



independence INC.

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Independence, Inc.

2023

Annual Report

Choice

Control

Freedom

Independence

The Disability Rights Movement



Above: Judith Heumann and other activists rally outside the Whitehouse in the early 1970's to support Sect. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Independent living is the right of all people, regardless of disability, to examine the cultural, societal and physical landscape around them, look at options in housing, education, employment, recreation and community access, and to have autonomy and control over personal, informed decisions on where and how to live one's life.

Exercising this right is hindered by attitudinal, systemic, physical and technological barriers. Removing such barriers takes large scale and widespread commitment by communities, citizens, advocates and all levels of government, to ensure the availability of resources, information, laws, programs and services that foster and support full and equitable access.



Left: President Bush signs the ADA Act into law, July 26, 1990. **Below:** Some key Federal laws created over the past 55 years, to ensure equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

Fair Housing Act: April 11, 1968

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, and familial status.

Section 504, Rehabilitation Act: September 26, 1973

The first civil rights legislation protecting disabled people from discrimination. It forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive federal program benefits and services.

Americans with Disabilities Act: July 26, 1990

The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, State and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. It also applies to the United States Congress.

Section 255, 251 Telecommunications Act: amended February 8, 1996

These amendments require that products and services relating to telecommunications equipment are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, ensuring access to a broad range of products and services such as telephones, cell phones, pagers and call-waiting.



A Brief History of Centers for Independent Living

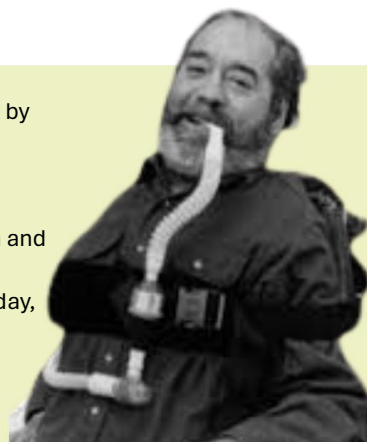
“The Independent Living Philosophy is the emancipatory philosophy and practice which empowers disabled people and enables them to exert influence, choice and control in every aspect of their life.” - *author unknown*


Centers for Independent Living were borne from the work of activists that held to the Independent Living Philosophy and recognized not only the discrimination of people with disabilities, but the great and immediate need for programs and services that help break down the attitudinal barriers and unjust treatment - equipping people with disabilities to move out of institutions and other forced living arrangements, and into their communities, with the same rights and access that non-disabled people enjoy.



Top Right: The first Center for Independent Living, Berkley, CA. **Top Left:** Ed Roberts (front/center) and the CIL team at the original Berkley Center for Independent Living, 1972. **Above:** Executive Director Jill Dudley and Program Manager Daniel Brown stand in front of the Independence, Inc. marquee holding a sign of award from the City of Lawrence Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

In 1972, the first Center for Independent Living was founded by disability activists, coordinated and led by Ed Roberts (right) in Berkeley, California. These Centers were created to offer peer support and role modeling, run and controlled by persons with disabilities. Core Services for all CIL's now include information and referral, individual and systems advocacy, peer support, independent living skills training and deinstitutionalization. Today, there are 403 Centers for Independent Living in the U.S. Independence, Inc., founded in 1978, is one of them.





**Independence, Inc. -
Advancing and
supporting independent
living in partnership with
our consumers, donors,
communities and
beyond.**

Choice

600

consumers served
with a total of

1,912

services provided

Through our programs and services, Independence, Inc. supports the independent living goals and choices of our consumers through services like advocacy, transportation, independent living skills training, peer support and much more.

We also work to remove systemic and attitudinal barriers in our communities by educating and assisting businesses, organizations, and the community as a whole, to identify barriers and find solutions that result in access for all.

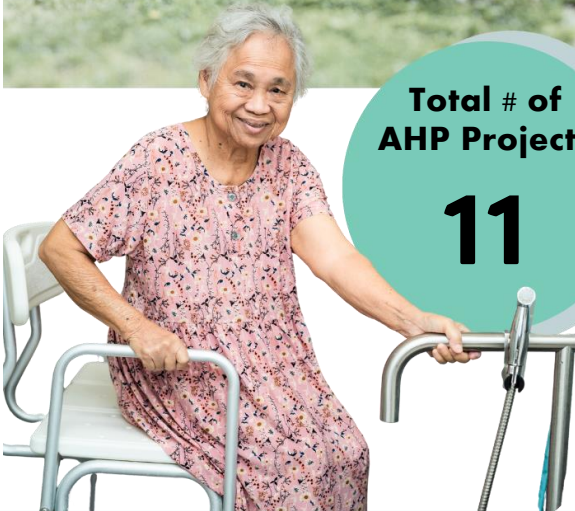


Above: a new ramp provides safe entry into the home for one of our consumers through our Accessible Housing Program, funded by the City of Lawrence Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

**Total # of
AHP Projects**

11

Left: a walk-in shower with chair and handrails can provide the accessibility needed to



Accessible Housing

A critical component of independent living

Getting in and out of one's home, and safely moving about room to room is something many of us take for granted as a given aspect of our daily lives. But everyday things like steps, narrow doors, bathtubs and high counters and faucets, present barriers and safety hazards in the homes of many people with disabilities.

the Independence, Inc. Accessible Housing Program (AHP), works to remove such barriers through home modifications like ramps, grab bars, roll-in showers and much more.



Control

of
consumers served
through Advocacy

74

Advocacy:
Working to
change
“what is”
Into “what
should be.

People with disabilities benefit from knowing the laws that affect their relationships with employers, businesses, landlords, and government. Independence, Inc. is part of a nationwide network of agencies working to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities to live independently by exercising their rights to do so. We perform many types of advocacy including individual, community and systems advocacy. A few examples include tenant-landlord disputes, reasonable accommodation requests, asking for accessibility modifications and Service Animal or Emotional Support Animal (ESA) advocacy.



Housing Services

Helping consumers take control of their independent living goals



When a consumer came into our office in August, requesting help with an appeal to her housing voucher denial with only one day left submit it, we knew we had our work cut out for us. Independence, Inc. Independent Living Specialist, Emily, got busy helping the consumer write a letter to the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority (LDCHA) requesting an informal desk review. When the details of the desk review didn't line up with the consumer's experience and narrative, and when several of the allegations uncovered in the review could not be substantiated, LDCHA agreed to a formal hearing and asked for testimony on how the former tenant would mitigate some of the substantiated problem areas if reinstated. Emily assisted in creating a stabilization plan to present at the hearing and with family members present to testify on behalf of the consumer and the consumer agreeing to the terms of the stabilization plan, she was finally re-approved for a housing voucher! She has returned to the LDCHA Transitional Housing Program and is awaiting a move into safe, affordable housing!



Freedom

Independence, Inc. Public Transportation

Total # of
Rides Given

4,683

The freedom of independence through transportation

Thinking outside of the box and creating local service partnerships, lead to meeting the needs of one local family facing a serious and unexpected transportation issue.

It's difficult to prepare for the unexpected and one local family learned this the hard way. Independence, Inc. Transportation Manager, LaNeece, was contacted by a community member whose 5-year-old grandson had just had surgery - leaving him with both of his legs in casts and using a wheelchair for mobility. After contacting several other sources that were either unable to help, or didn't respond, Pam Van Roekel reached out to Independence, Inc. for help. Working together, she and our Transportation Manager were able to contact Dre'VeL Taylor, City of Lawrence Mobility Manager and Heide Briery, Director of Transportation Services for the Senior Resource Center, and together the team formulated a transportation plan to cover every ride back and forth to school until the casts came off. "Thank you so much!", said Pam. "We are thrilled that Ryder can go back to school. We know how hard you all worked to put this together for us. Our grandson wants to go to school, and this is the only way it will happen."



The Hard-fought Battle Over Accessible Transportation

“Lack of access to transportation has always been an issue for people with disabilities, dramatically reducing opportunities for employment, recreation, education, and inclusion in society. In the 1970s and 1980s, transportation became a flashpoint for the disability community to gather, discuss, and organize (pictured above), city by city, area by area, as well as nationally. The fight for lifts on buses was gaining in the disability community. ADAPT, the grassroots activist group, was formed in 1983 to obtain a national policy on accessible transit.

“ Thanks to ADAPT and the efforts of many others who joined them, lifts on all new buses became mandated 30 days after the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed.

People with disabilities have long understood the critical need for accessible public transit. For many people with disabilities, public buses were the only means available to get around in the community. The general public and many transit officials, viewed those with significant disabilities as only needing transit to medical appointments, but the disability community knew that there would never be societal integration without full access to the community as part of daily human life.” - (excerpt) Janine Bertram Kemp, “Access to Public Transportation”, <https://issuu.com/faircountmedia>



of
Consumers
receiving
equipment

633

Equipment Loan Bank (ELB)

Helping consumers maintain
mobility and independence

Sometimes it's the small things that matter most! When a consumer with a chronic health condition affecting her eyesight came to us with a requested item from our equipment loan bank, one of our I&R Specialists, Carol, got to work. The consumer needed a magnifying glass but without the resources to get out and find one, she needed some assistance. Carol diligently looked through donated loan bank items that come in daily, until she finally found just what the consumer needed. When a case manager picked up the magnifier, the consumer was so happy to finally have this simple little item that made a world of difference in her daily life.

Information & Referral

Getting information and
community resources into the
hands of those that need it to
enhance independent living

Our I&R specialists work daily with consumers to find them the resources they need to meet their goals. Recently, a consumer, along with her friend from out of town, called our office stating they were stranded in Lawrence, with little money for food and gas and requested some one-time emergency funding. One of our I&R specialists referred the consumer to several organizations including the Salvation Army, ECKAN and Catholic Charities. The I&R Specialist followed up with this consumer and learned that they had received the emergency assistance needed to get back on their feet and on to their destination.

Independence

of
consumers
receiving I&R
services

1,151



Expanding the Public Health Workforce (PHW) Grant

Year two of working under the Federal PHW grant has brought many new opportunities to serve, inform and work within our communities to mitigate the ongoing effects of Covid-19, the pandemic as a whole, and newly emerging public health risks for people with disabilities.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



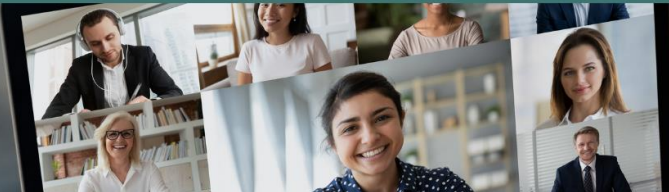
Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities is a crucial part of independent living. Amy Ballinger, Community Engagement Manager and Social Support and Resource Specialist, joined the Kansas Disability and Disaster Prep Group as part of her PHW work to address state, community and individual preparation initiatives and plans for natural disasters or other emergencies, by engaging people with disabilities, advocates and emergency response professionals to build awareness and share resources on how to prepare for an emergency.

CAP STEERING COMMITTEE

The Douglas County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is a sustainability & risk-reduction plan focused on mitigating the impact, including the health and wellness impact, of climate change in our area. Amy Ballinger, Independence, Inc. Community Engagement Manager and PHW Social Support & Resource Specialist, is a CAP Steering Committee member (below: far back, center), seen here assisting Jamie Hofling, Douglas County Sustainability Impact Analyst, during a Climate Action Plan focus group session in Eudora, KS.



LONG-COVID PEER SUPPORT GROUP



One of the most impactful of these developments has been our Long-COVID Peer Group, which began last year and has now grown to over 30 members. The purpose of the group is to establish connections between people who have Long-Covid and share experiences, discuss symptoms, talk about new clinical developments and treatments and share resources, ideas and coping skills. The experience has truly been transformational for many participants.

Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends, thank you for the generous support we received in 2023. Inspired by Independence, Inc.'s rich and proud history - A history starting with the formation of Independence, Inc. in 1978 - we find ourselves once again, excited and ready for the future. For more than 45 years, Independence, Inc. has worked tirelessly with advocates and our communities to promote a life of choice, control, freedom, and independence for people with disabilities. Each year, we detail our important work through our annual report. Our belief in this work, along with the hope of a more accessible and inclusive society, is what has propelled us forward throughout the decades, since our earliest days as a Center for Independent Living (CIL). We continue to live our purpose every day and strive to be part of the solution for systems change. I'm grateful for our community and everyone who supports us. Your partnership with us has been instrumental as we continue our mission to provide services, advocacy and opportunities for the disability community and the community at large.

Meet the Board



Independence, Inc. 2023 Board of Directors

Kevin Elliot - President
Athena Johnson, Vice President
Anna Paradis, Secretary
Robert Hutchison, Treasurer
Tim Franklin, Board Member

Matthew Gabel, Board Member
Angela Motsinger, Board Member
Kyle Owens, Board Member
Becky Silvermintz, Board Member
Craig Weinaug, Board Member

Financial Statement

Operating Revenue FY 2023

Total
Operating
Revenue
\$5,531,858

69.6%



Medicaid

17.5%



Grants

12.2%



Fee for Service

.4%



Investments

.3%



Donations

Operating Expenses FY 2023

Total
Operating
Expenses
\$5,216,005

71%



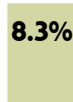
Medicaid

15.3%



Grants

8.3%



Fee for Service

5.4%



Admin
including investments
& donations

Thank you to our FY 2023 Donors!



Amazon Smile
Amy Ballinger
Anonymous DCCF Giver
Athena Johnson
Barbara Sabol
Barbara Watkins
Bernard Judge
Bill and Cindy Self
Bob Mikesic
Brian and Deborah Norwood
Bruce and Jeanie Bundy
Cathy Reinhardt
Cheryl Zabel
Cindy Williams
Danielsan Electric
David Miller/Miller Agency
Deb and Bob Werts
Delete Eleanor Unruh
Dennis and Marilee Harper
Dennis "Boog" Highberger
Dennis Brown Painting
Diana Ice
Dot Nary and Norm White
Dward Moore
Eleanor Woodyard
Ellen Paulsen
Ernest and Margaret Angino
Fred and Lilian Six
Gene and Carol Meyer
Glen White
G. Paul & Jewell Willhite
Harrison Stockton
Jane Getto
Jedel Family Foundation Fund

Giving

*"The
joy of
getting
is
fleeting.
The
joy of
giving
lasts a
lifetime"*

Jene Herron
Jill Dudley
Joan and Web Golden
Jody Anderson and Jim McGovern
John Frydman
John Nalbandian
J. William & Barbara Carswell Family
Karen Heeb
Karen Seibel and Mike Yoder
Karl Altman and Sarah Haavik
Kelly & Tanja Harrison Charitable Fund
Ken and Annette Wertzberger
Kent and Janet Pennybaker
Larry Irick
Larry J. and Frances E. McPherson
Lisa and Doug Gaston
Lois Orth-Lopes and Steve Lopes
Martin Moore and Durand Reiber
Mary Ann Rasnak
Maureen Horowitz and Chris Taylor
Michael Roark
Michele Williams
Molly Wood
Murray and Cris Renick
Myles Schachter
Randy McGrath
Roberta and Ron Renz
Robert Antonio
Robert Cugno
Sandra Sanders
Timothy Miller
Todd and Kelley Stillings
Tom West
Valeita Williams



Community Support

We value our partners and supporters, and we need your ongoing help as we work towards equal access and independence for all. Barriers to access and independent living are real, they can be complex, and they are everywhere. It takes a team to rally for the civil rights of those in our communities and ensure that everyone is able to experience inclusion and independence. Join us today through financial support, liking and sharing our social media posts and good old word-of-mouth.



Visit our FB page for our "donate" button. While you're there, like and share our posts and sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter
www.facebook.com/independenceincCIL
Follow us on Twitter:
twitter.com/independenceinc and
[IG instagram.com/independenceinclawrence](http://IG.instagram.com/independenceinclawrence)

Support

"Strong and stable communities are built on the partnerships between its citizens and the organizations that serve them"



Whether it's for a one-time gift or setting up recurring gifts, visit us at independenceinc.org/donate/ for safe and secure online giving. And of course, we love getting your checks of support in the mail! Make checks payable to: Independence, Inc., 2001 Haskell Ave., Lawrence, KS, 66046

Leave a legacy and show your lifelong support of disability rights and advocacy by contributing to our mission through a **planned gift**. Find out how, including the financial benefits to YOU by contacting Chip Blaser, Executive Director, Douglas County Community Foundation. Email chipblaser@dccfoundation.org or call 785-843-8727 and ask about giving to Independence, Inc.



independence^{inc}

Choice
Control
Freedom
Independence

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