

HOUSE BILL 2336

Clarifying Rules on Visitability Standards

Background

Oregon is aging in a rapid and unprecedented manner while available accessible housing is not adequate to meet the current or future needs of older adults and people with disabilities. Disability among Black and Indigenous populations is important to highlight as they have the highest rates of disability.

In acknowledgment of changing demographics and the shortage of accessible dwellings, Representative Pam Marsh convened a stakeholder committee from organizations and governmental agencies to explore options for increasing the construction and availability of accessible units throughout Oregon. The committee recommended defining “visitability” in the state residential building code to allow local planners, building officials, and developers to work from a common definition that would increase the ability to build appropriate, accessible housing for Oregonians.

What does House Bill 2336 do?

House Bill 2336 directs the Department of Consumer and Business Services to establish standards within an appendix to the Oregon Residential Specialty Code, defining “visitability” using the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) definition of Type C Units. “Visitable” homes permit visitors of all abilities to enter, move around freely in the primary entertainment area, and easily get to and safely use a bathroom.

The main features included in ANSI Type C Units include the following:

- (1) At least one visitable “no-step” entrance accessible via a route from the public street or sidewalk, a dwelling unit driveway, or a garage;
- (2) At least one visitable bathroom with room to maneuver a mobility device;
- (3) At least 70 square feet of habitable space for visiting on the same floor as the visitable entrance, or, accessible from the visitable entrance via a ramp, elevator, or lift.
- (4) All door openings between and including the visitable entrance, visitable living area, and the visitable bathroom must meet the minimum width standards.

What is the effect of HB 2336 if passed?

By placing a broadly accepted definition of visitable dwellings—Type C accessible units—in the appendix of the residential building code, HB 2336 will provide clarity and direction to policymakers and builders. HB 2336 does not require or incentivize building visitable dwellings. Local jurisdictions and builders will benefit as uniformity of rule will exist across the state. Local officials may choose to adopt the code for their community but are not required to. For example, a city may provide incentives to encourage the use of the visitability standard.