



PACE, Inc.

Fact sheet: **Accessible Homes Terms and Definitions**

Accessible Home- An accessible home is one that can accommodate a person or persons with disabilities. While individuals with disabilities differ in terms of their specific needs, an accessible home is designed to meet the most predictable needs of people with disabilities, such as are described in:

- The ADA
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
- The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988
- The Illinois Environmental Barriers Act

While accessible homes are often talked about in the context of the ADA and the laws governing public accommodations, persons with disabilities use the term to describe their housing needs, whether public or privately sought, using the ADA as a **minimal** standard of accessibility.

Barriers –Those features in an environment that prevent a person or persons with disabilities from accessing, fully utilizing, or controlling the environment to the degree enjoyed by people without disabilities. Barriers can be removed by thoughtful design and creativity (as, for example, when no-step entrances or ramps allow access to a home, when lights can be controlled via voice or computer, or when a counter top can be lowered to the height of a seated person).

Lifestyle Home- A home which is built from the outset to meet many or most of the predictable needs of its owners as they age or as their disability status changes. A lifestyle home incorporates features (such as reinforced bathroom walls, adjustable cabinet shelves, and conveniently located light sockets) that will allow owners to stay in their homes with minimal change, despite changes in sensory or physical ability. A lifestyle home includes many accessible features, as well a level of **adaptability** in installation of many features, so that those features can be easily modified to meet the needs of either people with disabilities, or users of features with different height, strength, etc. (This is similar to what the AARP has called a “Renewable Home.”)

Universal Design- A house meeting Universal Design standards conforms to seven principles: Equitable Use, Flexibility in Use, Simple and Intuitive, Perceptible Information, Tolerance for Error, Low Physical Effort, and Size and Space for Approach and Use. (More information about Universal Design can be obtained at: cud@ncsu.edu)

Visitable Home – A visitable home is one that welcomes people with disabilities as visitors: the three basic requirements of a visitable home are:

1. At least one no-step entrance,
2. 32-inch doorways throughout the main floor of the home,
3. and one accessible bathroom on the main floor (with a doorway at least 32 inches wide).

A visitable home can accommodate a visitor with a disability or a resident with a temporary disability.