



open your doors to everyone

## Guide to Accessibility and Universal Design for your:

- ✓ home
- ✓ community
- ✓ business
- ✓ organization



## **Access**

The ability and freedom to enter, approach, use or communicate with a facility, agency or individual.

## **Accessible**

The ability or ease that a person with a physical, developmental or sensory disability, or with limited language skills, may approach, enter and use buildings, facilities and services, as well as receive or send communication or information.

[\(Alberta Barrier Free Design Guide 2008, p 93\)](#)

## **Adaptable**

Environments, products and services that can be modified to accommodate a range of individual needs.

[\(Measuring Up Vancouver 1\)](#)

## **Age Friendly Design**

Policies, services, settings and structures which support all ages and enable people to age actively. It recognizes the wide range of needs, capacities and preferences of older people and promotes their inclusion and contribution to all areas of community life.

## **Assistive Devices**

Any equipment, technology, instruments or products that are adapted or specially designed to meet the unique needs of individuals.

## **Barriers**

Obstacles that exclude people, hinder progress, prevent an individual from fully participating in or limit their access to certain programs, services, or environments.

## **Barrier Free**

The absence of obstacles in an environment, therefore safer and easier access to buildings and the use of those buildings, related facilities and services for all persons.

[\(Alberta Barrier Free Design Guide, p 93\)](#)

## **Best Practice**

Exemplary techniques or models that present an ideal solution to a given problem or area of weakness, or go beyond the minimum requirement in a given area.

## **Built Environment**

All structures and human-made surroundings.

## **Choice**

The ability to select the best or most favorable preference from a wide range of options.

## Community

Groups that revolve around and are formed by shared beliefs, values, resources, locations, needs and goals. All people are a part of numerous communities that extend beyond their geographical location.

## Disability

An umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions...thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

(WHO <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>)

## Diversity

The range of human difference which makes each individual unique.

## Flex Housing

A concept in housing that incorporates, at the design and construction stage, the ability to make future changes easily and with minimum expense, to meet the evolving needs of its occupants.

(CMHC: [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/flho/flho\\_001.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/buho/flho/flho_001.cfm))

## **Handicap**

A disadvantage caused by an interaction between environmental conditions and an individual, and not simply inherent in the person.

[\(Inclusive Leisure Studies, John Dattilo, p 336\)](#)

## **Impairment**

Any loss or limitation of developmental, sensory or physical structure of function, temporary or permanent.

## **Inclusion/Inclusive**

Involving and valuing human differences while welcoming and facilitating the participation of everyone.

## **Multiple Formats**

Providing information in a variety of communication forms to make it accessible to people with diverse needs.

[\(Measuring Up Vancouver\)](#)

## **Personal Supports**

Any services, equipment or assistive devices used by an individual to accomplish daily and necessary tasks.

## Universal Design

The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Its goal is to provide a barrier free, practical and esthetic environment that, rather than appearing institutional, looks no different than any other design. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities.

([http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about\\_ud/about\\_ud.htm](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/about_ud.htm))

## Visitability

A sustainable, affordable and inclusive approach to home design that promote three key features: a no-step entrance, widened doorways to accommodate mobility aids, and a bathroom on the main floor.

## Wayfinding

Visual, audible or tactile cues that guide a person safely and easily through an environment.

([Alberta Barrier Free Design Guide, p 95](#))

