

VisitAbility

Home design features that provide basic access and enhance homes for visitors and homeowners



Promoting VisitAbility in Pennsylvania

VisitAbility ensures that everyone has basic access to visit homes with ease.

Visitable features...

- at least one “no-step” entrance
- a bathroom on the first floor
- wide doorways
- a clear path of travel on the main floor

VisitAbility is an international movement promoting safety and flexibility through smart residential construction design.

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This brochure is available in alternate format upon request.

610-873-9595 877-550-7347 gail@sdhp.org

Self-Determination Housing Project of Pennsylvania, Inc.
717 East Lancaster Avenue Downingtown, PA 19335



VisitAbility in Pennsylvania – What's New?

- **The Residential VisitAbility Design Tax Credit Act**, (The Act), was introduced by Senator Ferlo (D) and Senator Rhoades (R), and was signed into law by Governor Rendell on October 28th, 2006.
- The Act is an incentive based approach that grants Pennsylvania's counties, municipalities and school districts, individually or jointly, to voluntarily authorize tax credits of up to \$2,500 (per housing unit)
- Tax credits are used to offset costs associated with design modifications needed to incorporate VisitAbility features in newly constructed houses or in houses remodeled with VisitAbility elements.
- The enabling legislation would also allow the taxing body to determine if the credit could be taken over a period of time up to five years.
- The Act is not the same as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA does not pertain to single family homes.



Where is there more information about VisitAbility?

- www.visitabilitypa.com
- www.concretechange.org
- www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea/Visitability/index.asp
- http://assets.aarp.org/rgcetner/il/2002_03_homes.pdf
- www.engr.psu.edu/phrc
- www.planning.org/affordablereader/pracplanner/visitabilityvol2no4.htm
- www.pdcouncil.state.wi.us/visitability.htm

Who can be contacted about VisitAbility Legislation?

- Gail Hoffmann, Executive Director
Self-Determination Housing Project
of Pennsylvania, Inc.
717 East Lancaster Avenue
Downingtown, PA 19335
610-873-9595
877-550-7347
gail@sdhp.org
www.sdhp.org
- Kevin Hensil, Director of Communications
Pennsylvania Statewide
Independent Living Council
2 North Second Street, Suite 100
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-364-1732
kphensil@pasilc.org
www.pasilc.org

Who has Endorsed VisitAbility?

- The Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania



Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania Builders Association



- The Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living

- The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency



- The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center



- Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council



- Self-Determination Housing Project of Pennsylvania, Inc.



What is VisitAbility?

- One zero step entrance on an accessible path of travel from the street, sidewalk or driveway.
- Doorways that provide 32 inches clear space throughout the home's main floor and hallways that provide 36 inches of clear width.
- Basic access to a half or full bath on the main floor. A bathroom with "basic access" has sufficient length and width for a person using a wheelchair to enter and close the door.



- Light switches no higher than 48 inches above the finished floor.
- Blocking in the bathroom walls so that grab bars may be added at a later date.
- Basic accessibility features can be integrated into all newly built homes in an affordable, sustainable way

Who Benefits from VisitAbility?

- Everyone!
- A friend or family member with a physical disability who can easily visit your home
- People who use wheelchairs
- People pushing strollers
- People carrying packages
- People moving furniture
- People who want to age in their homes
- People who develop activity-limiting disabilities and want to stay in their homes
- The community - VisitAbility promotes a greater degree of interaction between those temporarily or permanently disabled with the whole society.



How Much Does VisitAbility Cost?

- VisitAbility is cost effective if planned in advance.
- VisitAbility costs less than 1% when new construction
- Once a home is VisitAble, making it fully accessible in the future will cost far less
- VisitAbility does not require including a long list of desirable access features or adhering to a full accessibility construction plan

What is the Upfront Cost Versus the Cost of Retrofit to Make a Home VisitAble?

- Wide passage doors
 - ⇒ \$50 per home to oversize doors in new construction
 - ⇒ Up to \$700 per door as retrofit
- Bath on the primary floor
 - ⇒ No cost if pre-designed
 - ⇒ Adding a bath can cost more than \$1,000
- No-step entrance
 - ⇒ Less than \$100 for new slab-on-grade construction
 - ⇒ \$300 to \$600 for new construction with crawl space or basement
 - ⇒ Up to \$3,300 as retrofit

Are VisitAble Homes in Demand?

- According to a 2000 AARP survey, more than 90% of persons age 65 and older prefer to stay in their current residence as long as possible.
- According to the Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities, sale and re-sale of visitable homes is enhanced as the senior demographic is growing rapidly and baby-boomers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents and provide easy-use homes for themselves.

Note: All the above figures are from the Concrete Change website - www.concretechange.org