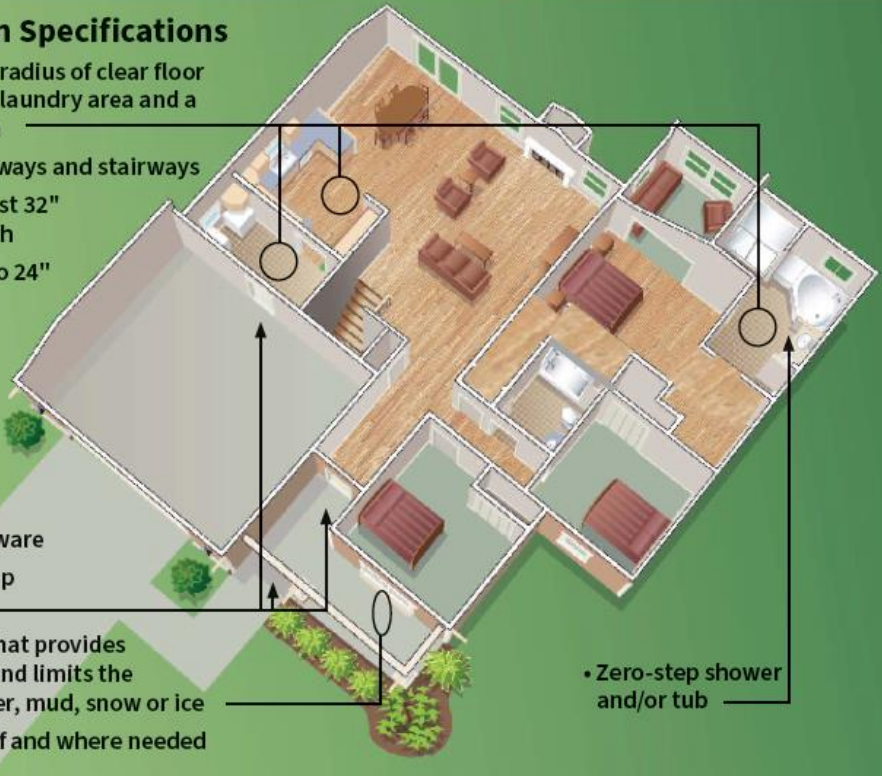


## Universal Design Specifications

- An adequate turning radius of clear floor space in the kitchen, laundry area and a main-floor bathroom
- 42"- to 48"-wide hallways and stairways
- Doorways with at least 32" of clear opening width
- Outlets located 18" to 24" above the floor
- Rocker-style light switches
- Double handrails on staircases
- Lever-style door handles
- D-style cabinet hardware
- One or more zero-step entries/exits
- A covered entrance that provides weather protection and limits the accumulation of water, mud, snow or ice
- Assist (or grab) bars if and where needed



• Zero-step shower and/or tub

Universal design, or UD, is a design framework that recognizes the diversity of (in engineering lingo) “human performance characteristics,” so spaces can be used by a range of individuals, regardless of age or ability.

An impediment to the broad adoption of UD features in housing has been the lack of understanding about what UD is — and isn’t.

Many consumers, including older adults, see custom accessibility features (e.g., ramps) as unappealing. But a home aligned with UD principles can help prevent

a later need for pricey, specialized, often unattractive modifications by using designs, building techniques and fixtures that are stylish, functional, flexible and attainable.

### Keep in mind:

A universally designed, age-friendly home is not the same as one that’s outfitted with equipment (such as a motorized lift) for specific medical, disability or mobility needs.

For a home to be marketable to an array of buyers or renters, it has to appeal to people who don’t yet have a need or interest in an age-friendly home.

With universal design, spaces and features are useful and stylish. Without being told, few would see the home and think it had been designed based on a resident’s age or condition.

Housing that is attractively designed for people of all ages and abilities is useful for, well, people of all ages and abilities.

A housing design competition can help dispel the stereotypes about age-friendly housing. Over time, that can lead to the availability of more UD-inspired new and remodeled homes of different sizes and price points. ■