

Design & Architectural Standards

— Bulletin 2026.1 —

Introduction

In anticipation of issuing the new Design & Architectural Standards (DAS) that will be effective on December 1, 2026, this bulletin modifies the requirements of the [current DAS](#), as well as the current [Affordable Assisted Living Guidelines](#) (AAL). **The changes below will be effective as of July 1, 2026** and apply to any project that has not yet received an 8609. All references to pages and sections refer to the current DAS and current AAL guidelines as noted.

Please note previous FAQs addressing the current DAS (for example, the [FAQ issued December 22, 2025](#)) are still in effect and may provide additional useful interpretation of the guidelines.

B. Definitions

The definition of *Dedicated Program Space* is expanded to include “any room or space outside the residential living unit designed exclusively for tenant use that has a fixed **activity** or program-driven purpose.” For example: puzzle/game rooms, libraries, fitness rooms, counseling space, wellness and health clinic areas, day care centers, hair salons, computer rooms, commercial kitchens for AAL residents, AAL staff laundry areas and housekeeping closets.

Note that this does not include security guard stations, offices or other spaces serving staff only.

Dedicated Program Spaces do not contribute to the square footage calculation of *Common Space* that is restricted to 20 percent gross building square footage in DAS section 3.2 of *L. Interior Requirements*.

H. Sustainability

OHFA has recognized the current DAS sustainability standards may not be cost effective for projects containing 24 units or less. For projects in the Housing Development Gap Financing (HDGF) program:

- In lieu of officially obtaining one of the green certifications listed in the DAS, applicants may have a certified Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rater submit a letter confirming the project has met the requirements of one of the certifications.
- FLIR heat camera analysis or similar will be permitted in lieu of blower door testing. Applicants must submit a letter stating how energy losses were identified and addressed.
- R-49 attic insulation is permitted in cases where meeting current ASHRAE 90.1 is not readily achievable.

Please be sure to review all funding sources applicable to determine if additional green requirements must be met.

K. Site and Exterior

5. Main Entry: Covered entry is not required for rehab projects.

6. Site Design & Landscaping: Placing condensing units in front of dwelling unit windows is not prohibited as long as windows allow for views over the equipment.

L. Interior Requirements

1. Durable Materials - Interior:

1.5.1.3 Granite countertops are no longer prohibited.

1.5.5.1 Moisture-resistant gypsum board may be used in any location where paperless gypsum board (PGB) is currently required.

3. Common Areas:

3.3.1 Floor drain and clean out cap locations are no longer regulated, but must be flush with the finished floor and not present a tripping hazard.

Appendix A: Universal Design Features

Bathroom: This modifies the current requirement for Countertops with beveled/radiused corners:

- In order to prevent injury, PLAM countertops must not have 90-degree corners. Either chamfer or radius the corner, or provide a modified profile (beveled, eased, ogee, bullnose, etc.) at the front edge. OHFA does not require any specific profile or dimension of the radius, but a detail must be included with the 80% drawing submission. No countertop material besides PLAM is governed by this requirement.

Kitchen: Landing zones for rehab projects are only required to be 9” wide. Microwaves are permitted in the landing zone for both rehabs and new construction, but should not be located in the required 30” wide roll-under work surface at Section 504 units.

4% LIHTC Affordable Assisted Living Guidelines

11. Kitchen & Appliances: It is no longer required to provide raceway, conduit, or other infrastructure for future installation of a cooking range.