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Universal Design Resources

What is Universal Design?

Universal Design (UD) is a strategy for making products, environments, operational systems, and services welcoming and usable to the most diverse range of people possible. Its key principles are simplicity, flexibility, and efficiency. And whether we realize it or not, most of us benefit from UD on a daily basis.

Originally developed in response to the needs of the aging population and people with disabilities, UD has much broader applicability. It increases ease of access to products, places, and services for multiple, diverse populations. Using UD means that facilities, programs, and services take into account the broad range of abilities, ages, reading levels, learning styles, languages, and cultures in their diverse workforce and customer base.

As a result, ODEP has long promoted UD as an effective strategy for increasing the inclusion of people with disabilities, in both the workplace environment and the workforce system.

The following resources offer helpful information related to universal design.

Resources

- **[What is Universal Design and How Can It Benefit a Business?](#)** — ODEP-authored article that explores UD as it relates to communication, technology, and the physical environment.
- **[Universal Design and Assistive Technology in the Workplace](#)** — Fact sheets and white papers from ODEP's Job Accommodation Network (JAN) related to UD.
- **[Universal Design and Information Technology](#)** — Resources related to accessible technology and the benefits of building technology applications that are accessible, usable, interoperable, and universally designed.

- **Principles of Universal Design** — Seven common principles for UD promoted by advocates and used worldwide.
- **National Center on Universal Design for Learning (NCUDL)** — Supports the effective implementation of UD for learning (UDL) by connecting stakeholders in the field and providing resources and information, including the UDL Guidelines.
- **Institute for Human Centered Design** — Organization committed to advancing the role of design in expanding opportunity and enhancing experience for people of all ages and abilities through excellence in design.
- **Ronald L. Mace Universal Design Institute** — Advances the concept of UD in all design disciplines, including housing, public-use buildings, outdoor and urban environments, and related products.
- **Accessible, Usable, and Universal Design** — Fact sheet from the DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) Center explains the difference between accessible, usable, and Universal Design.
- **Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access** — This organization helps make environments and products more usable, safer, and healthier. The website includes online courses on UD and information on creating innovative UD solutions.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Video** — Video from the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) provides an overview of universal design for learning (UDL), a framework to improve teaching and learning for all people.

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