to build housing for people with and without disabilities. The first workshop identified feasibility of the Design Standards scope and worked to define key objectives missing from multifamily housing design. The second workshop reviewed the Design Standards and element expectations for adoption.

The elements were sourced from multiple documents, edited and readapted to form over 300 elements that remain core to improving accessibility for a range of disabilities and people at different stages of life.

References

This list of references informed our certification process, but may not reflect every organization's values and goals.

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- Architecture for the Blind, Chris Downey
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- Disability Rights California
- Division of the State Architect, DSA, Access Code Collaborative working group
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- Home and Community Based Services Settings Rule (HCBS) Settings Rule
- Home Matters America: Appliances and Work Surfaces
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- Home Matters America: Interior and Living Spaces
- Housing Development Consortium, Housing Community and Development Report Out
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- Inclusive Design Council, USA
- Innovative Solutions for Universal Design, Solutions isUD
- International Living Future Institute, Living Future: Living Building Challenge 4.0
- International WELL Building Institute, WELL Standards
- LCM Architects, Chicago, IL
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- Mikiten Architecture, Berkeley, CA

- National Disability Authority, Building for Everyone
- National Institute of Building Sciences, NIBS Design Guidelines for the Visual Environment
- Nimble Spaces: Ireland
- Safe Score: Washer and Dryer Hookups
- Shopworks Architecture, Designing for Healing, Dignity, and Joy Report
- Sonoma County, Universal Design Checklist
- The American National Standards Institute, ANSI Standards
- The Corporation for Supportive Housing,

CSH: Suggestions for Physical Design Standards in Supportive Housing Developments

- University at Buffalo, Buffalo Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Universal Design ID:

Residential Remodeling and Universal Design, Home Innovation Research Labs and Upper Marlboro, MD

- U.S. Green Building Council, LEED 4.1 BDCO+M Guide
- YIMBY Action

Workshop Participants

The workshops held included architects and designers who would be the end-users of the Design Standards. They have been most influential at three parts where we first covered feasibility and potential, secondly provided feedback on implementation for users, and lastly in the Design Sprint thinking about the tool and roll out. They are from over 25 design studios in various parts of the U.S.

Name	Organization
Alicia Anderson	Administration on Community Living
Amy Pothier	Gensler
Andrew Glba	Devcon Construction
Ann Bui	The Kelsey
Anne Riggs	David Baker Architects
Armando Tobias	LCM Architects
Bethany Hurd	The Universal Design Project
BJ Dietz Epstein	Lighthouse for the Blind - San Francisco
Bruce Prescott	Santos Prescott and Associates
Caroline Bas	The Kelsey
Chris Downey	Architecture for the Blind
Deborah Talamantez	LCM Architects
Doug Anderson	LCM Architects
Elena Prokop	LCM Architects
Emily Jones	WRNS Studio
Eric Mondragon	The Kelsey
Erick Mikiten	Mikiten Architecture
Fatimah Aure	The Kelsey
Gail Napell	Gensler
Gina Hilberry	Institute for Human Centered Design

Greg Novicoff	LMS Architecture
Jennifer Simmons	Anderson Brulé Architects
Kate Conley	OJK Architecture
Katherine Dailey	LCM Architects
Katherine Rivard	Anderson Brulé Architects
Kathy Gips	Institute for Human Centered Design
Karen Braitmayer	Studio Pacific Seattle
Karen Nichols	Michael Graves
Kenneth Knox	Devcon Construction
Kimberly Bascos	Anderson Brulé Architects
Kristian Hayward	Devcon Construction
Lori Gerhard	Administration on Community Living
Matthew Braul	tlstitute for Human Centered Design
Micaela Connery	The Kelsey
Nicholas Sanchez	Self
Nubyaan Scott	Disability Rights California
Pamela Anderson-Brule	Anderson Brulé Architects
Pauline Souza	WRNS Studio
Raul Orellana	The Kelsey
Sabrina Odah	Suffolk Construction
Sally Roth	David Baker Architects
Sarah Pruett	The Universal Design Project
Scott Pruett	The Universal Design Project
Simcha Ward	Laurel Street Residential
Skyler Whittaker	Self
Steven Montgomery	LCM Architects
Sunday Parker	Salesforce
Susan Corry	Livelyhood Housing
Susan Duncan	Institute for Human Centered Design
Susan Moe	Access Compliance Consulting

Suzanne Hemphill	State of California Dept Housing and Community Development (HCD)
Tony Taormino	Devcon Construction
Valerie Fletcher	Institute for Human Centered Design
Wright Sherman	WRNS Studio

Inclusive Design Council

The Inclusive Design Council (IDC) for the Inclusive Design Standards is a cross disability group of 10 paid consultants who have provided input and feedback on the creation of the Design Standards that are being developed by The Kelsey with support from Erick Mikiten of Mikiten Architecture. The Inclusive Design Standards are meant to be a set of design and program guidelines to define accessibility and inclusivity for multifamily residential communities. The goal of the Inclusive Design Council was to provide feedback on various levels of inclusion, across different access needs to achieve a set of standards that enforce an accurate level of inclusion that meets the accommodation of people with physical, intellectual, sensory, visual, and hearing disabilities.

Bethany Hurd

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Bethany is pursuing her Masters of Architecture at the University of Kansas. She has a passion for Universal Design and is an individual who lives with disabilities.

“Home for More Inclusion is considering the end users in the initial design process and providing access in built environments that accommodate the vast different people and abilities” - Bethany Hurd

she/her

Lawrence, Kansas

Domonique Howell

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Domonique is an Independent Living Specialist at Liberty Resources. She is a disability and family advocate with knowledge and experience in disability access. She hopes these design standards could be the continued catalyst for change in access and design. These design

standards are important for her because she has lived experience with inaccessible living spaces.

“Home for More Inclusion is about creating a better society for everyone, and ultimate access is freedom.” - Domonique Howell

she/her

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jess Cowing, Ph.D.

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Jess is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the American Studies Department at Franklin and Marshall College. She is a neurodivergent scholar-activist and works in the areas of feminist disability studies, settler colonialism, and 19th and 20th century literary studies. She hopes these design standards will increase access for neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ people while creating change within the disability justice community. These design standards are important for her because she has experience in academic access and has led workshops on digital and classroom accessibility for faculty at the College of William and Mary.

“More Inclusion is welcoming and inviting people to a space. More Access is the messy work done from the beginning to build in supports that make people want to be in a space.” - Jess Cowing, Ph.D.

she/they

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Lydia X. Z. Brown

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Lydia is the Director of Policy, Advocacy, and External Affairs at the Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network. They are also an Adjunct Lecturer in the Disability Studies Program at

Georgetown University and an Adjunct Professorial Lecturer in the Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University. They hope these design standards will increase access for multiply disabled and neurodivergent individuals and provide an intersectional lens to building accessible housing. These design standards are important for them because they have significant experience with access to technology, pedagogical and curricular design, and event planning, and some architectural access from their time as a student advocate in college.

“More Inclusion is making everyone feel genuinely welcome and a sense of belonging. More Access is ensuring everyone has the care and support they need to make meaningful decisions about participation and engagement.”

-Lydia X. Z. Brown

they/them

theirs/ themselves

or no pronouns

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Leonard Craig

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Leonard is the former President of the Orientation Center for the Blind. He is an unpaid blind consultant for Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL). At CRIL, he works on feeding the unhoused and serves as an advocate for the housing crisis in the Bay Area. He hopes these design standards will empower people with disabilities because they provide a portal for people to individualize their lives and set a standard of accessible, affordable, and inclusive living for years to come. These design standards are important for him because they allow access for people with disabilities and give them ownership of the different housing communities they will be living in.

“More Inclusion is more connection to your community. More Access is more freedom for people with disabilities.” - Leonard Craig

he/him

Hayward, CA

Maddy Ruvolo

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Maddy is a Transportation Planner on the Accessible Services team at San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. She has a master's degree in urban planning, with a focus on access for the disability community. She hopes these design standards will increase access and inclusion in transportation accessibility and provide a leading standard of inclusive design in the housing sector. These design standards are important for her because she is disabled and has worked in disability rights.

"More Inclusion is upending power dynamics to center the most marginalized. More Access is centering disabled ways of being, enabling disabled people to navigate the world without barriers." - Maddy Ruvolo

she/her/hers

Oakland, CA

Nicholas Sanchez

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Nicholas Sanchez graduated from California State University, Northridge with a Bachelor of Science in interior design. He shares expert opinion on access and design specific to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. He hopes these design standards will add valuable experience to interior design and provide architects, developers, and housers the skills and knowledge to

build accessible, affordable, and inclusive spaces. These design standards are important for him because they address access needs that cover a multitude of disabilities.

“More Inclusion is having open conversations so that we could learn from each other and grow better, and more access is having closed captions, interpreters, and carts.” - Nicholas Sanchez

he/him

North Hollywood, CA

Scott Pruett

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Scott Pruett is Co-Founder of the Universal Design Project. He has life experience with access needs since a spinal cord injury in 1999, formal accessibility consulting between 2012-2015, Executive Director of a nonprofit focused on Universal Design, and Board President of a Center for Independent Living for the last 8 years. He hopes these design standards will address the systemic problem of inaccessibility in areas of the housing sector not regulated by the ADA. These design standards are important for him because he believes in accessible, affordable, and inclusive housing communities.

“More Inclusion is more community, and more Access is more opportunity.”

-Scott Pruett

he/him

Harrisonburg, Virginia

Sharon daVanport

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Sharon is the Executive Director at Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network. They are a disabled person and someone who has provided consulting around access and disability for more than 10 years. They hope these design standards will increase access for all and provide

a space of inclusivity for intersectional communities. These design standards are important for them because inclusivity is rooted in gender, racial equity, and justice.

“More Inclusion is ensuring all marginalized people and communities are not only provided a seat at the table, but they are also in leadership roles providing meaningful improvements for stakeholders living at the margins of the margins. More Access is committing to provide unlimited access without ableist barriers”

-Sharon daVanport

she/they

Lincoln, Nebraska

Skyler Whittaker

eowhit@gmail.com

Skyler has a BA in Educational Studies from Western Governors University and a MS in Library and Information Science from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They are an information accessibility specialist and disability justice advocate. They hope these design standards will design housing communities that are accessible, inclusive, and livable. These design standards are important to them because they support designing learning spaces and technologies that make it easier for different people.

“More Inclusion primarily means more inclusion in the process of designing one’s physical and social environment for accessibility. And this is also going to look different for different people in different situations, depending on where each person’s individual needs and interests fit best, and where they can most meaningfully contribute their knowledge and skills. I think the most important part of inclusion is being able to have influence over what happens to you within your broader social and community environments, instead of being at the mercy of having things done to you by other people.” - Skyler Whittaker

they/them

Kansas City, Missouri

Appendix

[› Terms of Use](#)

[› Overview of Relevant Accessibility Codes](#)

Terms of Use

Inclusive Design Standards End User License Agreement

This End User License Agreement (this “Agreement”) is made between The Kelsey, a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity, with a mailing address at 1460 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 (“The Kelsey”, “Our”, “Us”, or “We”) and you (“You”, “Your”, or “Yours”) (each, a “Party” and together the “Parties”). The effective date of this Agreement is the date You accept these terms in accordance with Section 1 (Your Acceptance) (the “Effective Date”). Please read this Agreement carefully. This Agreement governs Your use of the Inclusive Design Standards (the “The Design Standards”).

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2.1. Inclusive Design Standards. The Design Standards include resources and information relating to housing accessibility and inclusiveness.

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6.1. Term. Unless earlier terminated pursuant to this Section 6 (Term and Termination), this Agreement shall come into force and effect upon Your acceptance of this Agreement and shall continue until terminated by The Kelsey. (the "Term").

6.2. Termination by Us. We may terminate this Agreement immediately if We determine, in our reasonable discretion, that You are in breach of this Agreement.

6.3. Effect of Termination. Upon termination or expiration of this Agreement for any reason, Your rights to The Design Standards shall immediately terminate and You shall immediately stop accessing or otherwise using The Design Standards. This Agreement will remain in effect even

after Your access to The Design Standards is terminated or Your use of The Design Standards ends.

7. Modifications to this Agreement. We may modify this Agreement from time to time at Our discretion. If We modify this Agreement, then such modifications shall take effect proactively, upon Your subsequent access to The Design Standards. You may print out a copy of this Agreement for Your records.

Overview of Relevant Accessibility Codes

The following accessibility codes are good standards to use in all multi-family housing to ensure greater accessibility, in conjunction with recommendations in the Design Standards.¹²³⁴

1. U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements under the Federal Fair Housing Act (FHA). These laws apply to almost all multifamily housing in the country, even if there is no government program. They provide the very minimum of accessibility. These laws are found in several documents adopted at various times, which together provide the requirements and additional guidance. These include:

a. The Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines, March 6, 1999, found at 24 C.F. Part 100, and Appendix II to the Fair Housing regulations (24 CFR Ch. I, Subch. A, App. II). The preamble to the guidelines is at Appendix III to the Fair Housing regulations (24 CFR Ch.

I, Subch. A, App. III. See:

1 California Building Code Chapter 11A. These codes apply to all multifamily housing in California, even if there is no government program. We note that Chapter 11A is very similar to the FHA requirements, but where there are differences the codes providing the most accessibility must be applied.

2 California Building Code Chapter 11B. We note that Chapter 11B is very similar to the ADA 2010 Standards requirements, but where there are differences, or where the additional requirements of UFAS or the HUD alternative standards apply, the codes providing the most accessibility must be applied.

3 California Civil Code Section 51.2. Under California law, all senior housing developments have some additional requirements, including requiring an elevator or accessible ramp to all floors.

s, even if they are only two stories.

4 Several major funding programs in California have increased accessibility requirements. For example, the California Tax Credit Program requires that 15 percent of new units be fully accessible Mobility Units and 4% of the new units must be fully accessible Hearing/Vision units (as described in Chapter 11B and the ADA 2010 Standards). The Program also requires that 50% of the units built in housing for seniors be fully accessible Mobility Units. These units have additional features that make them more accessible to people with particular disabilities. Chapter 11B and the ADA 2010 Standards require these units, but in lower percentages. Ideally, and consistent with the Kelsey Design Standards, all units would have all of the features from both types of units, expanding accessibility and the ability to age in place.

<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/FHEO/documents/1991FH%20Accessibility%20Guidelines.pdf>

b. See specifically 24 C.F.R. Section 100.205;

c. The Supplement to Notice of Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines: Questions and Answers About the Guidelines, June 28, 1994, at Appendix IV to the Fair Housing Regulations (24 CFR Ch. I., Subch. A, App. IV);

d. The Fair Housing Act Design Manual: A Manual to Assist Designers and Builders in Meeting the Accessibility Requirements of The Fair Housing Act, <https://www.huduser.gov/>

[portal/publications/destech/fairhousing.html](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/destech/fairhousing.html), February 25, 2008;

e. JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ACCESSIBILITY (DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION) REQUIREMENTS FOR COVERED MULTIFAMILY DWELLINGS UNDER THE FAIR HOUSING ACT, at https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_

[equal_opportunity/physical_accessibility#:~:text=Joint%20Statement%20on%20Accessibility%20\(Design%20%26%20Construction\)%20Requirements%20\(April%2030%2C%202013\);](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opportunity/physical_accessibility#:~:text=Joint%20Statement%20on%20Accessibility%20(Design%20%26%20Construction)%20Requirements%20(April%2030%2C%202013);) and

f. For more information on the requirements and the seven safe harbors for compliance with the Fair Housing Act, visit Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST.

2. HUD Requirements under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act. These standards apply to all housing where the agency providing the funding receives federal funds or the project receives federal funds. These accessibility standards found at 24 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 8, including 24 C.F.R. Sections 8.22 (requirements for minimum percentages of fully accessible Mobility and Hearing/Vision Units) and 8.32 (Accessibility Standards) and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) found at 24 C.F.R. Part 40, Appendix A, and 24 C.F.R. Sections 40.4 and 40.7 (Standards/Availability of Accessibility Standards).

3. Federal requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. These standards apply to all housing where a public agency provides funding or the housing is part of a government program. Specifically, 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (2010 ADAS), 28 C.F.R. Part 35.151 and 36 C.F.R. part 1191, and Appendices B and D. In particular, the 2010 Standards

include 28 C.F.R Part 35.151 + 2004 ADAAG Standards. See the 2010 standards at https://www.ada.gov/2010ADASTandards_index.htm and the Dept. of Justice Guidance on the 2010

ADA Standards for Accessible Design at <https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADASTandards/Guidance2010ADASTandards.htm>

4. The HUD Deeming Memo (HUD's modified version of the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, HUD-2014-0042-0001, 79 Federal Register 29671 (5/23/14), commonly referred to as the "Alternative Standards" or "HUD Deeming Memo"). The federal standards in paragraphs 2 and 3 above are similar but not identical. This memo describes how you can comply with both paragraphs 3 and 4 by using the 2010 Standards, along with 14 exceptions to those standards.

[https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/05/23/2014-11844/nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/05/23/2014-11844/nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-of-disability-in-federally-assisted-programs-and-activities)

[of-disability-in-federally-assisted-programs-and-activities.](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/05/23/2014-11844/nondiscrimination-on-the-basis-of-disability-in-federally-assisted-programs-and-activities)

5. In some situations, additional standards may be applicable, such as in federal buildings of historic buildings.

In addition to specific accessibility standards, federal law also establishes some additional accessibility requirements. For example:

a. First, where not all units are fully accessible Mobility and Hearing/Vision units, the fully accessible units shall, to the maximum extent feasible and subject to reasonable health and safety requirements, be distributed throughout the project and be available in sufficient range of sizes and amenities consistent with 24 C.F.R. § 8.26 so that a qualified individual with disabilities' choice of living arrangements is, as a whole, comparable to that of other persons eligible for housing assistance under the program.

b. Properties have a legal obligation to maintain accessible features in good condition.

c. Even if properties meet all accessibility requirements, they are required by federal law to provide reasonable modifications (physical changes to the unit or property) and reasonable accommodations (changes in rules, policies, or procedures) to individuals with disabilities when needed to allow the individual equal enjoyment of the housing.

d. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the FairHousing Act, all require housing providers to take necessary steps to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities.

e. Second, where not all units are fully accessible Mobility and Hearing/Vision units, priority for the fully accessible units must be given to individuals who need the accessible features.

Marketing of accessible units must be targeted to people who need the features. Further,

reasonable nondiscriminatory steps to maximize the utilization of accessible units by eligible individuals whose disability requires the accessibility features of the particular units as specified in 24 C.F.R. § 8.27: "When an accessible unit becomes vacant, the owner or manager, before offering such units to an applicant without disabilities, shall offer such unit:

(1)First, to a current occupant of another unit of the same project, or comparable projects under common control, having disabilities requiring the accessibility features of the vacant unit and occupying a unit not having such features, or, if no such occupant exists, then,

(2)Second, to an eligible qualified applicant on the waiting list having a disability requiring the accessibility features of the vacant unit, then,

(3)Third, shall work with the local continuum of care organization, mental health department, or other placement entity or attempt to market the unit for a reasonable time to identify a qualified applicant who needs the accessible features before renting to an applicant who does not need the accessible features.

When offering an accessible unit to an applicant not having disabilities requiring the accessibility features of the unit, the property shall require the applicant to agree to move to a comparable non-accessible unit when available, and shall incorporate this agreement in the lease or a lease addendum.”

Relevant HUD & DOJ RA/RM and EC Guidance:

https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/reasonable_modifications_mar08.pdf

https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2010/12/14/joint_statement_ra.pdf

<https://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm>

For more information on federal accessibility standards, see
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/

[fair_housing_equal_opportunity/physical_accessibility](#)

To be involved with adoption and roll-out, and provide ongoing feedback contact
design@thekelsey.org

To access additional resources including a self-certification tool, training opportunities, technical assistance or other materials visit www.thekelsey.org/design

