



Property managers  
and owners:

**DISPELLING  
THE MYTH  
ABOUT  
RENTING TO  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES.  
IT MAY BE  
EASIER THAN  
YOU THINK.**

Providing accommodations for people with disabilities may be easier than you think. For people with disabilities, there is a significant need for units that allow them to live independently.

Rental property owners and managers appreciate tenants who renew their leases and pay their rent on time. People with disabilities tend to stay in their units as long as possible, reducing unit-turnover costs (see page 2). Participants in some programs, such as Colorado Choice Transitions (see back cover), receive extra financial and independent-living support that makes it easy for landlords to accommodate their needs.

For more information, call

**303-480-6838**

## THE COST OF UNIT TURNOVER

**For landlords and property managers:** Turnover represents an average of 75 percent of the unit's monthly rent for moderately priced units. This does not include costs for repairing property damage, which can significantly increase that amount.

**For tenants with disabilities:** “While moving is a hassle for anyone it can become an extreme challenge and sometimes presents an insurmountable barrier for people with disabilities. If one must rely on others for basic activities of daily living like bathing and dressing or if one has cognitive deficits that make organization of daily life difficult, or a disability that relies on routine for stability, moving is not something one will do unless there is absolutely no other choice. In addition to these challenges a fixed and low income makes the costs of moving prohibitive. As a leader in the disability community for more than 20 years I am not aware of anyone with a disability that has moved for any reason other than absolute necessity.”

– Julie Reiskin, Executive Director, Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition



### Tenant story: Paulette

I was introduced to Colorado Choice Transitions after being in the nursing home and at a rehabilitation center for a year-and-a-half. My transition coordinator not only helped me with my own transition, she recruited and trained me to become a transition coordinator, as well.

My transition was a long process. The hardest part was finding a place to move into. It took me a good year-and-a-half to find a place. I was on several waiting lists, and the tedious process made me weary. Yet, Colorado Choice Transitions offered me hope that I could one day be independent again. Becoming part of the community at large was important to me.

On June 28, 2013, I moved into my own apartment in Historic Downtown Littleton. To me, it was a miracle!

**THE FIRST WEEK:** I cried with happiness. I had a good, deep sleep for the first time in years. I had quiet, my own space, the ability to choose my own food and cook for myself.

**THE FIRST MONTH:** The nursing home had been the smallest place I'd ever lived, so I had to get used to having so much space for myself. I was finally able to express myself by decorating my new place. I enjoyed the new sounds of life in my community.

**THE FIRST YEAR:** My calendar was filled with doctors' appointments and arranging transportation to them. Otherwise, I pretty much stayed at home. I was still adjusting to having my own timetable to do what I desired. I was fortunate to be on the side of the building that overlooks Main Street, so I could watch parades and activities from my living-room window. In late 2013, I was able to secure my power chair. My aide helped me introduce me to both the bus and light rail systems.

**THE SECOND YEAR:** I was healthier, due to being in my own place and more independent. My calendar had fewer doctors' appointments and more activities with friends and the community. I could breathe again and felt more like my old self. I was happy and active. I still watched the parades – but no longer from my window.

**TODAY:** Now I am down on the street, active and involved in what is happening. I have attended city economic symposiums and functions at the local library. I open my home to visits from friends and family. I cook, bake and share with neighbors and friends. Now that I'm a transition coordinator, it's a joy to offer others the same hope of living independently in the community.

## PROPERTY MANAGER STORY:

When I was asked to make a statement regarding the residents I work with in the affordable housing industry that have transitioned from nursing homes to our communities, I was thrilled. These individuals have been a joy to work with.

Residents that have spent time in nursing homes have a wonderful attitude toward the new community they are entering. The appreciation they have for their new apartment home is a pleasure to see. In my experience, they have been not only outstanding residents but many have also become outstanding members of the community.

I have witnessed tenants in this category take a special interest in the complex they are living in and go out of their way to help others in need at the properties. The connections they establish when becoming members of an apartment community are truly heartwarming.

Additionally, the pride that these residents have for their new community is outstanding. It is always appreciated when a tenant takes the initiative to become an active part of a property and treat it with respect. I have seen, time and time again, this population go above and beyond to help maintain a beautiful community – whether it be picking up trash they see in a common area or volunteering to help out with the community gardens. In turn, this example of a quality resident tends to have a trickle-down effect on other residents at the property.

I have been blessed to have the opportunity to work with several clients during their transition period and have enjoyed it to the fullest.

I hope that any community manager that has the opportunity to work with individuals with disabilities has no apprehension in doing so, because it is a very fulfilling experience.

**Andrea Pacheco Fluker**

*Community Manager, Pillar Property Services, LLC*



# HIGH DEMAND FOR HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In the metropolitan Denver area, the need is high among people with ambulatory disabilities for accessible rental units.

County	People with ambulatory disabilities	Percent of county population
Adams	23,546	5.6
Arapahoe	25,147	4.6
Broomfield	2,083	3.8
Clear Creek	343	4.0
Denver	30,776	5.3
Douglas	7,205	2.6
Gilpin	212	4.0
Jefferson	24,232	4.7

## COLORADO CHOICE TRANSITIONS

Colorado Choice Transitions, a Money Follows the Person (MFP) initiative, helps Colorado Medicaid members transition out of nursing homes and long-term care facilities and into home and community-based settings. The program provides Colorado Medicaid clients who use long-term services with choices about how, when and where they receive services. Services promote independence, improve the transition process, and support clients in the community. About 200 individuals are in need of housing within the program.

### Colorado Choice Transitions clients are eligible for:

- Intensive case management during the first 365 days
- Transition coordination during the first 30 days
- Independent living skills training during the first 365 days
- Peer mentorship

### Think your property is not-quite-ready to accommodate a tenant with a disability? As a landlord or property manager, your Colorado Choice Transitions tenants are eligible for:

- Annual Section 8 inspections of the unit and the tenant's care of the space
- Homemaker services to help the tenant keep their home clean
- A Medicaid-funded benefit for accessibility modifications to a unit (as long as the property is not otherwise federally funded)

### What about housing vouchers?

Not all Colorado Choice Transitions clients are eligible for rental assistance housing vouchers. For those that are, approximately 70 percent of the rent amount is guaranteed every month and paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant.



For more information, call  
**303-480-6838**



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