



Summary of 1st Stakeholder Engagement for the 2027 Design and Architectural Standards (DAS) Update

Overview

- OHFA's first stakeholder session for the 2027 DAS updates was held at the Ohio Housing Conference as the "DAS! What I'm Talking About" session on November 12, 2025.
- There were 8 tables of people, which discussed their thoughts and potential improvements for the DAS.
- Tables were split into the following groups: 4 discussing new construction, 2 discussing rehabilitation, 1 discussing affordable assisted living, and 1 discussing permanent supportive housing.
- Feedback was reviewed from roughly 8 hours of transcripts for the session, and the below summary was created. Comments were edited for brevity, removal of identifying details, and similar comments were combined.

New Construction

- Better consistency between plan review from application and field inspection during construction.
- More flexibility in DAS requirements to tailor to project type, market or population
 - Some commented DAS as overly prescriptive
- Concentrate on the envelope of the building over interior requirements.
- Restructure the DAS by CSI/spec divisions, would allow for better coordination with MEP etc.
- Recently updated building code already raises the baseline for efficiency, unclear if efficiency requirements are needed in the DAS.
- Reference "most current version" of third-party green standards instead of naming specific versions e.g. green globes.
- Better process for exception requests the process is cumbersome.
- Substantial reduction in the requirements of the DAS, just rely on building code
- OHFA PCNA format differs from HUD's, which creates duplicative reports.
- Comments on Ohio's energy code is more stringent now and if green certs are really needed. Consider having them optional or points based.
- Better connection to code requirements in the DAS.
- Better connection of code requirements in arch reviews – especially accessibility.

- Simplify requirements for gypsum board. Use of “purple board” in wet areas instead of paperless gypsum board
- Restructure the Universal Design requirements – have a list to pick from where there is more choice on what is selected
- Links in the DAS to specific products as examples to meet the requirements

Rehabilitation

- Outline a better review path for Rehabs, with feedback from OHFA earlier in the process.
- More coordination with SHPO/NPS and DAS requirements.
- More clarity on what an exception requests needs.
- Have a path that requires less exception requests to be submitted to OHFA.
- Early meetings or site visits, such as a pre-plan review to address unique issues options to comply with DAS as early on as possible.
- 5’ sidewalks are hard to meet and/or increase costs.
- 5’x5’ entries are challenging to meet.
- Discussion of stove/range options and their availability, especially for accessibility.
- Discussion of radius countertops and the requirements in DAS increasing costs of countertops.
- Rehab A & Rehab B is not well defined. Provide a definition that ties to hard construction cost per unit.
- Universal Design should have more flexibility on what to select, have less required and don’t require to swap 2 for an exception request.
- With Historic, Energy Star window requirements increase costs and have minimal energy savings.
- Discussion about which states balance design requirements well with costs suggested: Indiana, South Carolina, Kentucky, Pennsylvania.
- Common area maximums don’t impact rehab, this is more of an issue with new construction.

Affordable Assisted Living (AAL)

- Need for more amenities and service space with AAL .
- Current AAL standards require each unit to be ‘range ready’ (electric range outlet plus associated ventilation) even though operators will not allow ranges for safety and licensing reasons. --- this increases costs.

- Separate AAL guidelines for this program, commentors cited higher staffing and different design needs.
- Reevaluate HVAC / Mechanical Standards for Rehab and AL (e.g., minisplits).
- Underwriting currently assumes a 2% annual escalation in Medicaid vouchers, but actual Medicaid rate increases occur irregularly and less frequently.

Permanent Supportive Housing

- Have population specific guidelines – as amenities and needs are different – such as youth, senior, family.
- Not all properties need outdoor amenities if the surrounding area has similar or desired features.
- Better define of programmatic space vs. common area.
- 100% roll-in showers is not needed.
- Design choices that support trauma-informed safety.
- Optional vs. required security standards depending on project type.
- Hot rooms for bed bugs are unused or ineffective, weekly exterminator inspections work better.
- Storage rooms are used inconsistently and bike rooms aren't used or become trash rooms.

Accessibility

- Use an accessibility law that does not include extras specified by OHFA.
- Clarify requirements around equivalent storage and accessible kitchen
 - Some expressed interest in minimum size requirements for storage
- Additional 5% for Section 504 should have more flexibility.
 - Not all populations have the same need for accessibility
- Roll-in showers without shelving do not have same functionality as an accessible tub.
- Some cited issues with getting front and top loading laundry machines – others cited should have mix of front and top loading.

General Feedback

- Follow-through with DAS requirements for the year a project is funded under. Some commented that staff recites current DAS requirements instead of those applicable to the project.
 - Adds more time & resources for both project and OHFA staff, when staff does not pay attention to year funded

2027 DAS 1st Stakeholder Engagement Summary

- Some commented on confusion with applicable DAS when project resubmits.
- Improve Coordination Between OHFA, HUD Reviewers, and Other Regulators
- Allow projects to submit updated drawing sets at the time of architectural review.
- More flexibility on when 80% set can be submitted.
- Clear description of what is needed for the 80% plan set.
- Development team needs more time to produce the 80% set or focus on 50-60% submission set.
- Have timeline for architectural review process better outlined, starting process earlier if possible.
- DAS should be less prescriptive and more flexible.
- Concerns with costs based on specific requirements in the DAS, such as countertop, flooring, cabinetry.
- Clearer distinction of what OHFA reviews and enforces.
- More transparency or flexibility regarding materials – cited materials being rejected in past.
- A way to share information and ideas between developer, architects, OHFA, contractors, etc.