

“Livable for a Lifetime”

Applying Universal Design in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District

Policy Work Group

Introduction

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people regardless of their ability or age, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The Livable for a Lifetime initiative grew from the “2020 Community Plan on Aging.” Its purpose is to promote change in the practice, policy, design, and construction of homes and communities, as well as the community involvement necessary to fulfill this initiative.

Purpose

The Policy Work Group will research and monitor developments in universal design, visitability, and accessibility. It will advise the Steering Committee and other work groups of recent policy initiatives in government and industry - local, state, or national - and how they impact the Livable for a Lifetime initiative.

Goal

To ensure all involved in the Livable for a Lifetime initiative are fully informed of the most recent policy issues developed on the local, state, and national levels so work groups can accomplish their activities more effectively.

Suggested Activities

- Develop aging-in-place specifications, obtain comment, and forward to Virginia's Housing and Development Authority, VA Department of Housing and Community Development, Federal Home Loan Bank, other funding agencies, and elected officials to advocate the addition of aging-in-place elements into legislation and funds qualification/scoring criteria.
- Conduct ongoing research into aging-in-place developments, issues, and legislation and advise the Livable for a Lifetime work groups accordingly.
- With direction from the Livable for a Lifetime Steering Committee, forward correspondence to officials/organizations listed above to advocate change in favor of aging-in-place initiatives.

* Universal Design is used to describe full universal design and visitability - a standard that includes a no step entrance, adequate doorways (a minimum of 32 inches of clear passage space), a usable bathroom on the first floor, and sufficient interior space. This initiative – based on 2020 Community Plan on Aging recommendations – is also applying universal design to neighborhoods, public areas, community facilities, and transit.