

## Creating a safe haven for parents and kids.

ACCESS Housing steps up security for families in its transitional shelter program with AXIS Companion video surveillance solution.



**Organization:**

ACCESS Housing

**Location:**

Commerce City, Colorado, USA

**Application:**

Safety and security

**Axis partner:**

Security 101

### Mission

ACCESS Housing knew its failing analog camera system needed replacing if the organization was to adequately protect families relying on its eight-apartment property for transitional shelter. A member of the Board of Directors began looking for a new system with high-resolution video, user-friendly software and 24/7 reliability.

### Solution

Security 101, a system integrator and Axis partner, set up a web of 10 AXIS Companion IP cameras that would easily enable staff to monitor the building's perimeter, courtyard, playground and apartment entryways. The HDTV-resolution cameras plus one eight-channel and one four-channel AXIS Companion Recorders are controlled by AXIS Companion video management software residing on staff desktops and smartphones.

### Result

ACCESS Housing now has a security system in place that truly provides peace of mind for the residents and staff of the nonprofit. The Axis cameras are helping deter outsiders from sneaking onto the property or illegally tossing trash in the dumpsters. And because the cameras can be accessed remotely, staff can keep an eye on the property even when they're not on the premises.



## Giving transitional shelter to families in crisis

ACCESS Housing was founded in 1983 to address the homelessness crisis in Adams County, Colorado. In addition to transitional shelter, ACCESS Housing provides families with children a range of support services (food, household furnishings, rental and utility assistance, crisis counseling, etc.) and advocacy programs (life skills training, parenting classes, case management, etc.) to help them regain control over their lives and make the transition to permanent housing.

"Whatever trauma the family is currently working through within the household," says Kurt Jones, Board of Directors member and volunteer for ACCESS Housing, "Our goal is to give them a safe space to live with some sense of normalcy and privacy."

One of the living quarters supported by ACCESS Housing is a two-story apartment building in the heart of a residential neighborhood in Commerce City, a northern suburb of Denver. Up to 50 families a year find transitional shelter in the eight two-bedroom units, most staying between 60 and 90 days. To ensure the safety and security of residents, ACCESS Housing installed security cameras to monitor the property. Over time, the old analog cameras and DVR recorder began to degrade and eventually fail, triggering the search for a new security system.

### Gaining new clarity for security awareness

Because ACCESS Housing staff focuses on the needs of the families full-time, every day, it was important that the new solution be simple to use. Equally important was video clarity. If an incident occurred, staff wanted to be able to capture distinctive characteristics of individuals and/or vehicles and pass those details to local law enforcement if necessary.

The solution that Security 101 presented used the building's existing infrastructure to install 10 high-definition AXIS Companion network cameras throughout the property. On each floor an AXIS Companion Dome V Network Camera monitors four apartment entryways. Because the cameras feature wide dynamic range, they deliver crisp images even under complex light conditions.

AXIS Companion Bullet LE cameras mounted outside the building keep watch over the main entrance, back parking lot and fence line, the courtyard and the playground. The outdoor cameras feature Wide Dynamic Range as well as built-in IR illumination for recording even in total darkness. Both models are vandal-resistant, record on motion and support advanced Axis Zipstream compression technology for maximum recording time.

"We were very strategic in where we placed the cameras," says Jones. "It was important for us that we secure the safety of our residents as well as our neighbors."

The 10 cameras stream to two AXIS Companion Recorders – one with four channels, the other with eight. Intuitive AXIS Companion video management software makes it easy for staff to monitor live video and review stored video from a desktop or smartphone.

"Having remote access to the video from our smartphones is a big bonus," shares Jones. "Now we can stay connected to the property even when staff isn't on the premises, something we could never do with our old system."





### Keeping close watch on potential problems

Since the apartment building caters to families with children, oftentimes these families have endured significant trauma and are especially vulnerable. As such, staff relies on the cameras to help them be extra vigilant about security. "You can imagine a scenario where a visitor might come onto the property late at night, which could jeopardize the safety of the shelter community," suggests Jones.

Jones says the video system helps all parties be accountable for their actions and behavior while on the property and interacting with the residents. In the past there have been reported incidents where visitors were coming onto the property via the backyard (where there were accessible windows) which did not have camera security at the time. "This posed a security risk to residents which needed to be addressed," says Jones. The new Axis setup has reduced this risk considerably and provides the residents greater peace of mind regarding their safety.

Jones feels that having the Axis cameras at the front of the property has also helped curtail illegal dumping. "Providing visual evidence of the make, model, color and even the license plate of the vehicle backing up to our dumpsters gives law enforcement the details they need to take action," says Jones.

One use for the Axis cameras that ACCESS Housing hadn't foreseen was the ability to remotely monitor property damage caused by inclement weather. "One weekend we had some high winds that blew down a chunk of our fence," tells Jones. "No staff was on the premises at the time, but one of them happened to check on the property from her smartphone and saw the damage. So she started calling contractors to schedule repairs."

Jones anticipates in the wintertime this kind of remote monitoring will help staff stay on top of plowing and sanding to mitigate the risk of residents slipping and falling on icy pathways.

### Looking down the road

ACCESS Housing currently maintains two other transitional shelters in Adams County. Given the success of the AXIS Companion solution in the Commerce City apartment building, the organization hopes to roll out the solution to those other properties in the future.

**"One of the biggest benefits of the AXIS Companion solution is mobility. If a resident calls the emergency number after hours, we can pull up the video from our laptops at home or on our smartphones and see what's going on."**

**Kurt Jones, Board of Directors member and volunteer for ACCESS Housing.**



# About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on the NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

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