
Knowing Your Guest: The Seven Co-Living Guest Types

A White Paper for Co-Living Operators and Real Estate Investors

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FOREWORD

This paper is written for two audiences: the real estate investor who has encountered the term co-living and wishes to understand what it actually represents before committing capital, and the operator who is already active in the market and seeks a more disciplined framework for understanding the people they house.

The co-living model is not complicated at its core. It is a furnished private bedroom in a shared home, offered on flexible terms at a price that serves people who either cannot absorb the cost of a full apartment or have no practical use for a long-term lease commitment. That is the essential proposition. Every operational decision — how to price, what to buy, how to furnish, how to screen — flows from that foundation.

What makes co-living worthy of serious study is not its structural complexity but its range. The essential worker renting by the week and the travel nurse on a 13-week hospital contract are both co-living guests, yet they have almost nothing else in common. The undergraduate student near campus and the 65-year-old simplifying after decades of homeownership both benefit from the co-living model, yet they require entirely different properties, different management practices, and different marketing approaches. Treating them as interchangeable is among the most common and costly mistakes an operator can make.

This paper examines seven distinct guest types that define the co-living market as it exists today. For each, it addresses who they are, why co-living is the appropriate housing solution for their circumstances, what they require from a property, and how to reach them effectively. Before turning to the guest types, two foundational matters are addressed: what co-living actually is and how it should be understood by those entering the market, and the two operating models under which co-living properties are managed in the United States.

PART ONE: WHAT IS CO-LIVING?

Defining the Model

Co-living is a professionally managed form of shared housing in which each resident occupies a private, furnished bedroom while sharing common spaces — kitchen, bathrooms, and living areas — with other residents. Utilities and internet access are typically bundled into a single monthly rate. Occupancy terms are short, most commonly month-to-month. The property is managed by an operator responsible for maintenance, guest relations, and the standards of the shared environment.

There is nothing novel about the underlying concept. Shared housing has existed as long as urban density has created demand for it. What distinguishes contemporary co-living from informal roommate arrangements is intentionality: properties designed and operated specifically for this purpose, with defined guest standards, professional management, and a consistent product offering.

Co-living is not a vacation rental, a hotel, or a short-term accommodation in the conventional sense. The individuals residing in co-living homes are not transient visitors — they are working, studying, recovering, or building their lives. They prepare meals in the shared kitchen, use the property's laundry facilities, and return home at the end of the day as any renter would. The distinguishing characteristics are that they share common areas with other adults in exchange for the flexibility and pricing that a conventional apartment lease cannot provide.

Why Residents Choose Co-Living

A clear-eyed understanding of why people choose co-living is essential for any operator who wants to serve this market effectively. The motivations reduce to two, and only two.

The first is affordability. In the majority of American metropolitan areas, the cost of a private apartment has outpaced wage growth to such a degree that a significant portion of the working population cannot access conventional rental housing without exceeding standard affordability thresholds. A private bedroom in a well-managed co-living home — priced between \$700 and \$1,200 per month, all-inclusive, depending on the market — places stable, dignified housing within reach for individuals whose income cannot support a solo rental. For this guest, co-living is not a lifestyle preference. It is frequently the only viable path to private, stable housing.

The second is flexibility. The conventional apartment lease runs twelve months. For a meaningful and growing segment of the population, a twelve-month commitment is not a realistic option. Travel nurses are under thirteen-week contracts. Remote workers have no geographic obligation to any particular city. Students need housing aligned with the academic calendar. Young professionals may be relocating for career opportunity within the year. Month-to-month co-living terms accommodate these realities in a way that the conventional market does not. These residents are not avoiding commitment due to instability — their circumstances make long-term housing agreements genuinely impractical.

Operators who internalize these two motivations will find that they clarify every marketing decision. Co-living is not a lifestyle brand. It is not a hospitality concept. It is a practical housing solution for people whose needs the conventional rental market is structurally unable to meet.

What Co-Living Is Not

Several misconceptions about co-living are common enough to warrant direct address.

Co-living is not inherently low-quality housing. Price point and quality standard are separate variables. A well-managed co-living home is clean, properly maintained, thoughtfully furnished, and professionally operated. Guest retention — and the financial performance of the property — depends on this being true.

Co-living is not synonymous with a party environment or diminished standards of conduct. The substantial majority of co-living guests are working adults who require a quiet, functional home. Properties managed with clear house rules and appropriate screening consistently attract guests who honor them.

Co-living is not a transitional arrangement that residents tolerate until something better becomes available. For many of the guest types examined in this paper, it is the deliberate and correct housing choice for their current life stage. Operators who approach it otherwise will find that attitude reflected in how they manage the asset — and in the results they produce.

PART TWO: THE TWO OPERATING MODELS

Co-living properties in the United States operate under one of two distinct models. Every operator should understand both before determining their approach, as the choice carries meaningful implications for revenue, control, legal structure, and the guest types a given property is best positioned to serve.

The Standard Rental Model

The standard rental model operates within the conventional landlord-tenant framework established by state law. The operator owns or controls the property and enters into individual room rental agreements with each resident. The relationship is a direct landlord-tenant relationship, governed by the applicable legal requirements of the jurisdiction — habitability standards, notice requirements, and tenant protections among them.

In a co-living context, each guest executes an individual room rental agreement for their private bedroom. Common areas are shared by all residents under the terms of the house agreement. Occupancy is structured as month-to-month in the vast majority of cases, reflecting the practical needs of the guest types the model serves. Pricing is typically all-inclusive — a single rate covering room, utilities, and internet — which eliminates administrative complexity for both the operator and the guest.

The standard model affords the operator full control over pricing, guest selection, property standards, and operational decisions. It requires no platform affiliation, no licensing fee, and no revenue sharing. It does require the operator to construct and maintain independent systems for marketing, guest screening, and property operations. Most independent co-living operators function under this model.

The Membership Model

The membership model is the framework employed by platform-based co-living operators, of which PadSplit is the most prominent example in the U.S. workforce housing market. Rather than executing a conventional lease, residents enter into a membership agreement with the platform and pay a weekly or monthly membership fee covering their room, utilities, and access to platform services. The legal architecture of this arrangement is designed to function differently from a standard residential tenancy — positioned closer to a lodging or subscription arrangement — which carries distinct implications for how disputes, terminations, and occupancy transitions are handled.

Operators who participate in platforms of this type receive an existing guest pipeline, a pre-established membership agreement structure, background screening services, and payment processing infrastructure. In exchange, a portion of room revenue is remitted to the platform, and certain decisions around pricing and guest selection are subject to platform parameters.

The membership model is particularly well-suited to guest types that benefit from its structure — most notably workforce and essential workers, for whom the weekly payment cadence aligns more naturally with pay cycles than monthly billing. Other guest types, such as travel nurses, students, and digital nomads, are typically served equally well or better through the standard rental model using the specialized platforms designed for each segment.

The two models are not mutually exclusive. Many experienced operators manage standard rental co-living properties for certain guest types while participating in membership-based platforms for others, capturing the advantages of each where market conditions support it.

PART THREE: THE SEVEN GUEST TYPES

The following seven sections profile each guest type in depth, addressing profile, motivation, property requirements, marketing strategy, and a summary of the principal advantages and challenges each type presents to the operator. Taken together, they constitute a practical framework for guest-type selection, property acquisition, and operational design.

Guest Type 01 — Workforce and Essential Workers

Profile

Workforce and essential workers constitute the largest single guest segment in the co-living market and, by most measures, the most chronically underserved demographic in the American housing system. They are employed in healthcare support, logistics and distribution, food service, retail, facilities management, and light manufacturing — industries indispensable to the functioning of every American city. Annual income for this segment typically falls between \$32,000 and \$58,000, representing honest compensation for consistent work that is nevertheless structurally insufficient to access private apartment housing at prevailing market rates in most U.S. metros.

The mathematics of this gap are not abstract. A worker earning \$18 per hour generates approximately \$37,000 in gross annual income. The standard affordability threshold — housing costs not exceeding 30% of gross income — translates to approximately \$925 per month for total housing cost. Median one-bedroom apartment rents in the majority of U.S. markets now fall between \$1,300 and \$1,800 per month. The conventional rental market has no viable product for this guest at their actual income level.

It is worth distinguishing this guest from those in financial crisis. The workforce resident is employed, typically stably so, and meeting their financial obligations. What they cannot absorb is the cost structure of a private apartment — not only the monthly rent, but the move-in requirement of first month, last month, and security deposit that can total \$4,000 to \$6,000 before a utility is activated. Co-living reduces that barrier substantially.

A particularly stable sub-segment within this category is the weekday resident: a worker who maintains a primary residence in another location and requires a reliable, affordable base near their place of employment during the working week. A construction foreman whose current project is 60 miles from home, a hospital support worker who accepted a higher-paying position in an adjacent market, a manufacturing contractor engaged for a six-month production run. This guest is deliberate, financially motivated, and operationally low-maintenance.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

Co-living addresses the affordability problem with structural precision. A furnished private bedroom at \$800 to \$1,050 per month, all-inclusive, falls within the financial reach that a workforce income allows. The all-inclusive pricing structure eliminates the budget uncertainty that variable costs create for residents managing tight monthly income. Month-to-month terms accommodate the realities of shift-based, contract, or transient employment without penalizing the guest for circumstances outside their control.

Workforce residents, when housed in a well-managed property and treated with appropriate professional respect, demonstrate a retention profile that should not be underestimated. Stable employment, reliable payment, and extended tenure are characteristic of this segment when the operator delivers on what the property promises.

Property Requirements

The private bedroom must communicate functional dignity. A full or queen bed is the appropriate standard. A lockable door — keyed or keypad-operated — is a prerequisite; it is the mechanism by which a resident can trust a shared housing arrangement. Blackout window treatments are essential for the significant portion of this segment that works shift schedules requiring daytime sleep. A writing surface, adequate closet storage, and individual climate control round out the baseline requirements.

In shared spaces, the kitchen holds the highest functional importance for this guest type. Dining out is not financially sustainable on a workforce income; the kitchen is where most meals are prepared and must support that use reliably. Full-size appliances, adequate cabinet allocation per resident, and a functional layout for meal preparation are not optional. In-unit laundry is the second most consequential shared amenity. Off-street parking is essential in the majority of markets.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

This guest's housing search is conducted on a smartphone, typically under time pressure, using specific and practical search terms. Local search presence — an optimized Google Business Profile and active Facebook Marketplace listings — represents the highest-leverage marketing investment. Facebook Marketplace listings should lead with price, confirm month-to-month availability, and present clear photographs of the actual spaces. Direct video walkthroughs consistently outperform professionally staged photography for this audience.

Sustained occupancy is most efficiently achieved through employer partnerships. Hospital HR departments, logistics operators, staffing agencies, and large retail organizations field housing inquiries from their workforce regularly. An operator established as a trusted housing resource for a major local employer converts a recurring marketing cost into a referral pipeline. Operators using the membership model will find that platform-based pipelines are well-calibrated to this segment and provide consistent demand without independent marketing infrastructure.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Largest and most consistently available guest pool in most U.S. markets, driven by structural housing affordability gaps with no near-term resolution.

- Workforce guests who find a well-run home at a fair price tend to stay, producing longer average tenure and lower turnover cost than most other segments.
- The membership model is particularly well-suited here, providing operators with a ready-made pipeline and payment infrastructure.
- Demand is durable and not dependent on any single employer, industry, or season.

Challenges

- Pricing is constrained by income, leaving limited room to raise rents in response to operating cost increases without risking vacancy.
 - This segment requires more intensive property management — maintenance responsiveness, kitchen and bathroom upkeep, and house rule enforcement are not optional.
 - Properties must be located near employment centers, which limits acquisition flexibility.
 - Screening requires care; income verification and employment stability are important filters that cannot be shortcut.
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Guest Type 02 — Young Professionals

Profile

Young professionals — adults between 22 and 38 employed in knowledge-economy roles including technology, finance, healthcare administration, creative industries, and professional services — represent one of the most commercially viable segments in co-living. Their annual income typically falls between \$50,000 and \$95,000, with higher figures common in technology and financial services markets. The challenge they face is not income but value: in the majority of major and mid-size metropolitan areas, the cost of a private apartment does not represent a rational expenditure for someone who may be new to the city, anticipating a career transition, or simply not prepared to commit to a twelve-month lease.

Co-living offers this guest a furnished private bedroom in a professionally managed home at a materially lower all-inclusive cost, with the month-to-month flexibility that matches their actual circumstances. This is a guest who chooses co-living actively, not by default — a distinction with real implications for the quality standard the property must meet.

A meaningful sub-segment follows the weekday resident pattern: a professional who has accepted a position in a new city and uses the co-living home as a functional base while they establish themselves, or whose primary residence is within commuting distance but not practical for daily use. These guests are among the most operationally straightforward in this category: purposeful, self-directed, and minimally present during the periods when shared space pressure is highest.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The financial case is the primary driver. A furnished, all-inclusive co-living room at \$1,000 to \$1,400 per month compared against a \$2,000 unfurnished studio — where separate utilities, internet, and the capital requirement for furniture must be added — represents a meaningful monthly difference even at this income level. Month-to-month flexibility preserves the optionality that is genuinely important to someone in a transitional career or life phase. The social dimension of a shared home with compatible peers has real value for someone building a social network in a new city, though it functions as a secondary consideration rather than a primary motivator for most in this segment.

Property Requirements

The private bedroom must function as both a sleeping space and a professional workspace. A queen bed is the minimum standard. A dedicated desk with appropriate seating is a functional requirement for a guest who may conduct professional work from the room regularly. Closet space must accommodate professional attire. The aesthetic presentation of the room carries greater weight with this guest than with most other segments.

In shared spaces, a modern kitchen with a functional dishwasher is a significant decision factor. In-unit laundry is close to non-negotiable. Outdoor space commands a meaningful premium and merits consideration as an acquisition criterion where the property economics allow. Common areas should be presentable to a standard the guest would find appropriate for hosting a peer.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

Young professionals conduct their housing search across multiple digital platforms simultaneously. Furnished Finder is the dominant platform for furnished, flexible housing in the U.S. market and should be treated as the primary listing channel. Facebook Marketplace and city-specific housing groups remain active for this demographic. Reddit city subreddits attract organic engagement from people actively relocating. LinkedIn is productive for identifying professionals who have recently noted a new city in their profile.

Professional-quality photography is the single highest-return marketing investment for this segment. Response time to inquiries is a material competitive factor. Corporate relocation programs at major local employers represent a slower channel to develop but produce pre-qualified leads with minimal ongoing marketing expenditure once established.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- This segment commands the highest per-room rates outside of travel nurses, supporting stronger property-level economics.
- Young professionals are generally financially stable guests who are accustomed to shared environments and generate minimal operational conflict.
- Active referrers within their professional and social networks; a strong reputation in this segment generates organic leads.
- Properties serving this guest can be positioned in desirable neighborhoods, supporting long-term asset appreciation alongside operating income.

Challenges

- Turnover is higher than most other segments, typically running 12 to 18 months as careers and relationships evolve, increasing marketing and turnover costs.
 - Aesthetic and amenity standards are demanding — an outdated or poorly maintained property will not compete regardless of price.
 - Location requirements are restrictive; this segment concentrates in walkable, employment-proximate neighborhoods where acquisition costs are higher.
 - Response time and professionalism in the leasing process are closely evaluated; a slow or disorganized operator loses this guest quickly.
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Guest Type 03 — Travel Nurses and Contract Workers

Profile

Travel nurses and contract healthcare workers — registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, surgical technologists, and allied health specialists — represent one of the most financially attractive and operationally reliable guest segments available to co-living operators. They take short-term assignments at hospitals and clinical facilities across the country in lieu of permanent staff positions. The standard contract duration is thirteen weeks.

The active travel nurse workforce exceeded 175,000 professionals in 2024, compared to 33,000 in 2018. Total annual compensation typically falls between \$101,000 and \$114,000 when base pay and stipends are combined. Of particular relevance to operators is the tax-free housing stipend that travel nurses receive from their placing agency — generally \$800 to \$1,400 per week depending on assignment location — designated specifically for housing costs. When a nurse secures housing at a cost below their stipend, the difference is retained by the nurse, tax-free. This creates a direct financial incentive to find quality housing at a competitive price. Co-living, when properly positioned, satisfies this equation consistently.

The gender composition of this segment — approximately 84% female — is an operational consideration that responsible operators address directly. A professional woman arriving alone in an unfamiliar city, with her assignment beginning within days, is making a safety assessment alongside every other housing evaluation. Neighborhood quality, property security, and the professional character of the household are consequential factors for this guest.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The conventional rental market cannot accommodate the operational requirements of this guest. Twelve-month leases are incompatible with thirteen-week assignments. Unfurnished apartments impose a capital and logistics burden a traveling professional cannot justify. Extended-stay hotels are expensive for sustained stays and offer none of the domestic

functionality a working healthcare professional requires. Furnished apartments with six-month minimums do not align with the assignment structure.

Co-living — furnished, flexible in term, professionally managed, and priced competitively relative to stipend levels — fills a gap the remainder of the rental market consistently leaves open. The referral dynamics within this segment are also meaningful: a guest who has a positive experience will refer colleagues assigned to the same facility, producing a self-reinforcing occupancy pipeline when managed well.

Property Requirements

This guest arrives with luggage rather than household goods, and the property must be prepared accordingly. The bedroom requires a quality queen mattress with full bedding provided, towels and linens included, a functional wardrobe or closet sufficient for both scrubs and professional clothing, a desk for documentation, and blackout window treatments for night-shift workers. The standard is complete move-in readiness from the moment of arrival.

The shared kitchen must be fully equipped — not only appliances but cooking utensils, pots and pans, a coffee maker, and a complete dish set. In-unit laundry is essential. Off-street parking is a near-universal requirement. The speed of inquiry response during the booking process is itself a functional requirement — a nurse whose assignment begins in ten days will not wait multiple days for a response.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

Furnished Finder is the primary discovery platform for this segment and maintaining a current, optimized listing there is foundational. Listings should specify actual internet speed, confirmed hospital proximity by drive time, the complete furnishing standard, parking availability, and in-unit laundry. The phrase "stipend-friendly pricing" signals familiarity with the guest's professional context.

Direct relationships with healthcare staffing agencies are the most efficient channel for sustained occupancy. Hospital nursing departments and HR offices are worth direct outreach. Travel nurse Facebook communities generate organic referrals when an operator develops a positive reputation within them.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Travel nurses are stipend-funded, which reduces price sensitivity and supports premium per-room pricing relative to other co-living segments.
- Professional, mature guests who cause minimal property damage and generate little interpersonal conflict.
- The referral network within the travel nursing profession is exceptionally active — one satisfied guest can produce multiple future placements from the same hospital system.
- Demand is driven by a structural nursing shortage that shows no near-term resolution, providing durable occupancy fundamentals.

Challenges

- Contract-length turnover — every 13 weeks — is the most frequent of any segment and requires a marketing and leasing operation capable of sustained velocity.
 - Even brief vacancy between contracts represents meaningful revenue loss on premium-priced rooms.
 - Hospital proximity is a hard location constraint that limits which properties can serve this segment.
 - The fully furnished and equipped standard — including linens, towels, and stocked kitchen — requires upfront investment and ongoing operational maintenance.
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Guest Type 04 — Students

Profile

Student housing is the oldest established form of co-living, predating the contemporary terminology by decades. What distinguishes the current environment is the gap between enrollment growth and available off-campus supply — a gap that has widened at major institutions and shows no structural sign of resolving through conventional development.

Operators who treat students as a uniform demographic forfeit the most productive part of this market. There are four distinct student sub-types with materially different financial profiles and behavioral expectations. Undergraduates — 18 to 22, typically parent-funded or on financial aid — represent the highest lifestyle variability of any sub-type. Graduate and doctoral students present a fundamentally different profile: 24 to 35, frequently with prior professional experience, often international, and generally more financially stable. Professional students — medical, law, nursing, and MBA candidates — are disciplined and professionally oriented, requiring functional workspace and proximity to clinical or professional sites. International students represent one of the fastest-growing and most underserved sub-segments, exceeding one million enrolled in the U.S. in 2024, and facing acute barriers to conventional rental housing that co-living removes with precision.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The conventional apartment lease is structurally incompatible with how most students live. Move-in costs of \$4,000 to \$6,000 are prohibitive on student budgets. Twelve-month terms do not align with the academic calendar. Unfurnished units impose furnishing costs on a population that typically arrives without household goods. Co-living eliminates each of these frictions: flexible terms aligned to the academic calendar, all-inclusive pricing on a fixed disbursement or stipend, furnished rooms requiring nothing beyond personal belongings, and no U.S. credit history requirement for international applicants.

Summer vacancy is a genuine operational risk in student-focused properties and should be addressed before acquisition. Twelve-month agreements where practical, and active

recruitment of graduate and professional students who maintain year-round residency, provide structural mitigation.

Property Requirements

The functional core of a student room is the desk — a full-size work surface with adequate task lighting and reliable in-room internet access. A full or queen bed is the appropriate standard. A lockable bedroom door and adequate closet storage complete the baseline requirements.

In shared spaces, gigabit or near-gigabit internet service — reliable under the simultaneous load of multiple devices per resident — is as operationally essential as running water for this demographic. A clean, functional kitchen with reliable appliances and sufficient per-resident storage supports the meal preparation that student budgets necessitate.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

The highest-leverage marketing channel is the university itself — most major institutions operate or link to an official off-campus housing directory, and placement there carries institutional credibility no paid advertising replicates. A direct professional introduction to the International Student Services office is among the most productive single outreach actions available to an operator near a university with significant international enrollment. University-affiliated Facebook groups are high-velocity during peak housing search periods. Graduate school department email lists provide direct access to the most financially stable sub-types.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Demand is highly predictable, driven by fixed academic calendars that allow operators to plan leasing activity well in advance.
- The student pool near a major university is large, self-renewing each year, and not subject to economic cycle variation in the same way that workforce demand can be.
- International students represent an underserved sub-segment with high need and relatively few viable alternatives, making them consistently motivated applicants.
- Graduate and professional student sub-types produce long tenures and minimal management burden.

Challenges

- Summer vacancy is a structural challenge for properties that serve primarily undergraduates on academic-year terms.
 - Undergraduate households carry the highest lifestyle variability of any co-living segment, requiring more active management and clearer house rule enforcement.
 - Pricing is constrained by student budgets, particularly at the undergraduate level.
 - Campus proximity is a hard location requirement that limits acquisition flexibility and may increase property cost relative to the achievable rent.
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Guest Type 05 — Digital Nomads and Remote Workers

Profile

The U.S. digital nomad community exceeded 18 million individuals in 2025, having grown 147% since 2019. The median age is 36. Median annual income is \$85,000, with 35% of the population earning between \$100,000 and \$250,000. The dominant professional profiles include software development, creative services, financial services, and professional consulting. Ninety-one percent hold higher education credentials. This is a financially capable and professionally stable population making a deliberate geographic choice.

Remote work has decoupled employment from location for this population. They evaluate housing markets by cost of living relative to income, quality of life relative to alternatives, and flexibility of commitment relative to lifestyle needs. Markets where their income provides substantially greater purchasing power than coastal baselines — mid-size cities, secondary metros, and lifestyle markets with functional infrastructure — are disproportionately attractive to this segment.

A meaningful sub-segment is the tethered remote worker: a professional with an established primary residence who requires a consistent weekday base in a metropolitan area for professional purposes. Average stay duration has been increasing, reaching 6.4 weeks per location in 2025, a trend favorable for co-living operators as it extends average occupancy duration.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The value proposition for this guest is rational optimization. A furnished, all-inclusive co-living room in a market where cost of living falls meaningfully below coastal baselines represents a deliberate economic and lifestyle decision. Month-to-month terms preserve the geographic flexibility foundational to how this guest has structured their professional life. The shared household addresses the social isolation that sustained solo remote work in an unfamiliar location consistently generates.

Property Requirements

The work environment within the private bedroom is the most consequential property feature for this guest. A dedicated ergonomic desk and chair, a wired ethernet port for video communication, appropriate natural light, and sufficient power access for multiple active devices are functional requirements. A quality queen mattress and fresh bedding are expected but secondary in the guest's evaluation hierarchy.

The most important shared amenity is documented internet performance. The distinction between claiming "high-speed internet" and presenting verified speed test results stated in measurable terms is the difference between credibility and skepticism for this guest. A dedicated work surface in the common area provides the environmental variation that sustained remote work productivity often requires.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

Furnished Finder is the dominant platform for furnished, flexible mid-term rental housing in the U.S. market. Nomad List functions as the authoritative reference platform for geographic and housing intelligence within the digital nomad community internationally. City-specific nomad Facebook groups and remote work Discord servers are active channels where housing recommendations circulate within trusted peer networks.

Local coworking spaces represent a high-conversion marketing relationship. Listing messaging should prioritize specificity: actual internet speed in measurable terms, a photograph of the actual desk configuration, an honest description of the household culture, and walkability data to daily-use destinations. Generic claims perform poorly with a guest who conducts detailed pre-arrival research.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- This segment supports competitive pricing in markets where cost-of-living arbitrage is meaningful, and guests are financially capable of paying for quality.
- The trend toward longer stays per location is actively extending average tenancy in this segment, improving operating economics over time.
- Tethered remote workers in particular produce stable, predictable occupancy with minimal management demands.
- The segment is growing structurally as remote work becomes more normalized across professional categories.

Challenges

- This guest is highly selective and conducts detailed pre-arrival research — a property that does not meet documented standards will be passed over quickly.
 - Lease flexibility requirements limit the operator's ability to lock in occupancy for extended periods.
 - The segment concentrates in specific markets with established nomad infrastructure, limiting geographic applicability.
 - Guest turnover, while lower than travel nurses, is higher than workforce or silver living segments.
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Guest Type 06 — Silver Living Residents (55+)

Profile

Silver living — co-living designed specifically for active, independent adults in their mid-50s through mid-70s — sits at the intersection of two of the most significant demographic and

economic forces in the United States today: an unprecedented aging of the population and a housing affordability challenge affecting older adults with particular severity.

More than 70 million Americans are currently 65 or older. Approximately 10,000 Baby Boomers cross that threshold each day, and by 2030 all members of that generation will have done so. Fifty-eight percent of older renters are currently housing cost-burdened by standard measures. The senior housing market is bifurcated between luxury retirement communities averaging \$3,800 per month and subsidized low-income units with multi-year waiting lists. The middle market — serving active, independent older adults who can afford neither luxury senior living nor access subsidized programs — is substantially underserved. This is where silver co-living operates.

Four life events drive the majority of silver living transitions: the loss of a spouse or long-term partner, the sale of a family home following an empty nest, relocation toward adult children, and proactive lifestyle simplification by adults who choose to act before circumstances compel it. Adult children are frequently involved in the housing decision and in many cases initiate the inquiry. Effective marketing addresses both the guest, who needs to understand this as a financially rational and dignity-preserving choice, and the adult child, who needs assurance of safety and professional management.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The conventional housing market offers this guest two options that an increasing number find unacceptable: remain in a home they can no longer maintain or afford, or enter an institutional facility they neither want nor require. Co-living presents a third path: private accommodation, meaningful community with peers, financial relief, and continued independence — simultaneously. The operator who communicates this clearly is offering a resolution to a problem many in this demographic have been carrying without believing a solution existed.

Property Requirements

Accessibility is the most consequential design consideration for this segment and the one most frequently underestimated by operators. Ground-floor bedroom and bathroom access, or upper-floor accommodation with reliable elevator service, is a prerequisite. Walk-in showers with non-slip flooring and grab bars, strong overhead lighting, and beds at appropriate height for guests with mobility limitations are functional requirements. Platform beds should be avoided.

Bathroom access ratios matter more for this guest than for younger segments. A private en suite, where the property allows, justifies a meaningful pricing premium. In shared spaces, the dining table merits specific attention — sized to accommodate the full household for shared meals, which function as a genuine community-building mechanism. Outdoor space is used with daily regularity and its presence consistently improves retention. Formal quiet hours, clearly established and enforced, are an operational requirement for this segment.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

Senior centers and Area Agencies on Aging are institutionally trusted resources for this demographic and are frequently willing to include vetted housing options in their reference directories. Hospital and clinic social workers represent a particularly efficient referral channel. Faith communities carry significant credibility and reach with this population. AARP local chapters offer access to a qualified, self-directed audience actively researching housing options.

Facebook remains the primary social platform for adults over 55, and engagement through local senior community groups produces meaningful organic reach. Marketing language should emphasize dignity, financial practicality, and continued independence. Institutional language and anything that implies diminished capacity should be avoided entirely.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Silver living guests produce the longest average tenure of any co-living segment — a guest who finds a good fit may stay two to five years, dramatically reducing turnover cost and marketing expenditure.
- Payment reliability is strong; most in this segment are on fixed incomes with established financial discipline.
- Demand is structural and growing, driven by demographic forces that will only intensify through the next decade.
- This segment is almost entirely underserved by existing co-living operators, meaning early movers face limited direct competition.

Challenges

- Property requirements are more prescriptive than any other segment — accessibility features, ground-floor access, and bathroom configuration are hard requirements that may require meaningful renovation investment.
 - Management is more communication-intensive than younger segments; this guest expects responsive, respectful engagement and will not tolerate being treated as a low priority.
 - Mixed-age houses require deliberate culture management; without it, age mismatch produces friction and early departure.
 - The marketing ecosystem for this segment requires relationship-building with institutional referral sources, which takes time to develop and cannot be shortcut with paid advertising.
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Guest Type 07 — Sober Living Residents

Profile

Sober living is structured, substance-free shared housing for individuals who have completed a formal treatment program and are in the early stages of recovery from substance use disorder. It is not a treatment facility. Sober living homes do not provide clinical services, administer medical care, or deliver therapeutic programming. What they provide is a structured, accountable, peer-supported residential environment that bridges the transition between intensive treatment and fully independent living.

Recovery research is consistent on this point: the social environment a person inhabits immediately following treatment is one of the strongest predictors of sustained sobriety. Sober living housing addresses relapse risk by establishing a new environment with new social norms, peer accountability, and a clear structure of expectations. The housing is a material component of the recovery process, not a backdrop to it.

The guest profile spans adults between 18 and 55, with peak intake between 25 and 40. Common referral sources include treatment center discharge planners, courts and probation departments, family members, and social workers. Typical stay duration is 6 to 12 months, with research consistently showing that longer stays produce significantly better recovery outcomes.

Why Co-Living Serves This Guest

The co-living structure is not a context in which sober living operates — it is the operational foundation of the model. Shared housing creates the peer accountability, daily community contact, and consistent behavioral expectations that early recovery requires. The house meeting, the shared meal, the house manager maintaining standards — these are the mechanism by which the residential environment functions as a recovery support. An operator entering sober living should understand that they are not simply renting rooms. They are managing an environment on which residents' long-term health outcomes depend in material ways.

Property Requirements

The physical standard for sober living is functional, clean, and deliberately uncluttered. Private bedrooms with lockable doors are standard, though shared rooms accommodating two residents are common at lower price points. Where shared rooms are employed, individually lockable storage for medications and valuables is a non-negotiable requirement. House manager accommodation is a functional operational necessity at most certification levels.

The common living area must be large enough to accommodate the full household for mandatory weekly house meetings. A dining table sized to seat all residents supports communal meals as a structured accountability and community-building tool. Transit access to recovery meeting locations, outpatient services, and employment is close to a universal requirement — most residents arrive without personal transportation.

Operators entering this space should understand the NARR framework — the National Alliance for Recovery Residences — before acquiring a property. NARR certifies sober living homes at four levels. Level II certification is the appropriate target for most new operators: it requires a paid house manager, regular and documented drug testing, mandatory recovery meeting attendance, and codified house rules. NARR certification is the professional credential that treatment centers and courts require before referring guests — without it, the primary referral pipelines are effectively closed.

Marketing and Where to Find This Guest

The primary marketing strategy for sober living is the systematic development of professional relationships with the clinical and legal community that generates referrals. Treatment center discharge planners, outpatient program coordinators, and court-affiliated social workers are the referral sources that sustain occupancy. These relationships are built on demonstrated competence, NARR certification, consistent communication, and reliability.

Drug courts and county probation departments place a meaningful volume of court-mandated residents in certified homes. The SAMHSA [findtreatment.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment) directory and state-level recovery housing registries should be maintained with current listings. AA and NA community networks function as active mutual aid systems where housing recommendations circulate. Marketing communications directed at referral sources should emphasize NARR certification level, house manager credentials, drug testing protocol, and house rules structure.

Operator Pros and Cons

Advantages

- Demand is driven by referral pipelines rather than advertising, which — once established — produces consistent occupancy with minimal ongoing marketing cost.
- A well-certified, well-managed sober living home becomes a preferred referral destination for multiple treatment centers, courts, and clinicians simultaneously, creating a durable occupancy moat.
- This segment is protected by federal Fair Housing Act provisions that limit local zoning interference, providing legal stability that other housing types do not always enjoy.
- Per-bed revenue is consistent, and when the home is well-run, resident retention tends to be longer than operators expect.

Challenges

- Regulatory and compliance requirements are more extensive than any other co-living segment — NARR certification, drug testing documentation, house manager oversight, and ongoing standards maintenance represent real operational overhead.
- House manager recruitment and retention is a persistent challenge; this is a specialized role requiring personal recovery experience and conflict resolution capability that not all candidates possess.
- Guest instability — relapses, involuntary discharges, and the personal crises that accompany early recovery — creates operational disruption not present in other segments.
- Operators who are not prepared for the sustained human weight of this work should not enter this segment.

PART FOUR: OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES ACROSS ALL GUEST TYPES

Housemate Matching as a Core Competency

No operational decision carries more weight on guest satisfaction and retention than the composition of the household. A well-matched house — residents with compatible schedules, cleanliness standards, noise tolerances, and general lifestyle orientation — tends to function with minimal management intervention. A mismatched house generates complaints, early departures, and reputational damage that compounds over time.

Effective matching requires asking the right questions during the application process, presenting applicants with an honest description of the current household, and exercising the discipline to decline a guest who would be a poor fit even when a room is vacant and revenue pressure is real. The short-term cost of a delayed fill is consistently less damaging than the long-term consequences of a household that does not function.

Month-to-Month Terms Are the Appropriate Standard

Across the substantial majority of the seven guest types examined in this paper, month-to-month occupancy is the appropriate and operationally sound term structure. This is not a weakness of the co-living model — it is the structural feature that makes it relevant to the populations it serves. A well-managed, properly priced co-living property does not depend on lease constraints for retention. It depends on quality. Residents who have a genuinely good experience remain. Those who do not will leave regardless of what they have signed, producing outcomes — unpaid final months, property disputes, and legal proceedings — that are uniformly worse than an honest month-to-month arrangement honestly administered.

Pricing Calibrated to the Guest Type

Each guest type carries a distinct price sensitivity profile, and pricing architecture appropriate to one segment will produce suboptimal results in another. Workforce guests cannot absorb rates above their income ceiling. Travel nurses are funded by tax-free housing stipends and will pay for quality — underpricing this segment is a frequent error that leaves material revenue on the table. Young professionals are rational comparison shoppers who evaluate all-in cost against the alternative of a solo apartment. Silver living guests are more sensitive to pricing stability than pricing level — consistent rates build trust in a way that unpredictable increases destroy. Sober living pricing is constrained by the income reality of residents in early recovery and, in some states, by Medicaid reimbursement frameworks.

Occupancy consistently above 95% is generally a signal of underpricing. Vacancy exceeding 10% warrants evaluation of both the pricing and the marketing strategy.

Technology Infrastructure as a Baseline Expectation

Smart locks, digital payment systems, mesh Wi-Fi networks, and digital maintenance request channels are not differentiating features in 2026 — they are the operational baseline that residents across all seven guest types expect. Operators who have not established this infrastructure are at a competitive disadvantage regardless of segment. The implementation

cost is modest relative to the operational efficiency gained and the professional credibility it signals to guests making a housing decision based in part on how seriously the operator takes their responsibilities.

CLOSING

Co-living is a practical, flexible, and financially rational housing solution for people who cannot absorb the cost of a full apartment or whose circumstances make a long-term lease commitment impractical. It is not a hospitality concept. It is not a lifestyle brand. It is a place to live — and the people who choose it deserve an operator who approaches that responsibility with clarity, professionalism, and genuine understanding of who they are.

The seven guest types examined in this paper are not marketing abstractions. They are populations with specific financial realities, specific physical requirements, and specific reasons for choosing shared housing. Each of those reasons makes complete sense given their circumstances. When an operator understands those circumstances with precision, every subsequent decision — what to acquire, where to acquire it, how to configure and price it, and how to reach the right guest — becomes materially more tractable.

The most capable co-living operators are not necessarily those who found the most favorable acquisition. They are those who built the clearest understanding of their guest, and then built everything else around that understanding.

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