

Basic Access in Every New House

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**The Status Quo: Barriers are the Norm—
Even in New Houses!**



Example: House with small step on the front—hard to retrofit.



Example: Narrow bathroom door.

**The Goal: Basic Access in All New Houses
(except the few unfeasible)**



Example: Four townhouses in a row with zero-step entrances.



Example: Woman using wheelchair fitting through bathroom door.

Is it Only About Wheelchair Users?



Example 1: Woman with walker in her home; Example 2: Man on crutches passing through an ample door; Example 3: Delivery man bringing in heavy package on dolly.

No. It's about safety at home for all people with long-term or temporary disabilities...And visiting in the homes of others: being at the party...And it's convenient for all.

Barriers Cause Suffering



Example: Woman in nursing home although she would prefer to be in her own home



Example: Triangular warning sign showing figure falling down steps



Example: Wheelchair-user at bottom of front steps looking up through window at a child she cannot visit

Has Widespread Access Already Proved Practical?

Yes. Local Policies across the country have led to tens of thousands of houses built with basic access *whether or not* a resident currently has a disability.



Example: Expensive house with curved stone path leading to zero-step entrance



Example: Inexpensive bungalow with sidewalk leading to zero-step entrance



Example: House on flat lot



Example: lot and driveway steep, but easy entrance from top of driveway to house



Example: Detached single-family house with access



Example: Attached single-family houses (townhouses) with access

In spite of successes, the vast majority of new houses continue to be built with barriers.

Low Financial Costs of Basic Access in New Construction

- Wide interior doors and a zero-step entrance, built on concrete slab: \$100 or less.
- Wide interior doors and a zero-step entrance, built over a basement: \$600-800
(Contact Concrete Change for costs statements by experienced builders)

High Financial Costs of Continuing to Build Barriers

- Typical costs of adding a zero-step entrance and widening doors on an existing house: \$10,000 or more.
- Typical cost of one year in nursing home: \$36,000, double occupancy.
- High medical costs of people who have developed mobility problems but lack resources to modify their unsafe houses: falls on entry steps, health consequences from lack of access to one's own bathroom, injuries to caregivers lifting family members, etc.

More than half of houses built today will have a resident with a severe mobility impairment during the lifetime of the house. More than 90% of these houses will have a visitor with a severe mobility impairment.

It is not possible to predict which houses.

For more information, and to help create policies and practices that change the status quo, contact:

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