



The Accessible Housing Network is a collaboration of organizations, advocating in support of people of all ages to live as they wish, in housing which is fully accessible.

We invite other individuals and groups to support our campaign by contacting their own elected representatives at all levels - municipal, provincial and federal.

Our message to all our elected representatives:

- Housing is a human right.
- The need for accessible affordable housing is a crisis.
- More than 22% of Canadians have a disability.
- Anyone can have been born with a disability, and we're all just a fall, accident or illness away from a disability - temporary or permanent.
- It is urgent that we change the National and Ontario Building Codes to make universal design mandatory in all new multi-unit residential buildings, both rental and ownership.
- Universal design will accommodate anyone of any age or ability, going beyond mere accessibility.
- The cost is less than 1% more than standard construction, when planned from the design stage. It is renovations to existing housing which are extremely expensive.
- Accessible housing keeps people out of long term care, saving millions of healthcare dollars.
- There is no Ontario law requiring that housing be accessible.
- The AODA does not mention housing.
- The Ontario Building Code only requires that 15% of new apartments be "visitable", not accessible enough to live there.
- Both the AODA and the Ontario Building Code are in contravention of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights

Code, and United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2002, the Ontario Human Rights Commission made a submission to the Ontario Minister of Housing pointing out that the Human Rights Code takes precedence over all other laws, including the Building Code. No Ontario government has taken action to bring the Building Code into harmony with the Human Rights Code. Barrier-free housing is a human right.

Change can begin at the municipal level. The City of Toronto can make universal design mandatory in all new housing (rental or ownership) developed through programs such as Open Doors and Housing Now, and new developments built with any tax dollars or on land made available by the City, or through agreements with developers to waive development fees or taxes. We are urging that the City take action - and become a model for other municipalities.

Accessible housing has many benefits:

- Reduced costs for long-term care facilities. Many people will be able to remain in their accessible homes, freeing up spaces in nursing homes.
- Reduced need for in-home support help;
- Improved mental and physical health;
- Fewer falls;
- Fewer ambulance calls;
- Fewer hospitalizations;
- Increased employment of people with disabilities.

No tax dollars should ever create accessibility barriers.

Accessible Housing Network Members: Older Women's Network (OWN), Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC), Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT), Citizens with Disabilities - Ontario (CWD-O), TRAILBLAZERS Tandem Cycling Club, Unitarian Commons Cohousing Corporation, Toronto Raging Grannies, CNIB, Community Living Ontario, Inclusion Canada

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