



# CONNECTIONS

## Joshua Fulenwider Joins Connections

Connections for Independent Living welcomes Joshua Fulenwider as our Director of Independent Living Services. The University of Northern Colorado graduate served as a member of our board of directors for two years prior to applying for the position.

“Connections for Independent Living is important to me because I have seen the barriers my cousin faced growing up and living with cerebral palsy,” said Fulenwider. “The mission of Connections became so important to me that I jumped on the opportunity to become more involved. We’ve achieved so much, but there is still so much more that needs to be done.”

Executive Director Rochelle Mitchell-Miller led the search for a director to manage and lead our largest department. “Josh had been an incredibly valuable board member during his tenure. His background in finance and business are huge assets to our agency,” Mitchell-Miller said. “Although we will miss his contributions at the board level, I know our independent living team will appreciate his leadership, and his strong interest to provide assistance to our consumers, and I am grateful to have him as a leader full-time.”

Tasked with the operational management of all Independent Living programs for Connections, Fulenwider supervises a team of seven specialists who work directly with the public. Fulenwider spent seven years with two Greeley-area banks serving customers. He also is well-connected with Weld County Chambers of Commerce, recreation groups and non-profit organizations.

Fulenwider considers providing assistance to persons who live with disabling conditions as a process to improve the lives of his northeastern Colorado neighbors. “Many of the things that the rest of the world takes for granted requires extra steps and/or navigating complicated governmental bureaucracy for those who live with disabilities,” said Fulenwider. “I have become heavily invested in the peer-to-peer support system that Connections works with daily.”



Courtesy Joshua Fulenwider

Connections' Joshua Fulenwider.

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### Our Organization

Established in 1986, Connections for Independent Living is one of nine certified Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the State of Colorado. We serve Weld, Morgan, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties. All our services are free and voluntary for our valued consumers.

## Connections Cares Resumes

Connections has resumed our weekly on-site *Connections Cares* program. It is designed for persons who live with disabilities in northeastern Colorado who have not been able to be fully accommodated by our remote and online services.

Continuing each Friday from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., trained independent living and housing specialists will be on hand at our Greeley office to provide personal assistance and guidance.



Joshua Fuhlenwider

The program began in October to provide limited personal assistance to qualifying residents in a fully outdoor environment. After a winter hiatus, the program resumed with limited indoor services by appointment or by checking in at an outdoor tent.

Through the program, persons who live with disabling conditions can receive assistance in housing options, arranging for a COVID-19 vaccination, and determining if they qualify for SSI/SSDI financial benefits. In addition, complimentary pantry boxes of supplemental food will be available for residents of northeastern Colorado living with a disability who are in need, along with face masks for COVID-19 safety.

“Providing 97 percent of our services remotely for the past year has been widely successful, yet it does fall short on some in-person necessities,” said Rochelle Mitchell-Miller, Executive Director. “Connections Cares gives a one-stop-shop for our highest demand in-person services and I am grateful to our innovative team for coming up with this solution for our community.”

## Computer Technology Program Offers Assistance

The State of Colorado Department of Human Services’ *Communications Technology Program* provides communications resources and tools at no charge to qualified deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind persons.

Connections is an authorized demonstration center for this program. Available equipment includes amplified and captioned telephones, smartphones and tablets, along with ring signalers and neck loops, or headsets and specialized equipment. This technology provides an individual with access to family members, and to the community at large.

If you have interest in participating in a free, no-obligation demonstration of available equipment, please contact Connections at (970) 352-8682. Currently, demonstrations are presented online by video conferencing. In-person sessions at our Greeley office can be arranged at our *Connections Cares* sessions.



Courtesy State of Colorado

## Connections Joins *Unite Colorado* Network

An innovative coordinated care network of health and social care providers is expanding in Colorado this spring. Connections is joining as a member of the *Unite Colorado* network, which will allow our Independent Living Specialists to send and receive electronic referrals for consumers in need of assistance.



Part of the national *Unite Us* network, Colorado’s network launched in the Denver metropolitan area. The expansion to Morgan and Weld counties this March allows Connections to participate.

The *Unite Colorado* network allows our team to refer consumers to other Colorado member organizations providing services outside our mission. Other *Unite Colorado* members can refer individuals who live with disabling conditions to Connections.

## Connections Peer Support Groups

### ANXIETY SUPPORT GROUP

Participants share information about how they cope with anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD). This group meets every third Thursday from 2–3 p.m. MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsAnxiety](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsAnxiety) passcode **549156**

📞 dial **253-215-8782**; using your keypad, enter **86218709472#**, **0#**, **549156#**.

### CHRONIC PAIN/ILLNESS PEER SUPPORT

A support group for those living with chronic pain and illness. Group meets every first Thursday of the month from 3–4:30 p.m. MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsChronicPain](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsChronicPain) passcode **565101**

📞 dial **346-248-7799**; using your keypad, enter **83030138798#**, **0#**, **565101#**.

### LOW VISION PEER SUPPORT

Learn about and share strategies for living with low vision or blindness. This group meets every fourth Tuesday from 11 a.m. –12 noon MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsLowVision](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsLowVision) passcode **289228**

📞 dial **669-900-6833**; using your keypad, enter **81692498500#**, **0#**, **289228#**.

### SELF-ADVOCACY PEER SUPPORT GROUP

This is a participant lead group that teaches people how to advocate for themselves. This group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10–11 a.m. MST.

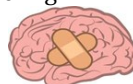


📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsSelf-Advocacy](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsSelf-Advocacy) passcode **752016**

📞 dial **669-900-6833**, using your keypad, enter **84949531378#**, **0#**, **752016#**.

### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

The Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group is a peer support group offering information and support to individuals who have experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or any other type of brain injury. Caregivers are welcome. This group meets the second Monday of each month from 1–2 p.m. MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsTraumatic](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsTraumatic) (no passcode)

📞 dial **253-215-8782**; using your keypad, enter **87692062801#**, #.

### SOCIAL GROUP

This informal group is for individuals who live with a disabling condition to socialize and discuss any topic they choose. The group meets every second Friday of the month, from 1–2 p.m. MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsSocialGroup](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsSocialGroup) passcode **279168**

📞 dial **669-900-6833**; using your keypad, enter **8723976380#**, **0#**, **279168#**.

### WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT GROUP

A safe environment for women to support each other. This group meets the fourth Friday of every month from 2–3 p.m. MDT.



📍 [bit.ly/ConnectionsWomenDisabilities](https://bit.ly/ConnectionsWomenDisabilities) passcode **373583**

📞 dial **346-248-7799**; using your keypad, enter **89197179026#**, **0#**, **383583#**.

## NEWS & NOTES

The expansion of the COVID-19 vaccination program in Colorado is greatly increasing the number of eligible residents. For consumers joining the hunt for appointments, remember Connections' Independent Living Specialists can be of assistance in this process. If you need transportation to or from an appointment, we can help, too.

If you have a new computer, or are struggling with an older model, Connections' TechMate program can offer help. Our Technology Services page online includes a form to schedule assistance in computer issues. Or, give us a call.

Amtrak has been directed in a recent court decision to update and reconstruct inaccessible stations that are violating the ADA. Colorado's Fort Morgan station is included. If you were affected by this station, you can file a claim for a share of the \$2.25 million settlement fund. Contact us at (970) 352-8682 for details.

Are you a Facebook user? Follow our Connections page at [facebook.com/CIlgreeley/](https://facebook.com/CIlgreeley/) for regular updates about our organization, and information about persons with disabilities.

Connections is published bi-monthly by Connections for Independent Living and distributed at no cost to care consumers, followers, supporters, and partners. **Rochelle Miller**—Executive Director; **Joshua Fulenwider**—Director of Independent Living Services; **Anne Yanez**—Finance Associate; **Sarah Augenstein**—Director of Interpreting; **Richard Rhinehart**—Director of Communications and Editor. Send change of address to Connections, 1331 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., Greeley, CO 80631-4601.

Explore our full program calendar online at [connectionscolorado.org!](https://connectionscolorado.org/)

## Connections for Independent Living

1331 8th Ave  
Greeley, CO 80631-4601

Phone: (970) 352-8682  
Fax: (970) 353-8058  
E-mail: [info@connections4il.org](mailto:info@connections4il.org)



**CONNECTIONS**  
Challenge Barriers. Build Independence.

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

### About Connections for Independent Living

Our mission is to promote the full inclusion and integration of people with all types of disabilities into all levels of society. We challenge barriers, both physical and attitudinal, which restrict the rights and personal development opportunities of people with disabilities. With a staff and board of directors that consists mostly of persons with disabilities, we are effective in promoting independent living and empowerment.

## Connections Transitions is Ready to Help

Are you, or someone you know, a participant or resident in a northeastern Colorado group living home or a nursing facility? For individuals who are ready to move to independent living, Connections can be of assistance.

Brad Taylor, Connections' Transition Community Director and Legislation Advocate, reports that making the transition to independent living is not an impossible process. Brad and Transition Coordinator Peggy Garcia have many years of experience. They can help a candidate determine whether independent living is suitable, and if it is, provide assistance and guidance.

To begin a conversation about whether a transition is right for you, a friend, a relative, or a colleague, give us a call at (970) 352-8982. Or, visit us online at [connectionscolorado.org/transition-services/](http://connectionscolorado.org/transition-services/) to review our Frequently Asked Questions, and to complete and submit our no-obligation pre-transition form.



Jessica Standiford

Brad Taylor, Connections  
Transition Community Director/  
Legislation Advocate.