



# PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE WITH **UNIVERSAL DESIGN**



## WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN?

Universal Design creates homes and community spaces that are easy for everyone to use — children, adults, older adults, visitors, and people with temporary or long-term disabilities. Universally designed homes and communities are visually appealing, convenient, and intuitive to use for everyone.



## HOMES & COMMUNITIES THAT WORK FOR EVERYONE

A home with Universal Design (UD) features helps people of all ages and abilities live comfortably, safely, and independently. Whether you're recovering from an injury, welcoming aging parents, or planning for the future, thoughtful design makes everyday life easier. Complete communities designed in walkable areas near services and transportation options allow older adults to maintain connections and avoid unnecessary driving.



## WHY IT MATTERS

Life changes — and your home should be able to change with you. Universal Design features can help you stay in your home longer, make visits easier for loved ones, and prevent costly renovations in the future. A UD home provides ease of use and convenience features for everyone, all the time.

**Planning ahead means more comfort,  
more independence, and more choices.**



Learn More About Universal Design:



[www.udinstitute.org](http://www.udinstitute.org)

[www.aarp.org/livable-communities](http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities)

# UNIVERSAL DESIGN PROVIDES:



ACCESSIBILITY



SAFETY



FLEXIBILITY



COST SAVINGS

## WHO BENEFITS?

**Families:** Safer, more convenient living for all ages and multi-generational homes

**Older Adults:** Stay independent and reduce fall risks

**People with disabilities:** Enables independent living for more individuals

**Caregivers:** Easier and safer support for daily tasks

**Builders & Developers:** Broader market appeal and long-term value for universally designed homes

**Communities:** More inclusive, age-friendly accessible neighborhoods

## EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN:

### Entry and mobility:

- step-free entrances
- wider doorways

### Bathroom safety:

- zero-threshold showers
- slip-resistant flooring
- safety hand holds
- shower seating

### Everyday access:

- reach-able storage
- ample lighting

*For more examples of Universal Design, visit the resources listed below*



## PLAN AHEAD

- Support lifelong living
- Reduce future renovation costs
- Make homes welcoming for all visitors
- Delays or eliminates move to expensive care settings
- Help people stay safely in their communities

## GET INVOLVED

- Incorporate Universal Design into your next build or renovation
- Sign up for updates from All Ages, All Stages NC
- See the full Universal Design Toolkit as it is released
- Share examples from your community



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