

## Housing Options for Seniors

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The majority of seniors want to live in their own homes for as long as possible. However, many homes are not designed to meet their changing needs as they age. For example, most homes lack rails or grab handles that will help prevent a fall. As people grow older, the consequences of a fall grow more serious. AARP studies show 50% of senior patients admitted for a fall injury will die within one year. In addition, fractures from falls are a leading cause of disability and often result in entering a nursing home. Most falls happen in the home and could have been avoided. Factors such as poor lighting, narrow stairs, and slippery surfaces can increase the chances of a fall. In addition, problems with glare and depth perception, reduced fitness leading to weakened muscles, or prescription medicines that might cause dizziness or tiredness can result in a fall.

In many cases seniors will want to stay in familiar surrounding as long as possible. Seniors will benefit from home modifications to suit their present or future requirements, such as handrails or grab bars, wheelchair ramps, lighting, alterations to bathrooms, improvements to existing doorways or other access areas, and some exterior work. However, in many cases their existing home will not work due to its size and layout. In that case, the Front Range has many options and you should look for a Realtor® with the SRES designation

SRES stands for Seniors Real Estate Specialist. Realtors® who have successfully taken specially designed courses are allowed to use this designation. The courses in the training were developed with input from seniors and reflect the things a Realtor® needs to know to be sensitive to their needs. It also represents a code of ethics and a standard of practice which is above and beyond the already high standards required of Realtors® by their membership in the National Association of Realtors. An SRES designated Realtor® is a professional who can be trusted to professionally counsel and serve the needs of Seniors who are considering making the move from their own home to some sort of assisted living.

Unfortunately many people still have stereotype images of nursing homes and retirement communities that are far from the truth. Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) are sometimes called life care communities. Entering one is usually a(n) once-in-a-lifetime choice and that's the appeal. Many have large campuses that include separate housing for those who live very independently, assisted living facilities that offer more support, and nursing

homes for those needing skilled nursing care. With all on the same grounds, people who are relatively active, as well as those who have serious physical and mental disabilities, all live nearby each other. These facilities offer services such as nursing help in administering necessary injections; or housekeeping which the senior needs help in maintaining. As someone's needs increase the home should be able to adjust the offered assistance all the way to full care if necessary. A good home will also provide social interaction with other residents both in and out of the facility with field trips to parks, shows, tours and the like.

When a senior or family Care Giver are considering an alternative living situation to staying in their home alone then a SRES Realtor® will be able to help a senior or caring family member assistance in both listing and selling their home for a fair market value and counseling them in deciding which of the many possible new living situations will best fit their needs. The SRES Realtor® will review things that need to be considered in choosing a facility such as the services and activities offered, cost, location, and the specific needs or assistance.

Most seniors will want housing options that keep them close to the area were they have been living and the Front Range has many options. Independent living, both assisted and unassisted, is available at such facilities as Alterra Villas at the Atrium, Presbyterian Manor and the Academy to name a few. There are facilities in the area such as Frasier Meadow Manor or Boulder Meridian, which offer a full array of services from independent living to assisted living all the way to nursing home services. Terrace Heights and Manor Care are a couple of the facilities which only offer Nursing Home services. Finally, facilities such as Golden West Manor, Mary Sandoe House or Sunrise Assisted Living offer assisted living exclusively. It should be noted that the facilities listed above in each service category are only a small sample of the numerous ones available in the Boulder county area. An SRES Realtor can help a senior or family member review and select the most appropriate facility for themselves or their loved one.

Dan Kuchars is an Associate Broker Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Boulder and carries the SRES GRI designations. If you have any questions or would like to discuss alternative living for yourself or a senior member of your family, Dan can be reached at 303-441-2436 or email at [www.Dan@DanKuchars.com](mailto:www.Dan@DanKuchars.com)

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