

What is the fundamental issue?

Visitable Housing is designed and built to allow guests with mobility impairments to visit someone in their home without architectural barriers impeding their ability to move in and out of the home or use facilities a guest, such as for dinner, would need. Such housing also makes it easier for residents to adapt their house as they age and develop mobility impairments. A significant number of local governments have required or encouraged new housing to be built with visitable features. There are some national voices calling for greater inclusion of visitable features in new homes as well.

I am a real estate professional. What does this mean for my business?

Housing which is visitable may be more attractive to buyers who have friends and relatives with mobility impairments. The costs associated with adding basic visitable features, such as no-threshold steps, wider doors, larger guest bathrooms, add little to the cost of housing at the time of construction. Such housing could be marketed as visitable to buyers.

NAR Policy:

NAR supports the Fair Housing Act's requirement that new multi-family housing be accessible to persons with disabilities. NAR also opposes actions which place liability for incorrectly constructed housing on subsequent owners and REALTORS® marketing the housing. NAR believes that visitability, the ability to host visitors with mobility impairments, can be important in homes. NAR believes that any visitability policy should be defined as voluntary. Further, NAR believes that the market is the best mechanism to produce visitable housing and opposes any federal visitability mandates. For the purposes of this policy, the key features of visitability apply to one level of the home. These are a no-step entry, passage doorways that provide at least 32" clearance, and a minimum of a useable half bathroom with a sink and water closet.

Opposition Arguments:

There are some who oppose any new requirements that could impact the flexibility in home design or that would add any cost to home construction. Others are concerned that minimal visitability requirements will lead to full accessibility requirements in housing. On the other hand, advocates for increased housing choices for people with disabilities argue that voluntary measures make any policy ineffective. Some prefer that all new housing be built to visitability standards and include designs that make accessibility more widespread in housing choices.

Legislative/Regulatory Status/Outlook

Nothing at this time

Current Legislation/Regulation (bill number or regulation)

NAR Issue Summaries

Fair Housing / Accessibility

Nothing at this time

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