
CASE STUDY

A guide to altering **renewal rates** through maintenance

How service quality drives resident retention — a case study in maintenance-driven renewal improvement.

A JOINT PUBLICATION BY

**01 THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

Why maintenance **predicts renewal**

This paper builds on Property Meld's published research, *The Maintenance–Renewal Connection: How Service Quality Drives Resident Retention* (Vol. 1, 2025).

That study analyzed **110,048 first-year residents** and **256,687 work orders** and established a single, clear finding: maintenance experience is the strongest predictor of lease renewal across all operational factors. What follows is not a re-statement of that research — it is the story of what one operator did with it, and what happened as a result.

The three findings most relevant to Atlas's implementation

01**Churn gap**

Residents with optimal maintenance churn at **20%**. Those with service gaps churn at **33.6%** — a **68% relative increase** in departure risk.

02**First 90 days**

First-quarter maintenance experience predicts annual retention with **73% accuracy**. AC, heating, and water repairs in this window increase churn likelihood by **67–98%**.

03**Assignment speed**

Residents who churned waited **4–21% longer** for maintenance requests to be assigned. Heating system requests showed the most extreme delay at **21.3% longer**.

Repair severity and churn — the direct relationship

First-year churn rate by maintenance experience · Property Meld Research Vol. 1

Optimal maintenance experience**20.0%****Service gaps present****33.6%**

■ Optimal — 20% churn ■ Service gaps — 33.6% churn (+68% relative)

Source: Property Meld Research Vol. 1 · 110,048 first-year residents · Full report available at propertymeld.com



The question this paper answers

The research told us what the data showed industry-wide. Atlas Home Services asked: what happens when you actually build an operational system around those findings? The sections that follow document the system Atlas built, the results it produced, and the specific steps any operator can take to replicate it.

02 HOW ATLAS HOME SERVICES IMPLEMENTED THIS

Building **the system**

Atlas Home Services manages a multi-state portfolio across Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, and Utah. In late 2024, Atlas adopted Property Meld and simultaneously built an operational framework directly targeting the research findings above. The program — framed internally as a 2026 initiative to reduce churn and increase renewals through maintenance — had **five interconnected components**.

“Honestly, it wasn't a hard decision once I read it. The data was too clean to ignore, 110,000 residents; the churn gap was 68% wider for residents with service gaps, and the first 90 days predicted full-year retention at 73% accuracy. That's not a correlation you file away. That's an operating model. The question wasn't whether to take it seriously. The question was whether we were going to build a real system around it or just talk about it in a meeting and move on.

— Roberto Martinez, VP AHS

THE OPT-IN DISTINCTION

Full enrollment vs. a limited arrangement

Opt-In properties are enrolled in Atlas's full maintenance management program — with active Maintenance Coordinators, structured workflows, and Property Meld applied as designed. Opt-Out properties receive a more limited arrangement. The renewal data makes the value of full enrollment unmistakable, and the gap between the two groups widened from 2024 to 2025.



Component 1 – The 90-day resident review system

The research is clear: the first 90 days determine the trajectory of a lease. Atlas's response was to build a formal, mandatory review structure around this window — embedded into every Daily Stand-Up (DSU) meeting.

- MCs come prepared with a segmented 30/60/90-day resident list, active Melds per resident, and a turn-vs-non-turn read on every open issue.
- PMs push all open work orders for sub-90-day residents toward resolution within 24–48 hours without exception.
- A five-touch proactive outreach cadence runs for every new resident through the first 90 days: weeks 1 and 2, months 1, 2, and 3 — independent of whether a Meld exists.

“ It was interesting to realize that two teams working within the same maintenance portfolios weren't communicating as frequently as we had assumed. Once we began bringing those teams closer together, AHS started showing up to these calls as a unified front, equipped with updates and the information Property Managers needed to make decisions. This improved communication helped accelerate both the approval process and overall completion timelines. Before long, these interactions evolved into natural day-to-day conversations and became part of the team's regular workflow.

— Melanie Gallegos, Maintenance Operations Manager

Component 2 – Property notes as a deferred maintenance register

Atlas identified a structural problem: owners who defer certain items at turn create a predictable cascade — those same items generate Melds within the first 90 days of new residency. Without a tracking system, MCs face an impossible position: a new resident reports a problem, and the honest answer is that the owner chose not to address it at turn.

- TCs document all deferred or owner-excluded items in property notes at turn completion — the live reference for MCs.
- When a new-resident Meld matches a documented deferred item, the MC manages communication via the note — keeping expectations accurate, and the item out of active scope.
- The documentation creates a proactive owner lever: connect the deferred item to the incoming Meld, and make a data-supported case for resolving it.



Component 3 – Role-specific responsibilities

The system only works when each role owns a defined slice of it. Atlas assigned explicit, non-overlapping responsibilities across the three roles closest to the resident experience.

PMPROPERTY
MANAGER

Weekly 90-day review at DSU. All active Melds for sub-90-day residents resolved within 24–48 hrs. Execute 5-touch outreach cadence. When deferred items surface as Melds, brief owners on retention impact.

MCMAINTENANCE
COORDINATOR

Maintain live 30/60/90-day resident list. Sub-90-day Melds = emergency-level priority, same-day contact. Check property notes before dispatching on any new-resident Meld. Route go-backs to TC, not re-dispatched as new scope.

TCTURN
COORDINATOR

Document all deferred items in property notes at every turn. Monthly PM review of turns, missed items, and go-backs. 24-hour action plan for all go-backs. Review turn scope alongside MC when new-resident Melds may relate to turn work.



A big part of reducing early-stage churn is how we handle work orders that come in during a resident's first 30 days. Since those items were likely missed on our initial and final walks, we route them straight to our Turn Team instead of through general Repair & Maintenance. Our Turn Team gets direct feedback on what they missed, and because we resolve these work orders within 24 hours of the resident reporting them, the resident feels heard and taken care of right away. It's a win for the Turn Team, our vendors, the owners, and the resident – which is exactly what moves the needle on renewals.

— Amy Sjonost, Regional Construction Manager, AHS



Components 4 & 5 – Preventative maintenance and owner alignment

For the JV portfolio, Atlas implemented seasonal HVAC servicing across all homes, plus comprehensive plumbing service at every turn. The owner engagement strategy then turns that operational rigor into data each owner can see in their own portfolio.

SEASONAL HVAC — SPRING

- Coil cleaning
- Capacitor checks
- Refrigerant service
- Filter change

SEASONAL HVAC — FALL

- Ignition / safety controls
- Heat exchanger inspection
- Gas pressure check
- Burner cleaning

PLUMBING SERVICE AT ALL TURNS

Drain snaking, leak checks, water heater flush and drain, and pressure relief valve inspection — performed as a standard part of every turn, before a new resident moves in.

COMPONENT 5 — OWNER ALIGNMENT

News becomes relevant when it hits home

The owner engagement strategy centers on a key insight: owners respond to data connected directly to their own properties. Rather than presenting industry statistics in the abstract, PMs identify specific non-renewals at each owner's properties and connect the dots explicitly.



03 THE RESULTS

Atlas renewal data: 2024 vs. 2025

Atlas's renewal data covers **3,504 first-year renewal decisions** across 2024 and 2025, segmented by Opt-In and Opt-Out status. Both groups declined year-over-year — a market-wide pattern — but the critical finding is the **differential rate of decline**. The Opt-In advantage grew from 10.2 percentage points in 2024 to 13.6 points in 2025.

GROUP	2024 TOTAL	2024 RENEWAL	2025 TOTAL	2025 RENEWAL	YOY CHANGE
OPT-IN 1st Year	1,954	90.4%	902	83.1%	-7.3%
OPT-OUT 1st Year	415	80.2%	233	69.5%	-10.7%
OPT-IN All Tenures	2,182	91.4%	1,081	85.4%	-6.0%
OPT-OUT All Tenures	468	82.5%	299	75.3%	-7.2%

Source: Atlas Home Services Renewal Summary. Opt-In = properties enrolled in full Property Meld maintenance management program.

2024 ADVANTAGE

+10.2pp

Opt-In vs. Opt-Out first-year renewal gap.

2025 ADVANTAGE

+13.6pp

The gap widened in a declining market.

OPT-IN Y1 RENEWAL

83.1%

vs. 69.5% for Opt-Out properties in 2025.

Properties without structured maintenance management didn't merely fail to improve — they fell further behind. The maintenance management advantage is a **structural buffer** against market-wide headwinds.

Source: Atlas Home Services, 2024–2025 completed cohorts.



The gap widened – in a declining market

Opt-Out properties declined **10.7pp** in first-year renewal (80.2% → 69.5%). Opt-In properties declined only **7.3pp** (90.4% → 83.1%).

“It told me that the system was real. Anyone can show improvement in a good market. What you can't fake is holding ground when the market is pulling everything down. Our Opt-Out properties dropped 10.7 points year-over-year. Our Opt-In properties dropped by 7.3. Arizona Opt-In was essentially flat. It also told me something about the team. The DSU reviews, the property notes discipline, the proactive outreach; those aren't glamorous. Seeing them show up in the renewal numbers validated that the team was actually executing, not just nodding at a new process.”

— Roberto Martinez, VP AHS

State-level results: Arizona as the proof point

Arizona – where the Opt-In program is most fully implemented – is the only market where renewal rates held essentially **flat year-over-year (+0.3%)**. Colorado Opt-Out fell 9.8% in the same period.

STATE	SEGMENT	2024 RENEWAL	2025 RENEWAL	YOY CHANGE
Arizona	OPT-IN	90.7%	91.0%	+0.3% ★
Arizona	OPT-OUT	88.4%	72.7%	-15.7%
Colorado	OPT-IN	87.6%	80.5%	-7.1%
Colorado	OPT-OUT	77.8%	68.0%	-9.8%
Nevada	OPT-IN	98.5%	88.3%	-10.2%
Idaho	OPT-IN	95.5%	92.3%	-3.2%
Missouri	OPT-IN	94.0%	82.6%	-11.4%

★ Arizona Opt-In is the only segment to hold flat year-over-year. Source: Atlas Home Services.

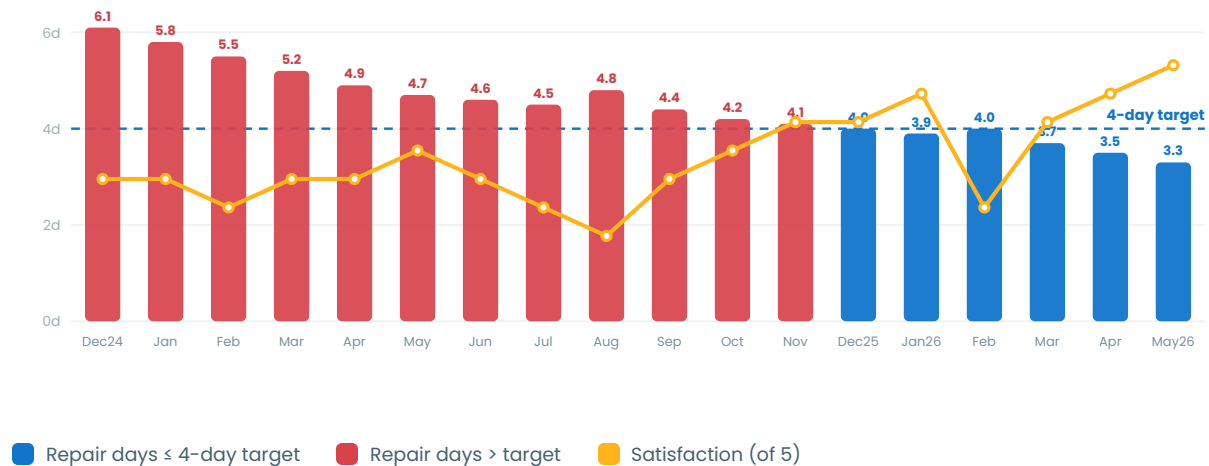


Maintenance performance: speed and satisfaction

Median repair time peaked at **6.1 days** in December 2024 and improved to **3.3 days** by May 2026 — a **46% reduction**. Every month since December 2025 has hit the 4-day benchmark. Satisfaction followed the same curve.

Median repair time & resident satisfaction

Dec 2024 → May 2026 · bars = repair days (4-day target) · line = satisfaction (4.0 target)



Key observations

SPEED IMPROVED 46%

From 6.1d (Dec 2024) to 3.3d (May 2026). Every month since Dec 2025 at or below the 4-day benchmark.

SATISFACTION & SPEED CORRELATE

The 3.7/5 low in Aug 2025 aligns exactly with above-benchmark repair times. As speed improved, satisfaction climbed to a record 4.3/5.

2025 COHORT ALIGNMENT

Residents moving in during the fastest-repair period are tracking at 73.5% Y1 renewal — the first upward signal above the 69–70% baseline.

FEB 2026 NOTE

Satisfaction dipped to 3.8 despite 4.0-day repairs — a reminder that speed alone doesn't fully explain satisfaction. Communication quality matters too.

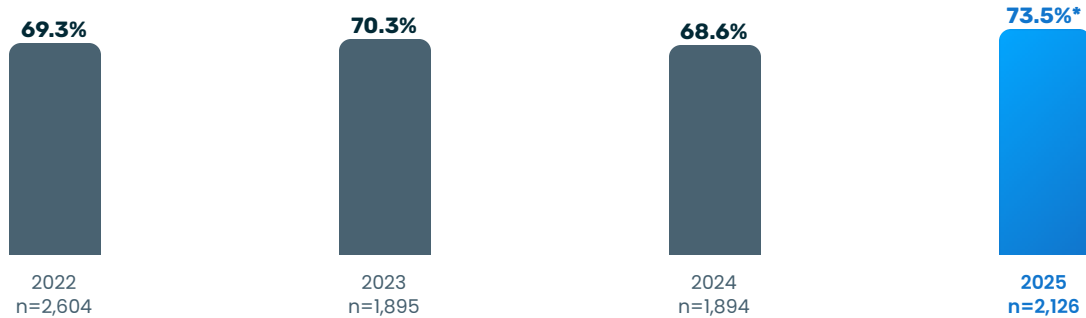


Year 1 renewal by move-in cohort

Atlas tracks renewal rates across **8,519 residents from 2022–2025**. Y1 renewal was stable at ~69–70% across all pre-Meld cohorts. The 2025 cohort — first to experience Property Meld from move-in — is tracking at an early **73.5%** (535 of 2,126 first leases matured).

Year 1 renewal rate by move-in cohort

Pre-Meld baseline ~69–70% · 2025 first cohort fully on Property Meld



*2025 partial: 535 of 2,126 first leases have ended. Full cohort matures through 2026.

Full cohort summary: Y1, Y2, Y3 & maintenance metrics

YEAR	TOTAL	Y1 RATE	Y2 (24+MO)	Y3 (36+MO)	AVG REPAIR	AVG SAT.	STILL ACTIVE
2022	2,604	69.3%	45.7%	30.3%	pre-data	pre-data	586 (22.5%)
2023	1,895	70.3%	50.5%	36.2%*	pre-data	pre-data	646 (34.1%)
2024	1,894	68.6%	45.0%*	too early	4.7d ↑	3.9 ↓	879 (46.4%)
2025	2,126	73.5%*	too early	too early	3.8d	4.1	1,678 (78.9%)

↑ above target · ↓ below target · *partial · 2025 = first cohort fully on Property Meld.



Financial impact: from retention to revenue

A 4-percentage-point improvement in renewal rate translates to **\$1,263.20 saved per unit per year** — generated entirely by avoiding turnovers and retaining rent revenue.

PER UNIT / PER YEAR

\$1,263.20

Driven by 70% → 74% renewal

Turnover cost avoided **\$563.20**

Rent loss avoided **\$700.00**

Basis **4pp improvement**

$\$1,800/\text{mo avg rent} \cdot \$2,500 \text{ turnover} \cdot 45\text{-day vacancy } (\$2,700) \cdot \$400 \text{ leasing} = \$5,600/\text{turnover}.$

Portfolio scaling

The per-unit benefit compounds with portfolio size and time. At any scale, the recurring annual figure is multiplied across the holding period.

PORTFOLIO	ANNUAL	3-YEAR	5-YEAR
1 unit	\$1,263	\$3,790	\$6,316
5 units	\$6,316	\$18,948	\$31,580
20 units	\$25,264	\$75,792	\$126,320
100 units	\$126,320	\$378,960	\$631,600

Portfolio impact at 6,700 units

If the 2025 cohort's 73.5% renewal rate matures to the 74% target, the **\$8.46M annual figure** becomes the recurring baseline benefit — compounding each year Property Meld sustains the improvement.

TOTAL ANNUAL SAVINGS · 6,700 UNITS

\$8.46M

268 fewer turnovers + \$6.9M retained rent

Fewer turnovers / yr **268**

Turnover cost savings **\$1.50M**

Retained rent value **\$6.96M**

**04 HOW OTHER OPERATORS CAN IMPLEMENT THIS**

A practical **operator playbook**

The practices Atlas implemented are operational choices — about how meetings are structured, how work orders are prioritized, how turns are documented, and how data drives conversations. Any operator can begin implementing these practices immediately.

Action 1 — Build the 90-day review into your operating rhythm

The highest-ROI operational change is formalizing a 90-day new-resident review as a mandatory agenda item in your existing daily or weekly cadence — not a new meeting, a standing segment in one that already exists.

- Segment your work order queue by move-in date. Sub-90-day residents = priority tier.
- In every team meeting, review all open Melds for sub-90-day residents. Push to resolution within 24–48 hours without exception.
- Maintain a live 30/60/90-day new-resident list, updated weekly.
- Execute a five-touch proactive outreach cadence for every new resident: weeks 1 and 2, months 1, 2, and 3. Do not wait for a Meld to exist.
- Track first-90-day work order volume by repair category. AC, heating, water, or plumbing in this window are a turn quality signal, not random occurrences.

“ The one thing I wish someone had told me: don't build it as a new program. The instinct is to create a new meeting, a new dashboard, a new workflow — and that's exactly how these initiatives die. The version that actually stuck for us was a standing agenda segment inside meetings we were already holding. And the second-order lesson hiding inside that: the 90-day window isn't just a retention play, it's a diagnostic. If a resident files an HVAC ticket in week three, that's not their problem, that's a miss in our turn process.

— Brian Bellew, VP Operations, Atlas PM



Action 2 – Implement property notes as a deferred maintenance register

- Make deferred maintenance documentation a mandatory step in the turn completion checklist — item, location, owner decision, date.
- Train MCs to check property notes before acting on any Meld from a sub-90-day resident. If documented as deferred, handle via the note — not as new scope.
- When a resident Melds on a deferred item, use that moment to escalate to the owner: the decision made at turn is now affecting retention.
- Track turn-to-Meld correlation: how frequently do deferred items from turns generate first-90-day Melds? This is your turn quality metric.

Action 3 – Set and track assignment time SLAs

Assignment speed is a resident's first real signal — churned residents' heating requests took **21.3% longer** to assign. Set explicit targets:

PRIORITY	TARGET ASSIGNMENT	APPLIES TO
Emergency	≤ 2 hours	Active leaks, no heat in winter, no AC in extreme heat
Urgent — Tier 1	≤ 4 hours	HVAC, water, heating — especially sub-90-day residents
Standard — Tier 2	≤ 8 hours	Water heater, toilet, tub/shower, refrigerator
Routine — Tier 3	Next business day	Sink, door, dishwasher, non-urgent appliances

Track assignment time by category and coordinator monthly; for sub-90-day residents, treat all Tier 1–2 repairs as emergency-priority regardless of formal classification.



Action 4 – The 'No-Meld 90' pre-occupancy framework

Eliminate Tier 1 and Tier 2 repairs in the first 90 days by fixing them before move-in — a working AC at move-in is a **retention investment**, not an expense.

- Mandatory HVAC system testing and service before every new occupancy.
- Complete water system pressure testing, fixture connections, water heater condition, and drain function.
- Verify all essential appliances are fully functional. Replace any unit of questionable reliability — a replacement appliance costs less than a lost lease.
- Bathroom fixture stress testing: toilet fill/flush, tub and shower drain, showerhead flow.
- Ongoing: HVAC preventative service minimum twice per year — spring and fall — for all occupied properties.

Action 5 – Close the owner mindset gap

- Connect maintenance data to each owner's actual portfolio. A specific example — 'this unit had a heating failure in month two, the resident did not renew, the turnover cost you \$5,400' — changes behavior. Generic statistics do not.
- Frame preventative maintenance as cost avoidance. The ROI argument is straightforward: a comprehensive turn PM costs a fraction of one turnover.
- Use your fully-managed portfolio as the proof point. If you have Opt-In properties, compare their renewal rates to Opt-Out. Show owners the gap with your own data.



SUMMARY

The maintenance–renewal flywheel

Superior maintenance experiences drive renewals. Renewals reduce turnover costs. Lower turnover costs free capacity for proactive maintenance. Proactive maintenance produces superior resident experiences. The flywheel turns in both directions — operators who allow service quality to slip are not merely failing to capture upside; they are accelerating a downward cycle.

01 • Superior maintenance

Fast, proactive service in the first 90 days builds resident trust.

02 • Higher renewals

Trust converts directly into lease renewals and longer tenures.

03 • Lower turnover cost

Fewer turnovers free up budget and team capacity.

04 • Reinvest in prevention

That capacity funds proactive maintenance — and the wheel turns again.

Atlas implemented these practices and produced a **13.6-point Opt-In renewal advantage** in a declining market. Arizona held flat year-over-year. The 2025 cohort — the first fully on Property Meld — is showing the first genuine upward renewal signal in four years. **The path is documented. The results are real.**



OPERATOR QUICK-REFERENCE CHECKLIST

Start **this week**

- ☐ Build 90-day new-resident review into every team stand-up
- ☐ Establish 5-touch proactive outreach cadence (wks 1, 2 & months 1, 2, 3)
- ☐ Segment work order queue by move-in date — sub-90-day = priority tier
- ☐ Set 24–48 hr resolution SLA for all open Melds from sub-90-day residents
- ☐ Implement property notes deferred maintenance register at every turn
- ☐ Train MCs to check property notes before dispatching on new-resident Melds
- ☐ Set assignment SLAs: ≤2 hrs emergency · ≤4 hrs Tier 1 · ≤8 hrs Tier 2
- ☐ Track assignment time by repair category and by coordinator — review monthly
- ☐ Mandatory pre-occupancy HVAC, plumbing, and appliance verification
- ☐ HVAC preventative service twice annually for all occupied properties
- ☐ Monthly TC/PM turn review to identify go-backs and improve quality
- ☐ Connect maintenance outcome data to individual owner conversations
- ☐ Track and report Opt-In vs. Opt-Out renewal gap in your own portfolio
- ☐ Run 24-hour go-back action plan for any identified turn deficiency

About Property Meld

Property Meld is a maintenance management platform purpose-built for the rental housing industry. The full research report, *The Maintenance–Renewal Connection Vol. 1*, is available at propertymeld.com.



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