

September 28, 2001

Promoting Accessibility Through Building Codes



The undersigned organizations recognize that barriers in the built environment pose a serious impediment to the full integration of people with disabilities into society. Federal law has attempted to address the lack of accessibility in certain residential buildings through the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act and in commercial and public properties through the design and construction requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. These properties also may be subject to other federal accessibility requirements such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Many states have enacted laws mandating accessibility for people with disabilities in housing, public sector and commercial properties.

Most states or localities in this country have adopted building codes to govern construction within their jurisdictions. These building codes are enforced by local or state code officials. The undersigned organizations believe that incorporation of the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act into building codes represents an opportunity to enhance compliance with these federal laws.

Therefore, the undersigned organizations urge state and local authorities to adopt building codes that, at a minimum, reflect all of the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Amendments Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. We support further efforts to promote increased compliance with the Fair Housing Amendments Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

American Institute of Architects
American Network of Community Options and Resources
American Seniors Housing Association
American Society of Interior Designers
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Easter Seals
International Code Council, Inc.
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
National Apartment Association
National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils

National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Realtors
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Mental Health Association
National Multi Housing Council
Paralyzed Veterans of America

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