



Independence, Inc. | e-newsletter | Spring 2020 edition

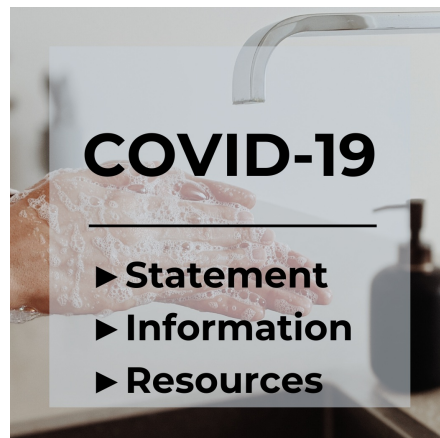


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## Independence, Inc. Responds to the Pandemic with Continued Services, Resources, Information and Community Collaboration

We've heard it said that we are collectively "all in the same boat". I understand the sentiment - but are we really? The way each individual has processed through, experienced and been affected by COVID-19 is as vastly different and unique as each one of us. Some still have jobs, others have lost all income. Some are sick, some are not, some have passed. Some have lost critical care workers, some have been able to maintain their staff. Some have lost child care, others have found suitable alternatives. Some have kitchens full of food, others are finding food hard to come by. Some are confined to their homes or facilities in complete isolation, some are still daily in the community working and shopping. Some are far from family, others are close by. Some are immunocompromised and need to take greater precautions, others are taking a more liberal approach to the quarantine. Some are suffering greatly, others have been only minimally affected, and a multitude of "new normals" lie in between. We all wear masks, social distance and talk daily about this pandemic - it seems perhaps this is where the true commonality in experience ends. But what does tether us all together if not a boat of same experiences? A community that rallies and collaborates in support of its people. All of its people. Whichever boat YOU are in, whether clinging to the edge or seemingly safely on board, we



have gathered a plethora of national, state and local resources and information to help meet you where you are.

In addition, our staff remains at work with our programs and services to help you navigate this season and whatever it looks like in your life. We are closed to foot traffic but remain in the office Monday-Friday 8-5 to take your calls and emails. Our Equipment Loan Bank is still available to those that need durable medical equipment - call ahead and if we have what you need, we'll get it ready for contact-free, curbside pick up.

[Read our full COVID-19 Statement here](#) and [visit our website for links to valuable resources and information](#) to help keep you safe, healthy, fed and thriving during this disruptive time. We are here for YOU!



**Independent Living Skills and Peer Counseling Specialist!**

Are you a motivated, detail-oriented problem-solver with good communication skills and a desire and proven ability to work with youth and young adults? We may be looking for you! We are currently looking for a dynamic, professional interested in social services and disability advocacy to join our team as we work to remove barriers and promote full and equal access to jobs, activities, health care, education and more. For full details on this position, including complete job description and application instructions, please the visit the [Careers page on our website](#). Qualified persons with a disability are invited and encouraged to apply. We will be taking applications for this position until it is filled.

**Our 2019 Annual Report is Ready to Flip-through Online!**



After a fabulous, thriving FY 2019 here at Independence, Inc. followed by a few months of design and development, the Independence, Inc. 2019 Annual Report is now ready to view online with our interactive flip-through report! <http://online.anyflip.com/iqyv/sntv/mobile/index.html>

**Thank you Kriz Fund and Alpha Roofing for Keeping us Dry and Beautiful!**

We were in desperate need of a face lift - make that a roof lift - here at Independence, Inc. and thanks to a generous grant from Kriz Charitable Fund, Inc. and the fabulous work of a crew from [Alpha Roofing](#), we were able to not only beautify this 30-year-old building but keep us all dry as well!



**Our Working Healthy/WORK ILC's are Hard at, well...WORK!**



In January, we were excited to announce that we expanded capacity and added Independent Living Counseling (ILC) through the Kansas [Working Healthy/WORK program](#) as one of our services and in doing so, invited to our team, four fabulous, experienced Independent Living Counselors.

In the past three months, along with getting acclimated to our organization, they have been hard at work in their various regions across the state of Kansas, helping to ensure success in employment and independent living for their consumers in the program. Like within all sectors and job types, COVID-19 is leaving its mark on Kansas WORK participants as well. "I have been working this month on ensuring all WORK participants are supported with Working Healthy KanCare insurance" said Leona Ellis, ILC team member. Working Healthy is set up to help keep insurance coverage during a change in employment and a Temporary Unemployment Plan (TUP) exists to make sure participants will keep coverage during a job loss or layoff. "This has been especially helpful", she said, "as some of our WORK participants have been laid off due to Coronavirus".

ILC team member, Nanette Unruh has been working hard counseling consumers through the independent living choices available to them to help them remain as safe and independent as possible, during this pandemic and beyond. And these choices can be very difficult to make. "I've had the privilege to help members and family with choices



available to them. Giving the member and guardian facts so they can make their own best decision is something I have been working on."

One of the most rewarding aspects of being an Independent Living Counselor is often found in ongoing working relationships with participants and being able to follow a case through to a successful, sustainable outcome. "When I returned to providing WORK ILC services (at Independence, Inc.), a familiar name on my caseload appeared as returning to WORK Services" explained Zack Terhune, ILC team member. "This participant had transitioned out of the program by no fault of his own at the previous agency I worked for, and it stung". Zack says this is when he knew coming to Independence, Inc. was the right move for him. "It was a gift for both of us. This participant is an extraordinary example of independently receiving assistance and self-determination and is doing fabulously!".

Organizing the team and making sure the work is coming along as it should, along with a smooth-as-possible transition to a new organization, is ILC Team Lead, Jennifer Moore. "Since our team joined Independence, Inc. in January, we feel right at home and are delighted to work with an awesome, dedicated group of people!". Ten more WORK participants have come into the program since January 1st, showing growth and providing optimism in this first quarter of the program. "We're honored to work with each WORK participant to reach their goals to increase their independence and maintain their employment".

More information on the Working Healthy/Work program can be found by [visiting our website](#), [downloading the brochure](#), and checking out the [Kansas Territory Map](#).

*above: WORK ILC Zack Terhune and Team Lead, Jennifer Moore collaborate on how to deliver the best services to their participants*

### Independence, Inc. Serves the Community Transpo-Style with Food Delivery During COVID

The [Independence, Inc. General Public Transportation Department](#) has teamed up with local nonprofit [Just Food](#) to join forces and make sure fresh, boxed commodities get to the people who need them most. Our drivers are out every week delivering the goods where they need to go for those who are unable to leave their homes for curbside pickup.

We are also servicing all of Douglas of County with FREE delivery of grocery orders for those that can't or feel it's unsafe to leave their home. For more information on our grocery delivery service during COVID-19, visit <http://www.independenceinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Grocery-Delivery.pdf>



*Independence, Inc. driver, Chip McConnell, loads boxes of food to deliver to community members*

### Why Haven't I Received my Spring Fundraiser Card in the Mail, You Ask?

COVID-19 has hit us all in unexpected ways and has knocked us off our paths and away from our sense of normalcy to one extent or another. Out of respect for and consideration of a struggling community trying to regain footing, we will not be engaging in a formal fundraiser this Spring but rather will continue to do all we can to engage the public and let you all know we are here for you with our programs, services and resources. We will pick up formal fundraising in the fall with our end-of-year ask.



Though we will not be sending out formal Spring Donation cards to our current supporters and community members, we do recognize many are desiring to give during this pandemic to continue to help meet the needs of those most vulnerable. If this is you, please feel free to [visit us online](#) for safe and secure giving or click on the Give Now button below.

[DONATE NOW](#)

### COVID-19 Pandemic and the Disability Community

The impact of the virus, social distancing and a stay-at-home order is far-reaching and can be disproportionately difficult for those with disabilities. Below are resources, articles and information for self-advocacy and staying healthy.

- [People with Disabilities and the COVID-19 Pandemic - Respectability.org](#)
- [Disability Consideration During the COVID-19 Outbreak - Forbes.com](#)
- [SARTAC Self Advocacy Resources](#)
- [Resources to stay active and engaged - NARIC Spotlight](#)
- [COVID-19 National Disaster Hotline for urgent disability-related rights and needs](#)

American Association on Health and Disability COVID-19 Impact Survey



Do you have a disability? Your participation is greatly encouraged and needed! The American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) is conducting an [online survey](#) to better understand the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on people with disabilities. The average completion time is less than four minutes. Alternate formats such as large print, Braille, or electronic versions of the survey are available upon request: [contact@aahd.us](mailto:contact@aahd.us).

Center for Disease Control Video Series in ASL on all Things COVID-19

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has released a [20-part video series](#) in American Sign Language covering all things COVID-19 related. This series covers topics such as knowing the symptoms, how to stay safe and stop the spread, caring for someone with the virus, managing symptoms, tips to keep children safe, information for pregnant women and so much more!



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