



# Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities

*A Guide for Recovery Home Owners and Operators*

## THE FACTS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Disability found that 74.6 million people in the country have some kind of physical disability. Information from the Christopher and Diana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center states:



- **Approximately 4.7 million people with disabilities also have a co-occurring substance use disorder.**
- People with disabilities, like deafness, arthritis, and multiple sclerosis have substance use rates that are double those of the general population.
- About half of people with a spinal cord injury, amputation, blindness, or degenerative diseases who drink alcohol can be classified as heavy drinkers.

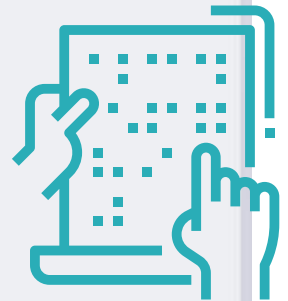
Oftentimes, people with disabilities have difficulty finding recovery supports that meet their needs. While some recovery homes must meet standards required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), recovery housing owners and operators can make additional accommodations (even to older homes) that are more inclusive.



## TIPS

### Here are a few ways you can make your recovery homes more welcoming when serving individuals with disabilities (some at no or low cost):

- Ensuring a 5' turning radius
- Installing light switches, thermostats and electrical outlets at a reachable height
- Installing reinforcements for grab bars on walls, showers, bathrooms, etc.
- Converting a room on the main floor into a bedroom
- Installing safe flooring types like ceramic tile, vinyl, or hardwood that decrease tripping hazards
- Utilizing dressers and wardrobes that are long, rather than tall
- Designing a semi-permanent ramp if your recovery home has steps leading to the front door
- Installing a flashing light, in addition to a doorbell
- Installing single lever or touch faucets
- Utilizing alternative methods, like the tactile font ELIA, for those who are visually impaired to more easily identify kitchen appliances, bathrooms, and assigned bedrooms. Few individuals who are visually impaired can read braille. Offer training.
- Ensuring a counter height of 34" for individuals who use a wheelchair. Or, put a table in the kitchen or bathroom where individuals can store their personal belongings
- Storing items like glassware, utensils, toilet paper and paper towels in lower cabinets for easy access
- Making sure your marketing materials are digitally accessible and compliant if you have a web page or post regularly on social media. For instance, captioning videos and providing written descriptions of photos
- Utilizing side-by-side washer and dryer, rather than a stackable unit



## REFERENCES

- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- Sunrise House
- Psychiatry & Behavioral Health Learning Network
- Sensory Sun