

WHAT IS PROJECT PHA?

Project PHA - Practical Housing for All - was initiated by the City of Fort Collins Commission on Disability to encourage builders to voluntarily offer features in new single family homes that would provide basic accessibility to all residents and guests. Homes with PHA features allow people of all ages, lifestyles and levels of mobility to live comfortably. These homes are designed with flexible features to meet the needs of all your friends, family and loved ones, no matter what changing lifestyles or times may bring. Project PHA is creating homes that will last you a lifetime.

PHA Features

- 1 No Step Entry on Accessible Route
- 2 First Floor Kitchen, Bathroom and Bedroom
- 3 Maneuvering Space
32" Clear Opening at Doorways
36" Clear Passage
42" Wide Hallways
- 4 Blocking in bathroom walls to accommodate grab bars
- 5 Reachable Plugs & Switches

“The day will come when people of all abilities, old or young, will move freely through all homes without barriers, as residents and visitors. Not endangered by stairs, but safe. Not embarrassed by narrow doors, but at ease. Not at home isolated – but at the party.”

Concrete Change
An international effort to make all homes visitable!
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Practical Housing for All

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Why should I consider PHA features?

Although no one wants to think about time taking a toll on our bodies and health, keep these statistics in mind:

- * It is estimated that one in every six Americans will have a temporary or permanent physical limitation sometime during their life. If you or somebody you love falls in the “one in every six” category, it’s easier to remain in a PHA home rather than having to stay elsewhere, move out or do costly renovations.
- * In surveys, 80% of people over the age of 45 want to continue living in their homes as they age. Of those over age 65, 90% made the same statement.

Most houses built today are not designed or equipped to handle the inevitable changes in people’s physical abilities due to injury, illness and aging. A PHA home is welcoming to all. Friends, guests and family members are welcomed into the home regardless of age or physical limitations.

PHA homes are convenient and accessible to everyone without adding substantial construction costs or sacrificing style. PHA features are very subtle and attractive when designed into the original plan. Building accessibility into a home is much easier and less expensive than retrofitting and remodeling.

What are PHA features?

The five basic PHA features include:

- * **At least one no-step entrance into the home**
A ramped or no-step entrance on a wheelchair accessible route from the street or driveway to the front, side, back of the house or in the garage.
- * **Main Floor**
The main floor has no less than a kitchen, a full bathroom and a room that can be used as a bedroom with sufficient maneuvering space for a person using a wheelchair.
- * **Maneuverable Space**
A minimum 36” wide level route throughout the first floor of the dwelling unit except minimum 42” wide hallways and 32” clear opening at doorways. Bathroom has a 30” by 48” clear space in front of the sink, toilet and bath/shower with reinforcement in the walls around the toilet and tub to support grab bars.
- * **Minimum 32 Inch Clear Opening at Doorways**
Standard 2’10” or 3’0” doors, 2’8” pocket doors or a 2’8” door with offset hinges provide a 32” clear opening at doorways. Lever handle hardware is preferred.
- * **Reachable Plugs and Switches**
Main floor light switches and thermostats no higher than 48” above the floor, receptacles at least 15” above the floor, and electrical panels adjacent to an accessible route with the same height requirements.

When added to a newly constructed home, these five basic features will provide livable homes with barrier-free access to everyone.

Additional benefits of PHA?

You might think that since you don’t use a wheelchair or your parents aren’t old, you can’t benefit from PHA homes. But, you couldn’t be farther from the truth! If you can answer yes to any of these questions, PHA homes are for you:

- * Got food? Guess what – no steps to negotiate with as you bring in those groceries.
- * Traveling? Now it’s that much easier to lug those awkward suitcases in and out.
- * New furniture set? Make life simpler when carrying that heavy couch!
- * Are you going to be a parent? Baby strollers can wheel in and out of the house in a jiffy.
- * Selling the house? Sale and resale of the home is enhanced in an era where the senior demographic is growing rapidly and baby boomers are attracted to homes that welcome their aging parents, while also providing life long access for themselves and their friends.

Changes to design features require very little up front cost – unlike the higher post-construction cost of renovation for widening doors and adding ramps.

(Source: Benefits as described Concrete Change and the National Association of Home Builders).

What if my builder does not offer home models with PHA features?

Ask your builder to include them! Although they may not be offered as standard features, most builders can easily accommodate your request for PHA features. If they don’t, find one who will.

I’m already spending a lot of money for a new home. How much does this cost?

The total cost of including PHA features in new home construction can be as little as \$200-\$500 per single home or single living unit, depending on the home. When you add that to the total amount of the home, it averages out to approximately \$1.50 a month for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage. That’s a small price to pay for a house that will last a lifetime!

Where can I get more information?

- * www.design.ncsu.edu/cud
- * www.udhomes.com
- * www.nahbrc.com/seniors
- * www.concretechange.org
- * www.aarp.org/universalhome
- * ANSI Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities Guide 117.1 – 1998
- * Mark Beck at 970-416-9956 or email: practicalhousing@earthlink.net



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