

Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion

The Kelsey in partnership with
Mikiten Architecture and the
Inclusive Design Council



The housing needs of people with disabilities continue to go unmet.

26%

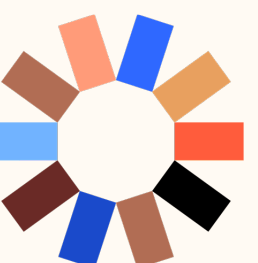
of people in United States have a disability including mobility, cognition, support and health needs, hearing, and vision

6%

less than 6% of housing is accessible to people with mobility or sensory disabilities

11%

of people with disabilities who use supportive services own or rent their own home



The Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion came from project specific needs for a set of strategies and tools, beyond code, to support cross-disability access and inclusion.



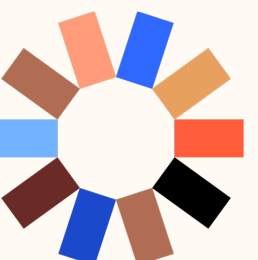
The Kelsey Ayer Station
in San Jose



The Kelsey Civic Center
in San Francisco



Other Accessible, Inclusive
Housing Communities



The Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion (Design Standards) aim to equip designers, builders, and developers with guidelines and frameworks for disability -forward housing creation. They are:

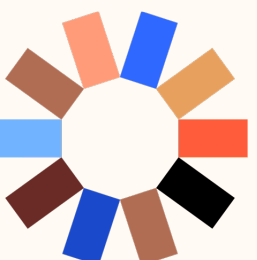
- **Cross Disability** to support access and inclusion for the broad and diverse needs of people with disabilities.
- **Multidimensional** to address the many elements of housing development, design, and operations that impact accessibility and inclusion.
- **Implementable and Expandable** to provide standards that can be clearly and swiftly adopted into projects and policies while evolving and expanding over time.
- **Value Creation** where disability-forward design supports better, more efficient, equitable, building development.



The Design Standards are not

- code requirement and are designed to work alongside your locality and funding specific design requirements
- a replacement for engaging individuals with lived experiences in within your local community, rather they include requirements and strategies for doing so
- complete, this is a first version with revisions planned for Q3 2022 as well as tools and digital experiences to be created to support their use.

We welcome your feedback as you use and explore them: design@thekelsey.org



Project team and partners

Project Team

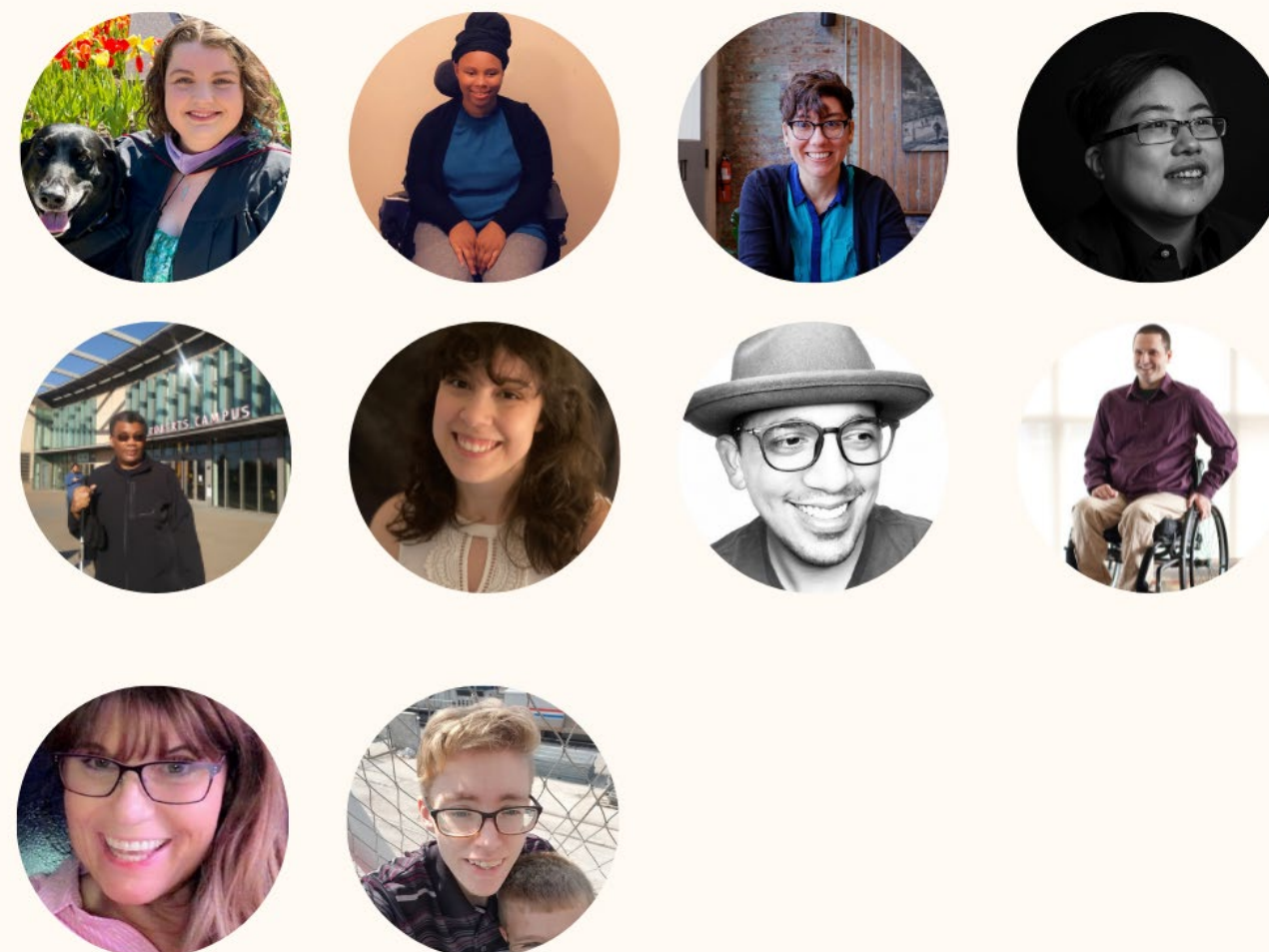


The Kelsey



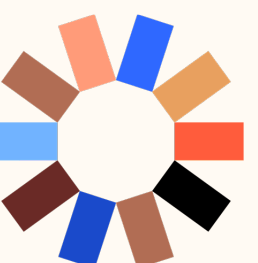
Inclusive Design Council

10 consultants with disabilities from across the country working at the intersection of design, advocacy, architecture, and planning



Designer Partners

Workshops and 1:1 consultations from architects working on multifamily, affordable, and accessible housing



The Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion include **300 Elements**. Elements reflect design choices, building features, development strategies, or operational policies that support accessibility and inclusion.

1.1 Disability Representation on the Project Team Team

Impact Areas

- Mobility and Height
- Hearing and Acoustics
- Vision
- Health and Wellness
- Cognitive Access
- Support Needs

Additional Benefits

- Affordability
- Racial Equity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Safety
- Beauty and Better Design

Sources

The Kelsey

1 Point Value

Level 1 - People with disabilities are part of advisory groups / focus groups shaping the project with documented ability to shape and define the project. **ESSENTIAL ELEMENT** ✓


- Advisory or focus groups are people with lived experience assembled by the project team

2 Point Value

Level 2 - People with disabilities are paid consultants on the project team.

3 Point Value

Level 3 - People with disabilities are full-time members of the project team and/or developer/owner team.



4.2 Vertical Circulation Dual Handrails

Impact Areas

- Mobility and Height
- Hearing and Acoustics
- Vision
- Health and Wellness
- Cognitive Access
- Support Needs

Additional Benefits

- Affordability
- Racial Equity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Safety
- Beauty and Better Design

Sources

Mikiten Architecture

1 Point Value

Stairs and ramps have high and low handrails.

- One handrail at 36" and another at 30" above the nosing.
- Provides safety for children and shorter adults.
- For ramps, someone in a wheelchair can slow their descent or pull themselves up the ramp more easily with better leverage than pushing a wheelchair wheel.



2.3 Building Approach and Entry Arrival Wayfinding

Impact Areas

- Mobility and Height
- Hearing and Acoustics
- Vision
- Health and Wellness
- Cognitive Access
- Support Needs

Additional Benefits

- Affordability
- Racial Equity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Safety
- Beauty and Better Design

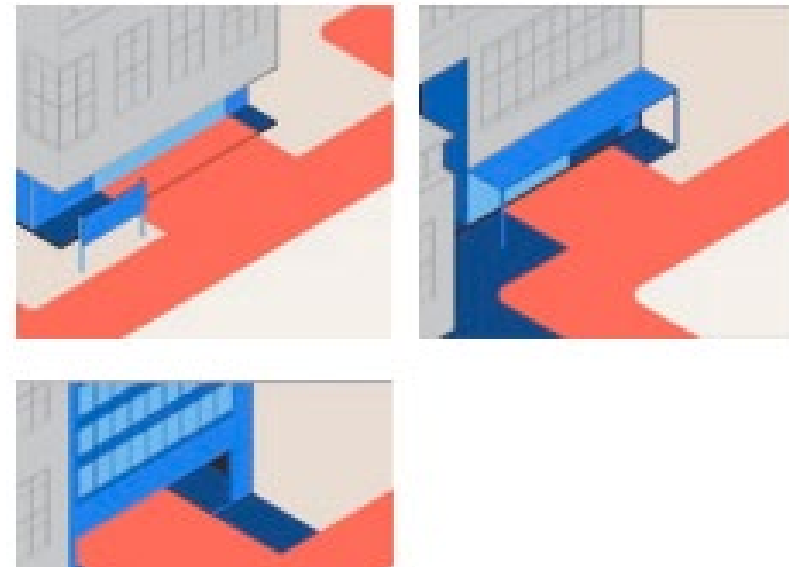
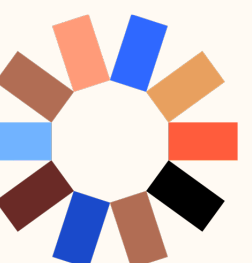
Sources

a111

1 Point Value

Architectural Landmarks. **ESSENTIAL ELEMENT** ✓

- Architectural features distinguish all primary entrances and exits (e.g., prominent signs, graphics, architectural features, landmarks, etc.).
- Landmark elements have unique lighting to assist in locating them.
- They are visible along the primary approach route of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Process

Standards and Project Reviews

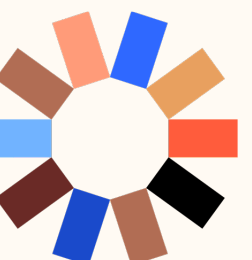
Compiled over 800 elements from existing standards, codes, project guidelines, research, and community design guidelines. Additional elements, not discovered in review, were created via workshops and focus groups with lived experience leaders.

Categorize, Refine, and Review

Categorized all elements by design category, impact area, and additional benefit. Merged duplicative elements. Solicited feedback in workshops, Inclusive Design Council meetings, and project-specific applications.

Publication

Compiled into the Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion with accompanying self-certification tool to sort elements and score projects. Design sprint to explore technology applications, digital tools and strategies, and future applications of the Design Standards.

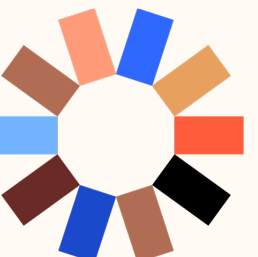


Design Categories

Choices throughout the development, design, and operations process impact access and inclusion. Design Categories help outline when in the process an element can be implemented and what member or part of the development or design team should own that elements implementation. **Project scoring requires implementation of elements across all Design Categories.**

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- **Design Process:** Elements that the project team will utilize to support comprehensive access and inclusion goals for residents; everything from building the team to community outreach-strategies to processes that provide access and define an inclusive building program.
- **Site:** The location of the community related to retail, transit, parks, employment and educational opportunities, and other amenities and the physical characteristics of the site itself that allow easy access from the Public Way to the front door, accessible walkways through between buildings or amenities, and opportunities for usable outdoor spaces like gardens, playgrounds, or gathering spots.
- **Building Exterior:** Physical features that might occur both on the site and in the building, or in various types of interior spaces. They span multiple categories and are grouped together to support team implementation.
- **Building Components:** Physical features that might occur both on the site and in the building, or in various types of interior spaces. They span multiple categories and are grouped together to support team implementation.
- **Interior Spaces:** Interior features of the building, excluding the dwelling units. This includes spaces like the lobby, corridors, and special rooms like mailrooms, and gyms, as well as broader ideas about overall design approaches and program elements for the building.
- **Dwelling Units:** Specific room-by-room features that improve the interior of the dwelling units for residents. Features provide guidance to the project team for design of the overall dwelling unit.
- **Operations and Amenities:** Operations guidelines, building staffing, on-site services, and resident experiences. Services that create connections between residents and the community that feel natural to the resident and are centered on the resident's housing goals.



Impact Areas

As standards designed to support cross - disability accessibility, each element supports one or more impact areas. These impact areas are intentionally not named after a diagnosis or type of disability, but instead link to access needs that different design or program choices can support.

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Individuals who have limited use of their limbs, limited range of motion or dexterity, who use mobility supports (i.e., wheelchairs - manual and motorized; scooters; walkers; canes; grab bars), who have short stature, and/or who use assistive tools (i.e., reachers, step ladders, stools, etc.) to access spaces.



Individuals who are hard of hearing (HOH), use hearing supports and devices to engage in surrounding environments (i.e., voice amplification devices, hearing aids, video relay services, cochlear implants, ASL, etc.), and/or who have auditory sensory sensitivities.



Individuals who are blind, who have low vision, and/or who use visual supports and devices to engage in surrounding environments (i.e., Braille, screen readers, magnifiers, lightboxes, etc.). This can also include people with high sensitivity to glare, or rapid changes in light levels.



Individuals who have chronic health conditions, who have allergies and chemical sensitivities, are immunocompromised, and/or regularly utilize medical and/or therapeutic services. Aspects of the building that promote wellness for all, such as connection to nature and natural light, are also included.



Individuals who process information differently, who have alternative language reception and/or communication preferences and needs, who need items or materials presented in different ways or speeds of information, and/or who use supports in understanding and content retention, information processing, and decision making or choice selection. Includes wayfinding support for memory or orientation.



Individuals who use support services in their home and/or the community including but not limited to: direct support professionals, health aides, nursing support, behavioral supports, and individualized therapies. Can also include individuals using in-house family support for mobility or other assistance.



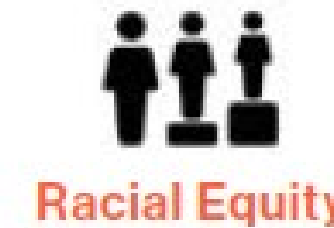
Additional Benefits

Choices made to support the accessibility and inclusion of individuals with disabilities often results in greater benefits and better housing for all people. All elements in the Design Standards advance multiple and various benefits for diverse groups of residents and neighbors, but some elements are specific to the following additional benefits.

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Individuals with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, and those reliant on SSI as their primary source of income would have to pay, on average nationally, 131% of their entire income to afford rent. Elements that meet additional affordability goals support project feasibility and increased affordability goals.



Centering on the most marginalized is essential to expanding inclusion and access. Elements address specific ways to increase anti-racist strategies in design and operation, broad equity goals, accessibility and inclusion for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, and strategies to support the inclusion of individuals with intersectional identities.



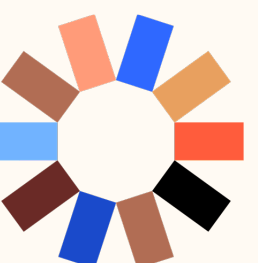
Choices made to improve materials selection, climate reducing strategies, daylighting, site selection, space planning, and overall design; most often also achieving sustainability and environmental impact goals. Beyond providing direct impacts with healthier environments for all residents, environmental sustainability approaches even provide positive externalities to the greater society, including community members with disabilities.



Design strategies that support access and inclusion not only keep residents with disabilities safe, but support overall community safety for all people in and around the building. More navigable spaces, safe walking surfaces, good lighting, clear communication systems, robust staffing, and community -based programs all help keep people safe in their homes and communities.



Inclusive and accessible design provides an opportunity for creativity, innovation, and rethinking spaces in a more identity-rich, resident-centered way. A focus on sensory related access creates spaces with increased harmony. Wayfinding strategies make for more graceful navigation. Cross-disability inclusion builds more interesting and meaningful communities. Elements support diverse definitions of artistic design, housing innovation, beauty in placemaking, and experiences that improve the lives of all residents.



thekelsey.org/design

Published Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion

Self-Certification Tool



The Kelsey

Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion

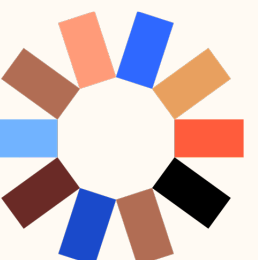
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A1 The Housing Design Standards for Accessibility and Inclusion

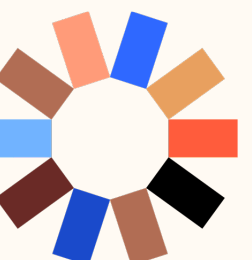
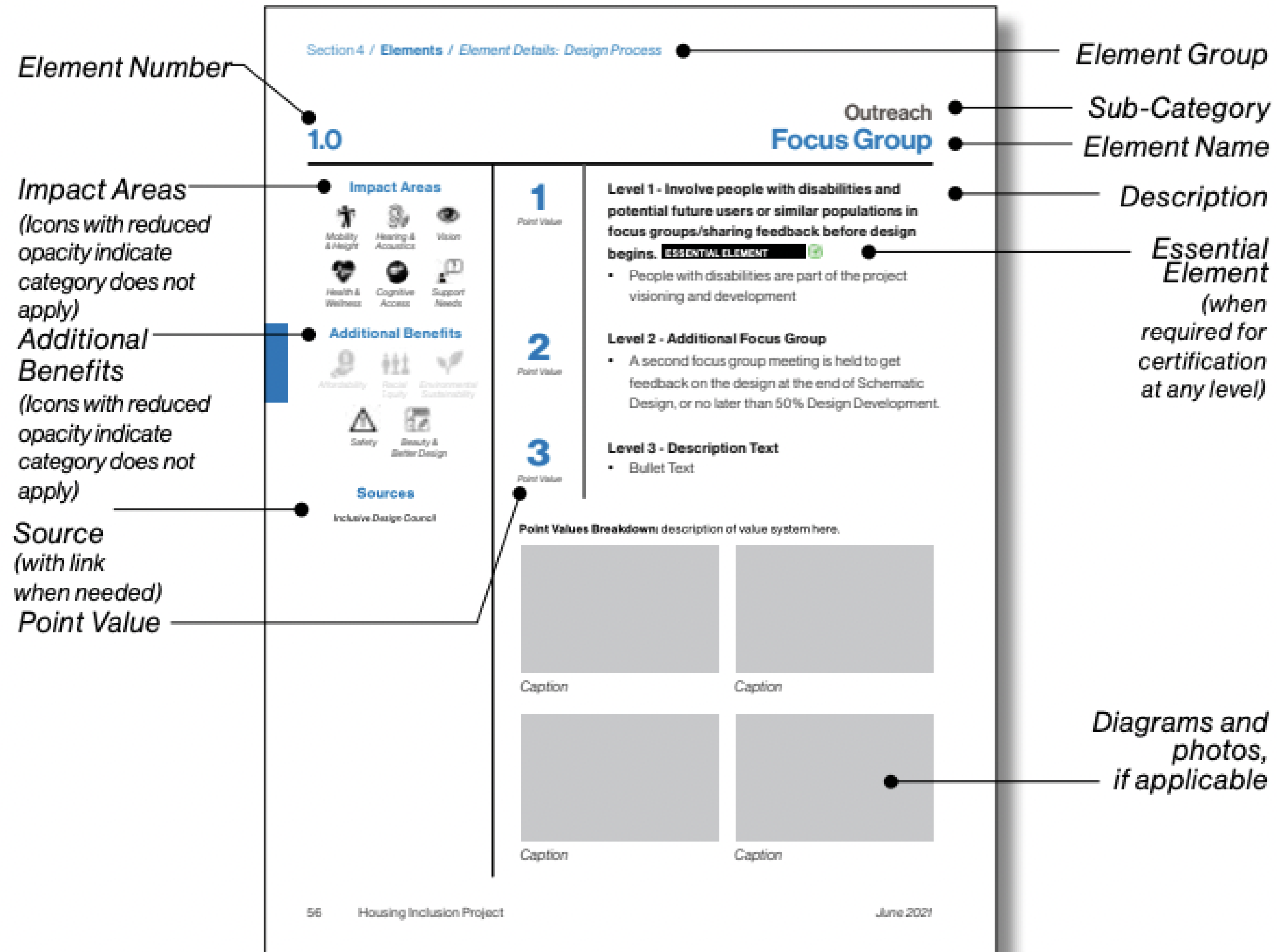
<p>To complete a Self-Certification, visit each Design Category (linked below) and score based on your project's included elements. Note some elements have multiple levels where points can range from 1-4 within a single element.</p> <p>Final totaled Self-Certification can be found here</p> <p>as well as scoring required for Essential, Silver, Gold, and Platinum Certification.</p>	
<p>Self Certification: Design Process</p>	<p>Elements that the project team will utilize to support comprehensive access and inclusion goals for residents; everything from building the team to community outreach-strategies to processes that provide access</p>
<p>Self Certification: Site</p>	<p>This section relates to aspects of the site location, physical features, and certain aspects of the building exterior. Relevant elements include distance to retail, transit, parks; physical characteristics of the site itself from the Public Way to front door and accessible outdoor opportunities. The Site category also includes building/site interface, such as entry security, porches, and some aspects of exterior doors.</p>
<p>Self Certification: Building Components</p>	<p>Physical features that might occur both on the site and in the building, or in various types of interior spaces. They span multiple categories and are grouped together to support team implementation.</p>
<p>Self Certification: Interior Spaces</p>	<p>Interior features of the building, excluding the dwelling units. This includes spaces like the lobby, corridors, and special rooms like mailrooms, and gyms, as well as broader ideas about overall design approaches and program elements for the building.</p>
<p>Self Certification: Dwelling Units</p>	<p>Specific room-by-room features that improve the interior of the dwelling units for residents. Features provide guidance to the project team for design of the overall dwelling unit.</p>
<p>Self Certification: Operations and Amenities</p>	<p>Operations guidelines, building staffing, on-site services, and resident experiences. Services that create connections between residents and the community that feel natural to the resident and are centered on the resident's housing goals.</p>

[Elements sortable by impact area or additional benefits can be found here.](#)



Element Detail Sheet

The following pages describe each element. Each element sheet is laid out as follows:

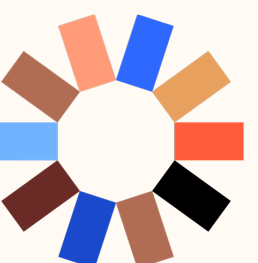


Full Certification

Certification under these Design Standards demonstrates that broad accessibility and inclusion in multifamily buildings is achievable and promotes others to do the same. Stepping through the certification process is a rich learning process that will prepare teams to incorporate more accessibility in future projects of all types.



Category	Essential	Silver Certified	Gold Certified	Platinum Certified	Max Available
1. Design Process	6	8	11	16	22
2. Site	16	23	35	58	86
3. Building Components	12	18	28	47	67
4. Interior Spaces	11	16	25	40	62
5. Dwelling Units	11	17	29	50	77
6. Operations and Amenities	10	13	17	25	34
TOTAL	66	95	145	236	348



Other Certification

Exemplary Badges

An idea driven by the Inclusive Design Council, Exemplary Badges can be achieved in design or operation in addition to full certification. They allow projects to showcase their choice to emphasize strategies for a specific impact area. While cross-disability access is captured in the overall certification, and important for designing inclusive communities, Exemplary Badges demonstrate when certain projects have deployed additional features to support a target population or local need.

The below summarizes the required points in an impact area to be considered exemplary. Points can be distributed across any design categories.

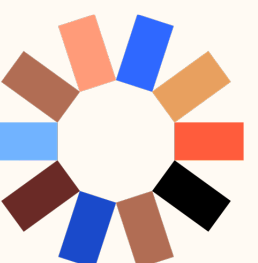
EXEMPLARY	EXEMPLARY	EXEMPLARY	EXEMPLARY	EXEMPLARY	EXEMPLARY
Mobility and Height	Support Needs	Hearing and Acoustics	Vision	Cognitive Access	Health and Wellness
72	36	21	54	49	31

Focused Certifications

Very often existing projects undertake a partial remodel, such as rehabilitation of all the dwelling units or a refresh of outdoor spaces. For these types of limited-scope projects, there are targeted opportunities to achieve excellence in accessibility and inclusion through a focused certification.

Due to the underlying philosophy that an inclusive project can't happen without an inclusive process, scoring for all four types of focused certifications require a certified level of scoring in the design process category. For instance, a Gold level certification is required for the area of focus.

Category	Certified Site	Certified Interiors	Certified Dwelling Units	Certified Operations
1. Design Process	6	6	6	6
2. Site	35	-	-	-
3. Building Components	12	12	12	-
4. Interior Spaces	-	25	-	-
5. Dwelling Units	-	-	29	-
6. Operations and Amenities	5	10	5	17
TOTAL	58	53	52	23



Planning

Build inclusive project teams, select accessible sites, select community partners, define resident and income mix.

Financing

Align funding to accessibility and inclusion goals and identify aligned funders who support disability-forward housing

Design

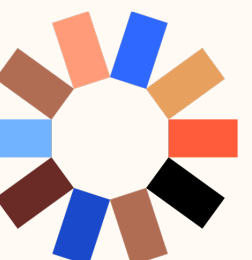
Support all phases of design development with clear guidelines, set project goals for overall access and inclusion strategies to be implemented

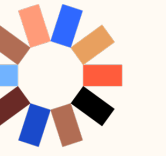
Construction

Provide construction teams clear guidance on access requirements and implementation of the project design goals

Operations

Identify building amenities, staffing, resident services, and operations that support an inclusive, accessible, high-quality resident experience





Ways to Engage

Use the Design Standards

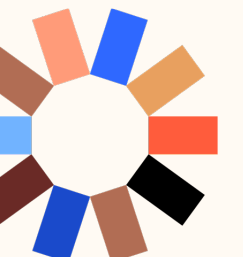
We'd love to feature your project and how you're approaching accessibility and inclusion, and your self-certification on our developing website.

Provide Feedback

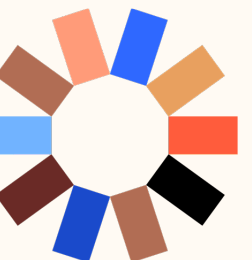
Rewrites and edits are ahead in Q3 2022, we welcome your feedback, insights, and edits at design@thekelsey.org or at 1:1 meetings.

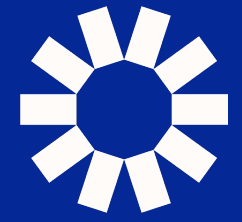
Share

Share with your networks, professional groups, clients, funders, and partners. Our team is available for introductory workshops, orientation, and technical assistance.



Innovative
Connected
Inclusive
Diverse
Intentional
Beautiful
Accessible
Caring
Easy





Thank You

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