

STRATEGY

IMPACT

VISION

REACH



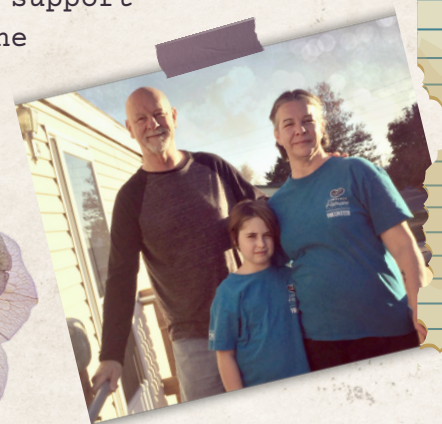
# A JOURNEY THROUGH TWENTY TWO

Independence, Inc. Annual report 2022

# Resiliency. Optimism. Strength. And Stories.

What are some words or phrases that, for you and through your experiences, define this past year? For us here at Independence, Inc., we've observed a lot of strength, unity and collaboration as our staff, our communities and our consumers have come together to support a system of connection, resiliency and recovery as we all look forward to a post-COVID era with hope, optimism and a reflection on the stories that got us here.

Join us as we journey back through our 2022 scrapbook, with stories and snapshots that highlight the strength and resiliency of our consumers, the unending support of staff through our programs and services, the innovative collaboration with our community partners and the generosity and commitment of our donors that helped make it all possible.



A  
journey  
through  
twenty  
two



## COLLABORATION

**The Independence, Inc. Accessible Housing Program (AHP)** has been a key part of our programs and services for many years. Through the program's application process, we provide accessibility modifications like entry ramps, roll-in showers, low-rise steps, handrails, grab bars and more, to low-income community members with disabilities, helping to ensure their safety as they live independently in their homes. But due to budget constraints within the program, we have a cost cap per project which can leave gaps in needed home accessibility modifications that may leave consumers vulnerable to accidents or simply make a section of the home inaccessible.

So when the mom of consumer Jeffrey Wisniewski contacted us as a referral from Habitat for Humanity, with some extensive home modifications needed to move her son from an assisted living facility back to her home, we knew we had a perfect opportunity for community partner collaboration.

Habitat for Humanity also did not have enough funding to complete the entire scope of the project so we put our heads together and met as a team, to begin collaborating and brainstorming on how the two organizations could partner, pool resources and make transitioning from an institution to home, a reality for the Wisniewskis.

The collaboration led to a consensus on the scope of the project, how the costs and oversight would be divided and what contractor would be used. Habitat for Humanity would cover the exterior modifications – removing the steps and adding an entry ramp – and Independence, Inc. would cover the interior modifications including an accessible shower, ADA height toilet, accessible sink and widened doorways to the bathroom and bedroom.

Jeff Wisniewski is now living back in the home and using the Independence, Inc. Financial Management Services (FMS) to coordinate and oversee the payroll for his new care attendants that assist him in living safely and successfully in the home of his choice.



Above: new entry ramp at the front of the home of Jeff Wisniewski;  
Right: before and after photos of the new, fully accessible bathroom.



# CAN SOMETHING AS "SMALL" AS AN EQUIPMENT LOAN BANK MAKE A HUGE IMPACT? YES. YES IT CAN.

Hey Miss Carol,

This is Paul Finley from SSVF. Hope you were the one I spoke to about the crutches (you are the only Carol listed on the website). I was able to make it in yesterday... and just wanted to reach out to you to thank you for getting those going for my client. He pretty much had a broken set of older ones that were falling apart and the ones you gave him are amazing. He was in tears for the way he was able to get them dialed in... and just the grips alone were a HUGE upgrade. He sends his utmost THANK YOU back to you.

Thank you again for the incredible service you provided. Please accept my HUGE thank you, as well, for how quickly we were able to get this done. Can't emphasize enough how much of a blessing this was. If I can send a letter of recognition through to your Board of Directors, please let me know. If this will suffice, please pass it on to them.

Thank you once again for your time and effort. You truly blessed my client.

*-Thank you letter from a Healthcare Navigator with Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)*

Walker  
shower  
bench  
wheelchair  
commode



# ACCESSIBLE HOUSING PROGRAM

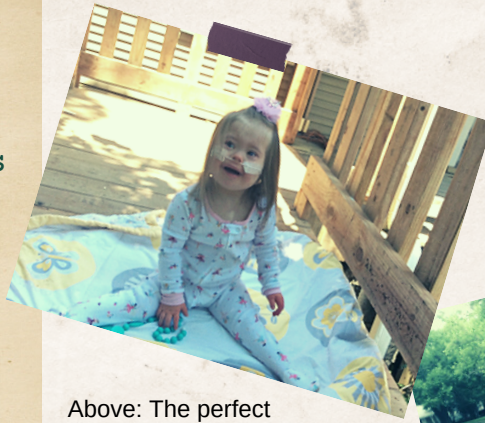
**9 Home Accessibility Projects** completed in 2022 through the AHP with modifications including:

- Wheelchair Ramps
- Walk-in and Roll-in Showers
- Widened Doorways
- Grab Bars and Accessible Height Toilets
- Threshold Ramps

# EQUIPMENT LOAN BANK

**607 Consumers Served** through our Durable Medical Equipment Loan Bank with items including:

- shower seats
- rollators
- wheelchairs
- commodes
- adult briefs
- toilet risers
- knee scooters



Above: The perfect spot to enjoy some sun and fresh air as Renlee enjoys her new accessible entry ramp.



Above Right: New entry ramp allows the homeowners to get safely in and out of their home.

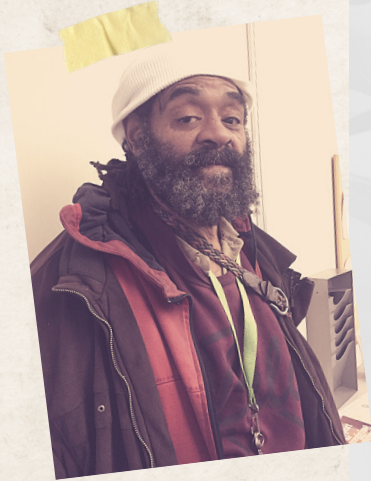


Lower Right: Inventory changes daily in our Durable Medical Equipment Loan Bank



# IT'S JUST GOOD MATH: GOALS + (HOUSING X EMPLOYMENT) = SUCCESS!

What we hear in the hallways and read in staff monthly reports is simply music to our ears...



**HOUSING**  
**30**

consumers served

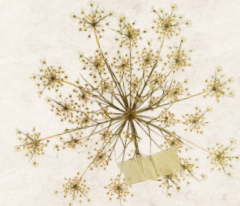
"A consumer experiencing homelessness in Lawrence shared how his life experiences, being in the military and subsequent mental health conditions, have all contributed to his homelessness. He had to leave the Lawrence Community Shelter due to lack of progress towards employment and housing goals and moved to Clinton Lake. In just a couple of weeks of working together, we completed his application for food assistance and are working towards completing housing authority applications. We worked together in creating a resume, cover letters, and references and applied to several positions. After numerous interviews he was offered his "first pick" job as a security guard. He has now completed his hire-on process vaccines, onboarding, background check, orientation, obtained a passport, uniform, letter of intent and security guard license with some funding provided by Independence, Inc."

- excerpt from staff center report

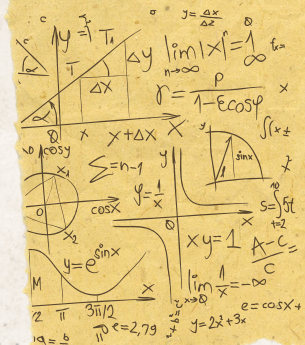
## Employment

### 153

consumers served



Nice work!





## ADVOCACY AND LEGAL SERVICES

"A KU student who lost his financial aid due to academic probation needed assistance in appealing the decision, re-establishing financial aid and signing a lease so he could move out on his own for the first time. I assisted him with the appeal and re-obtained financial aid, helped in planning with his teachers, advisors and tutors to ensure he maintains the grades needed to continue to get financial aid in the future, and helped him in securing a lease. We will continue to work towards his independence by focusing on time and money management while maintaining a well-balanced and healthy lifestyle and being an active member on the KU rowing team while furthering his education."

- excerpt from staff center report

Advocacy and assistance  
in completing and  
understanding  
application processes  
can be a key to success...



**ADVOCACY**  
**153**

consumers served



# THE WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY REALITY: "WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW". THE GOOD NEWS? WE'RE HERE TO ASSIST & SUPPORT.

When a local business owner called our office for support with a claim filed against them for lack of website accessibility, we could hear and understand the distress - "I had no idea we weren't fully compliant".

The small business relies heavily on online orders and excluding members of the disability community from successfully navigating their website was never an intention. It's a common occurrence - lack of disability awareness in communities as a whole and lack of knowledge about website accessibility. The good news is, we're here to change that!

We were so thankful to get to walk alongside this business owner in their journey to not only compliance, but to truly understanding the barriers that noncompliant websites create. With collaboration between our staff, the business owner and their web developer, we were able to help navigate the process of compliance and the result was a fully compliant site. A win for everybody!

"It was so good speaking with you, I came away with a sense of community support."





## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS - WEBSITE USAGE TO REACH, ENGAGE AND INFORM OUR COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMERS, CONTINUES TO GROW

Analytics are important for any business or organization to help paint a picture of consumer habits, needs, and reach. When we rebuilt our website and launched it in 2020, we knew it was going to grow our reach. We didn't know just how much!

**Since September, 2020, Independenceinc.org increased**  
the average time spent on a page by **14.38%**  
entrances from home page to additional pages by **14.87%**  
number of users by **58%**  
number of sessions by **71%**  
number of page views by **54%**

What does this all mean? It means that people are using our website in record numbers to find the information and resources they need to live independently in the communities of their choice.

What else does it mean?

Website accessibility is a critical component to independent living and every public-facing website is required to be fully accessible.

Need help? We can point you in the right direction!



<b>2020 Analytics:</b>	<b>2022 Analytics:</b>
7,600 users	12,000 users
9,900 sessions	17,000 sessions
24,560 page views	37,596 page views

## INFORMATION & REFERRAL: CREATING A NETWORK OF RESOURCES

Being able to point consumers in the right direction when they have needs outside the scope of our own programs and services, is often critical to the health and well-being of our communities. Our team works diligently to conduct outreach, create community partnerships and to collect updated information on community services available to help consumers access the resources they need. Sustainable access to accessible housing, food, employment, recreation, education, peer support, community, health care and transportation is our top priority, and if we can't meet a specific need, we will do our best to find a program, resource, fund or organization that can.



**1,020** I&R  
services  
provided

**5,952** total rides  
provided  
through our  
General Public  
Transportation



## TRANSPORTATION: A VITAL COMPONENT OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

Being able to get from point A to point B is a critical part of living independently. Access to transportation can mean access to employment, healthcare, food, recreation and all the other things that fill our days. Our General Public Transportation offers rides within Douglas County and medical rides to the Kansas City and Topeka areas, Monday through Friday.

# INCREASING THE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE

"Increasing the Public Health Workforce" (PHW) Grant received in 2022, is helping to expand our ongoing Covid-related services as we work to make sure people with disabilities have access to the latest public health information and resources.



Amy Ballinger (far back, standing), Independence, Inc., assists with note-taking at a community focus group for climate change at the Eudora School District offices.



Independence, Inc. received a PHW Grant in 2022 and has been working hard to use this time and these resources to reach further into the community through the realm of public health. We have a strong focus on Long-Covid, mitigating health care coverage loss at the end of the Medicaid continuous coverage period, and keeping a close eye on current and emerging public health concerns including illnesses, emergency management and preparedness and local, national and global climate change.

Independence, Inc. Community Engagement Manager, Amy Ballinger, has taken on this new role and can be reached at 785-371-1646 or [aballinger@independenceinc.org](mailto:aballinger@independenceinc.org) for any questions about this new grant-funded work.

Amy is working on climate change initiatives through the Douglas County Climate Plan Steering Committee, supporting people with Long-Covid through a Long-Covid Peer Support Group and connecting with partners and other Centers for Independent Living across the state to join forces in keeping our communities safe, healthy and supported. Visit our website or call or email for more information.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the generous support we received in 2022. This past year, there was a continued need for our Center for Independent Living's (CILs) expertise as our world once again changed, adapted, and opened with a new normal. As we journeyed through 2022, we stayed true to the values that have sustained our organization for over four decades. The values of dignity, peer support, consumer control, civil rights, integration, equal access, and advocacy. These values support us through the challenges of the moment. I'm grateful for our community and everyone who supports us. This gratitude and optimism fuels our future.

- Jill Dudley, Executive Director



### **Independence, Inc. 2022 Board of Directors**

Robert Hutchison, President/Treasurer

Dustin Stumblingbear, Vice President

Anna Paradis, Secretary

Kevin Elliot

Tim Franklin

Matthew Gabel

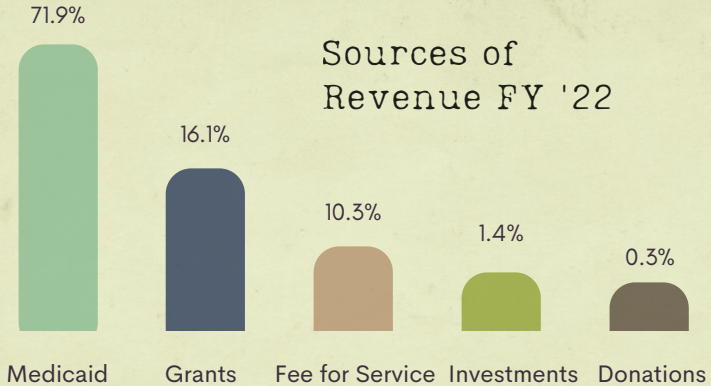
Athena Johnson

Becky Silvermintz

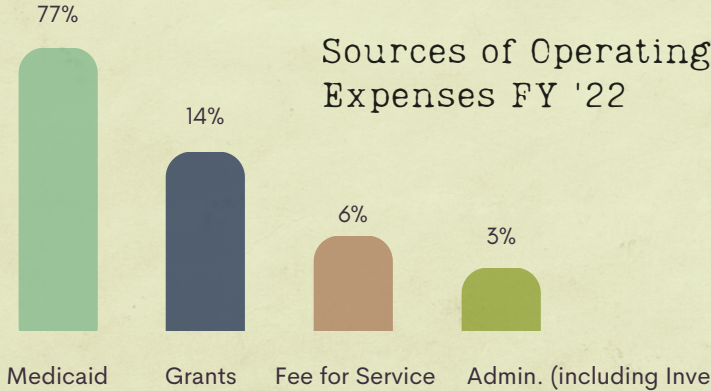


A Note  
from  
our  
Director

**FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT  
FY 2022**



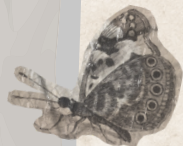
Total Operating Revenue: \$5,123,961  
expressed in % of total revenue



Total Operating Expenses: \$4,834,544  
expressed in % of total expenditures

# A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR FABULOUS DONORS!

Amy Ballinger  
Ann & Larry Mah  
Audrey Kamb-Studdard  
Austin Turney  
Barbara Sabol  
Barbara Watkins  
Bernard Judge  
Bill and Cindy Self  
Bob Mikesic  
Brad Wertz  
Brian & Deborah Norwood  
Bruce and Jeanie Bundy  
Captain & Kitty Gray  
Carla Ballenger  
Carrie Hall  
Cathy Reinhardt  
Cindi Hickey  
Cindy Williams  
Dana Fertig  
David & Diana Ice  
Deb and Bob Werts



Dennis "Boog" Highberger"  
Dennis Brown Painting  
Dick and Barbara Schowen  
Dot Nary and Norm White  
Eleanor Unruh  
Eleanor Woodyard  
Ellen Paulsen  
Fred and Lilian Six  
G. Paul & Jewell Willhite  
Jane and Mickey Imber  
Jene Herron  
Jill Dudley  
Joan and Web Golden  
Jody Anderson & Jim McGovern  
John Frydman  
John Nalbandian  
John & Nancy Sue Howard  
Karen Heeb  
Karen & Randall McGrath  
Karen Seibel and Mike Yoder  
Karl Altman & Sarah Haavik



Ken & Annette Wertzberger  
Kenneth Rowen  
Kent and Janet Pennybaker  
Kroger Community Rewards  
Larry Irick  
Larry J. & Frances E. McPherson  
Lois Orth-Lopes & Steve Lopes  
Marilee Harper  
Martin Moore & Durand Reiber  
Mary Ann Rasnak  
Maureen Horowitz & Chris Taylor  
Michael Roark  
Michele Williams  
Molly Wood  
Myles Schachter  
Orley & Toni Taylor  
Roberta and Ron Renz  
Robert Antonio  
Timothy Miller  
Todd and Kelley Stillings  
Tom West



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We not only value but rely on community support and partnerships to be able to expand our reach year after year and effectively weave our services, programs and advocacy throughout the lives and systems around us. In other words, we need you!



## SPREAD THE WORD

We love referrals! Share our information, tell people about our services, let them know about our equipment loan bank, grab some brochures and have them ready to share. These are great ways to expand our reach and help serve our communities!

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Visit our website often to get familiar with our programs and services. We have a vast and thorough resource page to help people live independently by simply clicking some links and finding the information they need. While you're there, hit us up through our chat feature if you have any questions! <https://independenceinc.org/>

## DONATE

Visit our website's donate page or mail in a good 'ol check. Every bit helps and is greatly appreciated! <https://independenceinc.org/donate/>

## ENGAGE

Visit us on social media and join our newsletter mailing list! Or just call or visit us today! <https://www.facebook.com/independenceincCIL/>



independence.

# INDEPENDENCE, INC.

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[www.independenceinc.org](http://www.independenceinc.org)

