

*We create opportunities for independence for people with disabilities through research, education, and consultation*

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**Independent Living Research Utilization**

**[www.ilru.org](http://www.ilru.org)**

**Darrell Christenson &  
Karen Michalski-Karney**

**Working with Public Housing  
Authorities & Other Partners  
&  
Sample Partnerships**

# Karen Michalski-Karney

# Housing Choice Vouchers

- Project: Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.
- PHA and BRILC jointly apply for Housing Choice Vouchers.
  - BRILC enters into partnerships with disability related organizations in community.
  - BRILC provides outreach and provides continued support to participating families or individuals.
  - PHA accepts applications from individuals referred by BRILC.

# Community Development Block Grants



- BRILC assists City to respond to “Special Needs” section of ConPlan.
  - Resulted in “Empowering Individuals with Disabilities” Program.
  - Assists extremely-low to low-income homeowners to complete home modifications.
  - Have been receiving these funds for more than 15 years.
  - FY 16-17 allocation was \$108,189.

# Regional Home Builders Association



- Holds annual “Spring Home Show.”
- BRILC becomes member and secures grant
  - Works with local vendors to construct an accessible apartment at show including kitchen, bathroom and bedroom.
  - Apartment contains assistive devices.
  - “Universal Design” workshop provided as a part of the show.

# Targeted Units

- BRILC approached by developer regarding apartment complex.
  - BRILC will refer applicants, assist in application process, assist applicants to request reasonable accommodations, assist applicants to apply for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, etc.
  - At least 5 units out of 20 to be reserved for individuals with disabilities who could live independently but for the availability of accessible and affordable housing.
  - Additional 10 units reserved for individuals with multiple barriers to independent.

# Darrel Christenson



# The Ability360/ Valley Leadership Story



- Ability360 utilized a professional development group called Valley Leadership to produce a video and Power Points to educate both realtors and developers.
- A call to non-profits to “pitch” their project idea to multiple teams of Valley Leadership members.
- Teams had 9 months to complete their work.
- Ability360’s initial pitch was to develop a housing directory that could be current and accurate with affordable and accessible listings, both rentals and homeownership.
- Soon, the focus changed, but they were still interested.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership, cont'd.

- Mission: Valley Leadership empowers, leverages and mobilizes leaders to meaningfully impact the most pressing issues facing Arizona.
- Vision: A broad spectrum of Arizonans working together to impact the issues that matter most, setting the example on leadership.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership, cont'd. 2



- **Values: DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**
- Valley Leadership is not about political party, income level, religion, gender, or race. We value the person, any person, committed to leading Arizona forward. We respect different perspectives and know that a diverse Arizona is our advantage.
- **HISTORY:** Arizona's can-do-attitude can solve anything. We continually look to our history to inspire and move us towards Arizona's next big thing.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership, cont'd. 3



- **PARTNERSHIPS:** We can't do it alone. Valley Leadership values partnerships and understands real impact is only made together.
- **FUN:** With our network of leaders, it's hard not to have fun! We value the social capital that comes with having fun and building relationships.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership, cont'd. 4



- We all soon realized that educating realtors, developers, builders, and all in the housing industry was the key to change.
- The need for accessible housing needed more attention to all of these groups.
- The team of 8 Valley Leadership members started work on gathering information on the subject matter from Ability360 – needs, costs, benefits, barriers etc.

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them



All of the arguments against meeting the needs of people with disabilities are met with facts substantiating our arguments to do so:

- 61 million Americans with a permanent disability
- 20% of the population and growing daily
- There are rising disability levels among middle-age Americans (age 40-64) as well as increasing disability among those ages 55-64.
- Roughly 10,000 Baby Boomers in the USA will turn 65 every day for the next 19 years. (Silver Tsunami)

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them, cont'd.



- Over the past 10 years, the population age 65 and over increased from 37.2 million to 49.2 million (2006 – 2016). This is a 33% increase.
- The age 85 and over population is projected to more than double from 6.4 million in 2016 to 14.6 million in 2040 (a 129% increase).
- Rates of disability increase with age. For people 65 and older, 35.4% have a disability.
- Approximately 22 million persons ages 65 and older reported having physical difficulties in 2006.

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them, cont'd. 2



- Surveys show that older persons want to remain in their homes as long as possible. Almost 80% of adults ages 45 and older prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible.
- At least 21% of US households have at least one person with a physical limitation.
- A single family home will typically hold 7 different occupants over the course of its 50 year lifespan.
- There is at least a 60% probability that a single family home will house at least one person with a disability during that span of time.



# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them, cont'd. 3



- In Arizona, 13% of the population (or about 912,115 individuals) reported a disability.
- 17% (nearly 1.1 million) of the population in Arizona is 65 years and older and is steadily rising every year.
- The current accessible, affordable housing stock is far lower than what the community needs, and continues to fall further behind each year.
- PHA waiting lists are closed and have 1-4 year waiting lists.
- #1 Fair Housing complaints center around accommodations for persons with disabilities.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership

- Here is the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnd7ehrAlaQ#action=share>

- Cox Communications did the video for us. A \$10,000 in-kind gift!

# THE PLAYBOOK

# Goal and Mission

**Goal:** Establish Ability 360 as local resource and thought leader in real estate accessibility needs for individual with disabilities.

**Mission:** Create connections and influence with entities and individuals who can improve the disparity between individuals with disabilities and adequate housing.

# Relationships

- An important step to obtaining mission objectives and goals is creating meaningful relationships. Ability 360's relationship with Valley Leadership gave the necessary resources to support Ability 360's work. The Valley Leadership group provided dedicated man hours, access to network, in kind services and collaboration. Other relationships that assist in obtaining mission objectives and goals include:
  - Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service
  - Realtor Associations
  - Builders/Developers
  - City Government (Department of Economic Security / Michael Traylor)

- Many tangible pieces of collateral were produced to aid in creating awareness and educating the community.
  - Video
    - General video giving mission statement and testimonials from Ability 360 allies.
    - Additional video content of allies' interviews in archives for later use.
  - Presentation Slide Deck
  - Social Media Content Calendar
  - Local media coverage

# Marketing Materials to Realtors

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## Materials Specific to Realtors:

- Infographic highlighting need for MLS 31 category awareness.
- 31 MLS accessible category descriptions.
- Photos of 31 MLS accessible categories.
- Statistics about value of considering accessible features.
- Template email to realtor association.

# Creating Listing Value



# About Ability 360—Empowering People with Disabilities for Over 30 Years 1981 – Present

**Our Mission:** to empower people with disabilities to take personal responsibility so that they may achieve or continue independent lifestyles within the community.

## Ability360 Programs and Services:

- Individual & Systems Advocacy
- Information & Referral
- Employment Services ADA Services and Counsel
- Empowering Youth in Transition
- **Home Modifications**
- Social and Recreational Opportunities
- Home Care Services
- Sports, Fitness and Health & Wellness

# The Need | Accessible Housing

- In Arizona, thirteen percent (13%) of the population (or about 912,115 individuals) reported a disability.
- There are rising disability levels among middle-age Americans (age 40 to 64) as well as increasing disability among those ages 55 to 64.
- Seventeen percent (nearly 1.1 Million) of the population in Arizona is 65 years and older and this percentage is steadily increasing every year.
- Roughly 10,000 baby boomers across the United States will turn 65 every day for the next 19 years. (i.e. the Silver Tsunami)

# The Need | Accessible Housing, cont'd.

- Over the past 10 years, the population age 65 and over increased from 37.2 million to 49.2 million (2006-2016). That is a 33% increase.
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# The Need | Accessible Housing, cont'd. 2

- Surveys show that older person want to remain in their homes as long as possible. Almost 80 percent of adults ages 45 and older prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible as they age.
- At least 21% of US households have at least one person with a physical limitation.
- A single family home will typically hold 7 different occupants over the course of 50 years. There is at least a 60% probability that a single family home will house at least one disabled person during that span of time.
- **TAKE AWAY: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR THE ELDERLY ARE A GROWING MARKET IN ARIZONA.**

# Missed Opportunity!!

- On average, 1 out of 10 MLS listings have at least ONE accessible feature selected.
- The ARMLS offers 31 accessible features for a listing. Many of the features are very common and are simply overlooked by realtors.
- **TAKE AWAY: REALTORS CAN ADD INCREDIBLE VALUE TO THEIR LISTINGS BY UNDERSTANDING AND NOTING ACCESSIBLE FEATURES.**

# 31 ARMLS Accessible Features



## Entrance Features

### ABILITY360

- **Zero-Grade Entry:** Entrance to home does not have a change greater than ½ inch.
- **Ramps:** Secured, non-slip ramps to allow navigation of elevation changes. The ramp grade is no greater than 1:12 or 8.3%
- **Hallways 36in + wide:** The hallway has a minimum 36" clear width clearance (not frame to frame).

# 31 ARMLS Accessible Features

## Bathroom Features

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- **BATH GRAB BARS:** There are steel or aluminum bars at/in shower and toilet areas to steady or brace users for support or balance
- **BATH ROLL IN SHOWER:** Shower floor is at the same level as the bathroom floor, with no ledge, sill, or runner.
- **BATH LEVEL FAUCETS:** There are lever-style handles replacing ball or knob style faucets for ease of use
- **BATH 60IN TURN RADIUS**  
There is a 60 inch wheelchair turning radius at toilet
- **BATH RAISED TOILET:** The toilet is either 17" or 19" from the floor to facilitate transfer,
- **BATH ROLL UNDER SINK:**  
There is space for knees (wheelchair user) that is at least 24" in height and approximately 30" in width.

# 31 ARMLS Accessible Features



## Home Features

## ABILITY360

- **TACTILE/VISUAL MARKERS:** Multisensory identifications, with light, sound, or touch markers to communicate status of appliances, thermostats, alarms, doorbells, etc.
- **REMOTE DEVICES:** Remote controls for lights, fans, appliances (kitchen and other), thermostats, alarms, and automated door touch pads.
- **HARD/LOW NAP FLOORS:** The floors are composed of hard surfaces such as woods, linoleum, tile, stone, with minimal carpeting, beveled transitions.
- **LEVEL HANDLES:** Single bar type lever on doors, spigots, appliances absent of knobs and circular pulls on cabinetry; loop handles shaped like the letter "D", permitting hand to insert into handle.
- **STAIR LIFTS:** Mechanical, motor driven assists to permit wheelchair occupant access to multi-floor homes.
- **CLOSE BARS 15 TO 48 IN":** installed to allow seated access; installed at heights of 15 to 48" above floor level.



# 31 ARMLS Accessible Features



## Outdoor Features

- **POOL RAMP ENTRY:** ramp entry to pool.
- **MULTIPLE ENTRIES/EXITS:** Multiple accessible entries/emergency exits.
- **DOOR/ACCESS 32IN" + WIDE:** Minimum 32" clear width clearance (not frame to frame).
- **EXTERIOR CURB CUTS:** external to home-neighborhood has ramped sidewalk areas at crosswalks and intersections to permit wheelchair users to cross streets, access mailboxes, etc.
- **POOL POWER LIFT:** power lift for wheelchair.

- United States Census Bureau, Population and Housing Narrative Profile, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, Geography: Arizona, [https://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/TheDataWeb\\_HotReport2/profile/2016/5yr/np01.html?SUMLEV=40&state=04](https://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/TheDataWeb_HotReport2/profile/2016/5yr/np01.html?SUMLEV=40&state=04)
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- Population Reference Bureau, Aging U.S. Baby Boomers Face More Disability, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2013/us-baby-boomers.aspx>
- AARP Public Policy Institute. State of 50+ America. Washington, DC: AARP, 2006.

# Sources, cont'd.

- <http://www.gu.org/OURWORK/Multigenerational/MultigenerationalHouseholdInformation.aspx>
- Sandra Fleishman, Handicap-accessible housing market is still a work in progress, Washington Post, September 2, 2011  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/handicap-accessible-housing-market-is-still-a-work-in-progress/2011/08/27/flQAm85owJ\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.14b70b7c2cee](https://www.washingtonpost.com/realestate/handicap-accessible-housing-market-is-still-a-work-in-progress/2011/08/27/flQAm85owJ_story.html?utm_term=.14b70b7c2cee)
- "Profile of Older Americans." *Profile of Older Americans*. N.p., n.d. Web. 30 Apr. 2018.

# Questions?

- Contact: Darrel Christenson
  - 602-296-0530
  - [DarrelC@ability360.org](mailto:DarrelC@ability360.org)

# Increasing Home Access

# The Need | Accessible Housing, cont'd. 3

- In Arizona, thirteen percent (13%) of the population (or about 912,115 individuals) reported a disability.
- There are rising disability levels among middle-age Americans (age 40 to 64) as well as increasing disability among those ages 55 to 64.
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# The Need | Accessible Housing, cont'd. 4

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- Approximately 22 million persons ages 65 and older reported having physical difficulties in 2006.

# The Need | Accessible Housing, cont'd. 5

- Surveys show that older person want to remain in their homes as long as possible. Almost 80 percent of adults ages 45 and older prefer to stay in their homes as long as possible as they age.
- Approximately 70% of Americans live in single-family homes, and the overwhelming majority of these housing unites have barriers that make it difficult or impossible for someone with physical disabilities to enter and exit.
- At least 21% of US households have at least one person with a physical limitation.
- There is at least a 60% probability that a newly built single family home will house at least one disabled person during the next 50 yrs.
- **TAKE AWAY: HOME ACCESS IS ESSENTIAL TO THE GROWING ELDERLY POPULATION AND DISABLED POPULATION IN ARIZONA**



# The Current Housing Stock

- Federal law requires access for people with mobility impairments only to all new multifamily residences and to a small percentage of single family units constructed with public funds, but not generally single family homes.
- Approximately 70% of Americans live in single family homes.
- However, most existing single-family housing and the majority of new housing have steps at all entrances and narrow interior doors, particularly bathroom doors.

# The Current Housing Stock, cont'd.



- Only about 1% of homes in the U.S. have five important accessibility features that would make a home accessible to individuals with mobility impairments.
- As the country faces demographic changes that include a growing number of older person and individuals with mobility issues, **the traditional housing practices are not meeting market demand.**

# What is the solution? Visitability.

A Visitability home is marked by these core architectural conditions:

1. One zero-step entrance at the front, back, or side of the house depending on site conditions.
2. Doorways that provide thirty-two inches of clearance.
3. At least a half bath on the main floor.
4. Lever door handles.
5. Reinforced walls in ground-floor bathrooms for future installation of grab bars.
6. Electrical outlets and environmental controls in reachable location (switches less than 48" above the floor).

Including these features from beginning creates greater supply of accessible homes **for a growing market** & reduces the need for residents to spend large sums of money on future modifications.

# Costs Associated with Visitability



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**Myth:** Incorporating basic access features substantially increases total construction costs.

## **Facts:**

- Professional construction costs estimator hired by Pima County, Arizona, estimated the cost at about \$100 for new houses built on a concrete slab, which included \$25 in overhead and profit for the builder.
- Experiences in Georgia & Texas bear this estimate out. Executive director of the Home Builder Association of GA stated that “when visibility features are planned in advance the added costs is very low for a new, single family detached home...Less that \$100 for homes on concrete slabs, & \$300-\$600 for homes with crawl spaces or basements.”

# Costs Associated with Visitability, cont'd.



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## Facts:

- With regard to door width, a study the surveyed five wholesale supplies across the U.S. found that 2'10" doors, when purchase in units of 100, not only were readily available but also costs on average only \$2 more than 2'8" doors.
- Wider doorways from the start: \$50 vs. thousands of dollars in remodeling costs
  - **Affordability is not compromised if the visitability features are incorporated early in the design process.**

**Myth:** Visitability homes are harder to sell.

**Facts:** Studies in cities where visitability statutes are mandatory have shown that homes sell at the same rate.

- Per a 2006 AARP report, builders of visibility homes report that they have not experienced any differences in the speed with which they sell those homes compared with homes without such features
- For profit builders in San Antonio, Texas, Georgia, and Bolingbrook, Illinois, reported that homes with visitability features sold within the time frame that satisfied the builders.
- In fact, integrated accessible option are in greater demand given the changing demographics and adding access during construction of a homes is less expensive than after the fact.

# Costs Associated with Visitability, cont'd. 3



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**Myth:** Visitability is not versatile.

**Facts:** A visitable home is indistinguishable from a conventional home

- A zero step entrance does not require a ramp.
- A zero step entrance does not have to be located at the front of the home.
- It works on flat and other building lots.
- It is feasible when building on a concrete slab or over a basement.

# Questions?

Contact: Darrel Christenson

602-296-0530

[DarrelC@ability360.org](mailto:DarrelC@ability360.org)



# Ability360 & Valley Leadership

- <https://ability360.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Untapped-market-is-your-missed-opportunity.pdf>
- One in six Americans currently lives in a multigenerational household.
- Families across America are looking for homes with accessibility features not only because they have someone in the family with a disability but also because more of them are living in multigenerational households where an older parent has mobility restrictions.

# Ability360 & Valley Leadership, cont'd.

- We strive to create connections with other thought leaders and entities who are passionate about inclusion and improving the disparity between individuals with disabilities and adequate housing.
- The intent (or purpose) is to create awareness of the importance of accessible housing and to educate businesses and individuals, including: Builders, Developers, Realtors, Home Buyers and Home Owners.

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them



- 0.5% cost in new construction to include accessibility.
- Single family homes only add \$100-300 in costs.
- Realtor commissions rise (buyers and sellers).
- Developers can market units to 100% of the community.
- Including accessible features from the beginning creates a greater supply of accessible homes **for a growing market** and reduces the need for residents to spend large sums of money on modifications in the future.

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them, cont'd.



- Housing industry makes money.
- Accessibility meets housing community needs.
- Safer and more independent/ convenient homes.
- Reduces falls in the home, reducing ER visits, hospitalization, nursing home placements.
- We are not a niche population.
- **WE HAVE ECONOMIC POWER! USE IT!**

# All Arguments are in Our Favor – Use Them, cont'd. 2



All of the arguments against meeting the needs of PWDs are met with facts substantiating our arguments to do so:

- 61 million Americans with a permanent disability.
- 20% of the population and growing daily.
- 0.5% cost in new construction to include accessibility.
- Single family homes only add \$100-300 in costs.
- Realtor commissions rise (buyers and sellers).
- Developers can market units to 100% of the community.

# Q&A and Discussion

# CIL-NET Attribution

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