



PROGRAM BULLETIN

Date: April 8, 2025
To: Development Community
From: Anne Berman, Director of Real Estate Development
Subject: Accessibility Resource Manual
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Working with our partners, RIHousing has published an Accessibility Resource Manual to assist developers receiving funding through RIHousing to improve accessibility standards in their developments. The Resource Manual has now been incorporated into our Developer's Handbook <https://www.rihousing.com/developers-handbook/>. The manual complements the accessibility requirements in the recently revised RIHousing Design Standards by including a list of additional recommended best practices and a comprehensive list of resources for various project types and sizes, including small rehab projects and larger new construction developments. While designed to enhance accessibility, visitability, and adaptability in projects supported by RIHousing, the Accessibility Resource Manual is equally applicable to non-RIHousing financed construction.

Minimum accessibility requirements are governed by the applicable State and National codes, including the accessibility requirements of the 2021 Rhode Island State Building Code, which references IBC 2018/A117.1-2009 (RISBC), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act (FHA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504). Each of these four standards establishes minimum requirements for accessible housing, though the scoping for where and how these standards apply varies. It varies based on whether the project is part of a state or local government program, the number of units, and whether it is new construction or an alteration. The accessibility requirements of the RISBC are part of the building code and enforceable by local building officials. The other three standards (ADA, FHA, and 504) are federal requirements enforceable through federal civil rights legislation.

We hope this new resource will be helpful to you as you incorporate RIHousing's new accessibility requirements into future development proposals, and we encourage you to consider incorporating additional accessibility features described in the Manual as your development proposals allow.