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How CILs Can Transform the Housing Landscape

Physical and Housing Program Compliance

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**Visitability Principles and
Federal Visitability Legislation**

Universal Design Principles

**ADA Compliance and Public Housing
Authorities**

History of Federally Assisted Housing Programs for Low Income Families PWDs



- Started with Housing Act of 1937 – requires tenants to pay 30% of household income.
- First elderly-only public housing was built in 1960.
- In 1961, HUD amended definition of “elderly family” to include individuals with disabilities of any age.
- Problems rose in the 80’s & early 90’s because those with mental illness were now less likely to be institutionalized AND 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act added “handicap” to the class of individuals protected.

History of Housing Programs, cont'd.

- Also, included people with alcohol & drug addictions.
- More problems rose.....
- Public Housing Opportunity Extension Act of 1996 streamlined process of designating public housing projects (elderly only or only to residents with disabilities).

Olmstead Decision

Olmstead v L.C. February 1, 2001

- Institutionalization of persons with mental health disabilities in lieu of community-based care may be discrimination.
- Addressing the least restrictive environment issue.

Understand Physical and Housing Program Compliance



- Universal design principles in housing
- Visitability principles & Federal visitability legislation
- ADA compliance & Public Housing Authorities

Universal Design Principles

- **Universal** design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. - Ron Mace
- NOT intended to meet the needs of 100% of the population – only the largest possible portion of the “bell-shaped curve.”
- Includes factors for accommodating physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities, and multiple chemical sensitivities.

ADA Compliance and Public Housing Authorities



- ADA covers common areas: parking, path of travel, leasing offices, pools, community rooms, etc.
- Fair Housing Act covers from threshold of the unit's door and inside the unit.
- Landlord must allow "reasonable accommodations" at the tenant's expense.
- Landlord reserves the right to require tenant to return unit to its original state at tenant's expense, when moving out.
- Educate landlords on the benefits of accessibility.

Visitability Principles

- New single family, duplex & triplexes (below 4 or more units required under Fair Housing Act).
- 3 main, minimum standards of Visitability for persons with disabilities (PWDs):
 1. At least one zero-step entrance
 2. Wide passage doors (32", prefer 36")
 3. At least a half bath/powder room on the main floor

Visitability Principles, cont'd.

3 more features:

1. Environmental & utility controls between 15-48" off the floor
2. Bathroom walls that are reinforced to permit attachment of grab bars as needed.
3. Lever door handles

Justification for Visitability Standards



- We don't build houses like we did in 1959 (60 years).
- We are now building houses that will last until 2079.
- Americans move on average every 7 years
- 7-9 families will occupy a dwelling over the years.
- Chances are great that AT LEAST 1 family will find the features very useful.
- House can be marketed to 100% of the community.

- Eleanor Smith Inclusive Home Design Act
- Rep. Jan Schakowsky – Ill. Leader and Champion

CIL-NET Attribution

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