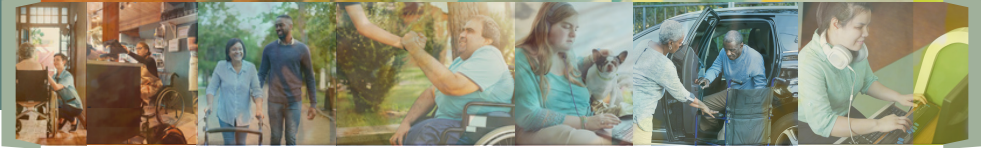




independence<sup>inc.</sup>

Independence, Inc. | Annual Report | 2021



Adapting,  
connecting &  
moving forward

*in a million little ways.*

*The peacock, with its unique vision and ability to look around and adapt to changing circumstances, is a beautiful representation of the work we do daily to spot obstacles and barriers to the health, safety and well-being of our consumers. Known to symbolize re-growth and renewal, self-expression and integrity, this "100-eyed" specimen can serve as a reminder of what it takes to understand the ever-changing world around us and how to adapt and thrive, everyday, in a million little ways.*

# Reflecting

*Self reflection is a good thing. It continually questions and explores: who are we? What is our focus and our purpose? Knowing who and what we are - and aren't - is critical to our identity not only as individuals but as an organization.*

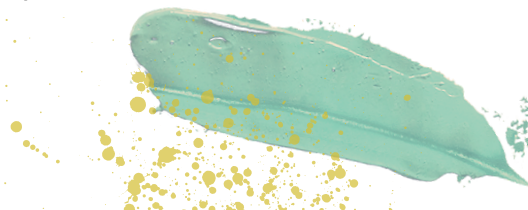


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If the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have shown us anything, it's that continually reflecting, reassessing and adapting are crucial components to moving forward. We as individuals, and as an organization, have had to take a deep dive into the complex and challenging world around us and assess who and what we are and how it is we can navigate these ever-changing circumstances to effectively serve the lives, communities, and systems that need our support.

Independence, Inc. may not always be found in the headlines. We aren't a source for emergency services. We're not a large organization with the human resource capacity to deploy in crisis situations. Who and what we are however, is the constant, capable and often unseen undercurrent, flowing faithfully and steadfastly through the disability community, where programs, services, training and technology are utilized and support is offered day after day in a million little ways.

Why? Because every body has value and the right to independence, equal access, and freedom to choose what's best for themselves. Throughout the pandemic we have remained at work daily to offer continuity in service provision - never leaving our consumers and community without critical services like transportation, information and referral, access to durable medical equipment, advocates to assist with self-directed independent living goals, and the list goes on.



# It's a million little things...

It's a million little things we do day after day that make a difference in our communities and make us who we are. Every consumer is unique, every day is different and every need is real.

It's the help with a Medicaid application to get a consumer through the cumbersome process of qualifying for KanCare. It's the in-home accessibility survey that helps someone with a disability and their family plan for changing accessibility needs. It's the support of our experienced advocates as they assist a consumer navigate the reasonable accommodation request process with a landlord or settle a dispute over a service or emotional support animal.

It's transportation to access COVID testing or to get vaccinated. It's helping a consumer tap into resources for transitioning from a nursing home or rehab facility back into their home where they can ride out the pandemic close to loved ones. It's advocating for the disability vote and assisting with voter registration. It's money management, food preparation skills, SNAP, rent and utility benefit applications, computer program, smart phone and tablet accessibility training. It's assisting with employment goals, housing needs, community access, peer support, assistive technology and so much more.

## adapting

**a·dapt /ə'dapt/**

*"to adjust to new conditions or circumstances; to modify or make suitable for a new use or purpose"*

From modifying our physical spaces to adjusting our service delivery methods and integrating new technology, we have indeed adapted to the ever-changing world and needs that surround us.



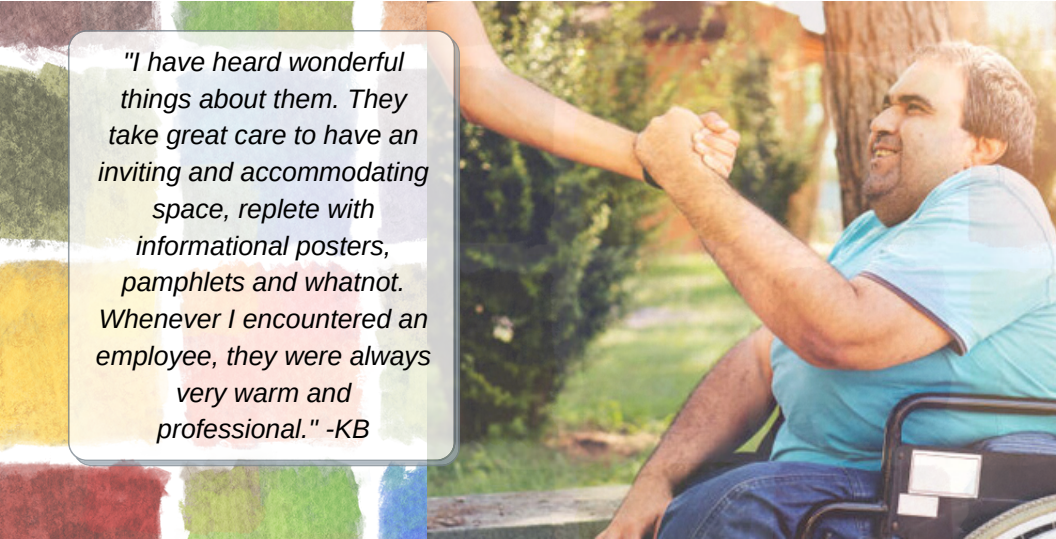
**2,068**  
total services  
provided

## connecting

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Whether connecting our consumers with community resources, technology, programs and services or much-needed human contact and socialization through online peer groups, connection is key. It's what makes freedom of choice, self-direction and equal access, a reality in these changing and challenging times.

These core values of choice, freedom and control are what we hold fast to as a Center for Independent Living as they shape and direct our services, and who we are, in a million little ways, every day. Whether assisting a consumer in computer literacy or independent living skills, home modifications or community access, we start with the consumer, identifying needs and goals and creating an individual plan to assist in meeting those goals.

A photograph of a man in a wheelchair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, smiling and holding hands with another person whose arm is visible from the left. They are outdoors, with trees and a wooden bench in the background. The lighting is warm, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

*"I have heard wonderful things about them. They take great care to have an inviting and accommodating space, replete with informational posters, pamphlets and whatnot. Whenever I encountered an employee, they were always very warm and professional." -KB*



*"This place has the kindest & most caring drivers and the transportation department is the best. Thank you all that help with my father" - SV*

## Transportation: a Key to Independent Living

Consider this quote from a 1979 copy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation:

*"Accessible transportation is essential if people with disabilities are to live independently in the community. Future progress in transportation for disabled people depends largely upon resolution to complex cost-benefit arguments and community acceptance of disabled persons as people deserving a spectrum of transportation services".*

Over 40 years later and these same attitudinal and systemic barriers still exist:

*"People with disabilities still face barriers that make public transportation more difficult. Older infrastructure, inoperable lifts and ramps, transportation availability, and added stigma against disabled people are just a few of the daily hurdles faced by millions." - Barriers to Independent Living: Public Transportation, accessibility.com blog, Jan. 19, 2022*

*moving forward*

We work daily to enter in to our communities, remove barriers and move forward with programs and services like [General Public Transportation](#), that connect our consumers with the tools, systems, and resources they need to live independently.

It's who we are - a big part of the million little pieces each connecting and creating a path forward in the journey to an accessible, inclusive, universally designed and equitable future for all.


**6,220**  
rides given  
through General  
Public Transportation  
Services

## Financial Management Services

If the continuing COVID pandemic reinforced anything in 2021, it was the ongoing need to adapt to daily fluctuating circumstances. As the need for in-home Personal Care Service Workers (PCSW) began to rise, we knew that we as an organization, had to also rise to the challenge.

As COVID began spreading through communal living institutions like nursing homes and assisted living facilities, the need for PCSW's grew as it became an essential goal to keep people with disabilities safely in their homes. Finding personal care workers willing to work under the threat of COVID transmission became a daunting task for those who either lost care attendants who needed to protect themselves from possible exposure, or for those who needed to find a care attendant for the first time.

As a [Financial Management Services \(FMS\) provider](#) under the Kansas Medicaid HCBS Waiver Program, Independence, Inc. stepped up to the plate alongside our consumers to help meet the challenge. We expanded our FMS department - both with staffing and consumers - from 128 FMS consumers in 2019 to 207 in 2021 - almost doubling in size during the pandemic. Our FMS department has worked diligently to continue to provide essential services like preparation of payroll, filing of payroll returns and W-2s, filing taxes, unemployment insurance and worker's compensation coverage for the care attendants, and information and assistance to family members and others who support our consumers in directing their services.



*"I'm an Occupational Therapist Assistant and have heard wonderful things about this organization." - CA*



*"I am able to get food and do what I need as a disabled person, as a human being, with some dignity because of Independence Inc." -LB*

## Independent Living Counselor services (ILC) through the Working Healthy/WORK program

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The Kansas Working Healthy Program is a work incentive program through KanCare, that provides an avenue for people with disabilities to work, increase their income and accumulate assets, while not jeopardizing health care coverage. Work Opportunities Reward Kansans (WORK) provides support services like Independent Living Counseling for eligible Working Healthy participants.

[Independence, Inc. Independent Living Counselors](#) (ILC's) are experienced, knowledgeable, caring professionals who help consumers across Kansas navigate these programs, listen to needs, help identify goals and provide supports to help achieve those goals. Independent living, self-direction and inclusive workplaces are the philosophies that guide our work and our counselors promote these philosophies daily as they work side-by-side with their program participants.

**131**

**WORK Participants  
served in 37 different  
Kansas Counties**



## Equipment Loan Bank

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Our [Information and Referral](#) Specialists at the front desk work daily to receive, clean and organize medical equipment donations and prepare them for lending out to anyone in the community.

Whether for an injury, a disability, post-surgery needs, age-related safety or mobility, or any other situation where an assistive device or durable medical equipment may be needed, we have you covered with our [Durable Medical Equipment Loan Bank](#). Our equipment loan bank is stocked through community and individual donations and includes items like shower seats, commodes, walkers, rollators, wheelchairs, knee scooters, canes, crutches, transfer benches, gait belts, grabbers and so much more!

*"They were extremely helpful to me. I had been told by a Library staff member that Independence, Inc. would be the place to contact about receiving a folding wire rolling basket for use while I am out in the community, to help me carry [my] things" -TM*







*"They have supplied me with needed assistive devices and transportation when necessary. Very helpful and explained how to use a computer" -IS*

## Information & Referral

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[Information & Referral](#) (I&R) is the art, science and practice of bringing people and services together to assist in living one's best, most active, secure and healthy life possible.

Our I&R specialists keep up-to-date with programs and services provided by community, social, health, and government organizations that can benefit people with disabilities in a multitude of ways. From housing, employment and emergency services, to food resources, access to healthcare and financial assistance, we are here to help those in our communities, identify and navigate through the many programs, services and resources available.

**964**  
**I&R Services**  
**Received**

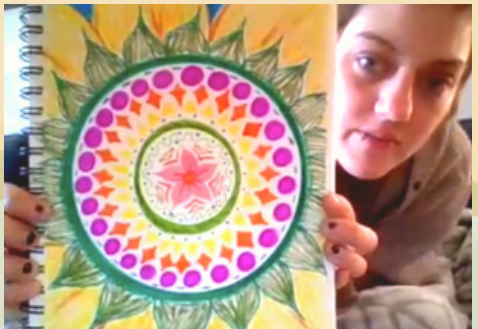


"I like that there are social groups available and I get to interact with the other consumers." -V.V.

# Peer Groups

When safety and health protocol often means staying home, virtually connecting during the pandemic with art, music and games through our [online Peer Groups](#) is a lifeline to socialization and activities that keep face to face contact and fun group projects a reality.

*below: Peer Group participants show off their creative works of art during an online art-therapy group.*





*"they are very helpful  
in a lot of good, positive  
ways that make life a  
little less stressful.  
Many thanks!" - WG*

Reaching out to our communities through a robust online presence is a key part of our service delivery and connection with our consumers and community as a whole. With over:

- 15,000 website sessions
- 11,000 website visitors
- 16,788 tweet impressions
- 21,409 Facebook reach and
- 57 Instagram posts

we spent 2021 diligently reaching, messaging, answering questions, sharing information, making referrals and interacting daily with our communities through our website, chat and social media outlets.

Online  
Presence

# A note from our Director

The last few years have tested our communities at every level. I have been tested both professionally and personally, as I strive to be present, knowledgeable and available. It really is a million little things that make 2021 a year of celebration, collaboration, communication, success, failure and most of all, adaptation. This has been a year of resilience, revamping and retooling. Our report shares how we navigated these times alongside our consumers and communities to create real impact through our work.



We have strived to stay connected and have encouraged our consumers to re-connect, sometimes through unfamiliar and intimidating technology. While we continue to face these unprecedented times and challenges, we're stepping forward, not back, and are focused on supporting our mission. You are an integral part of who we are and we appreciate the support you have shown to us throughout 2021. - *Jill Dudley, Executive Director*

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## Independence, Inc. 2021 Board of Directors

Angela Motsinger, President/Treasurer

Robert Hutchison, Vice President

Terry Manies, Secretary

Kevin Elliot

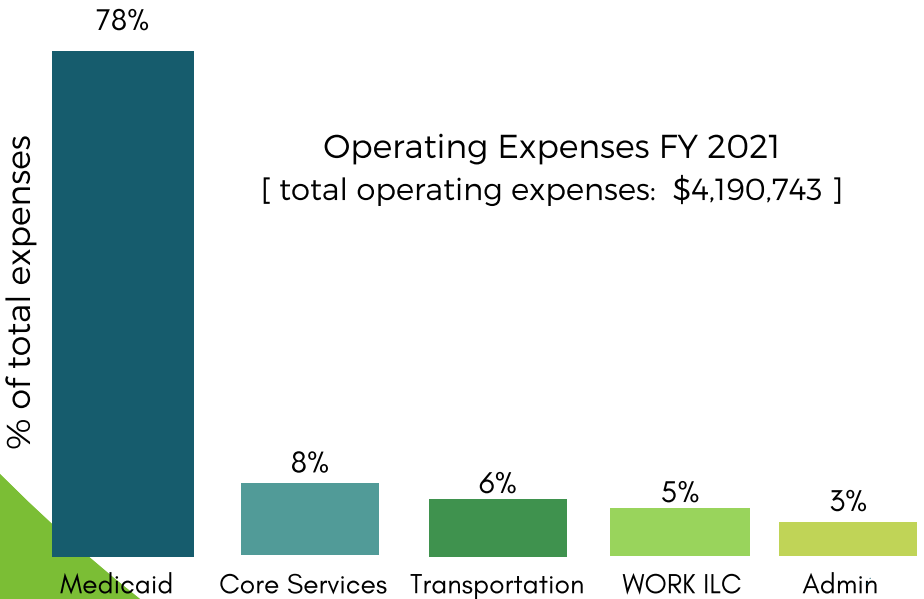
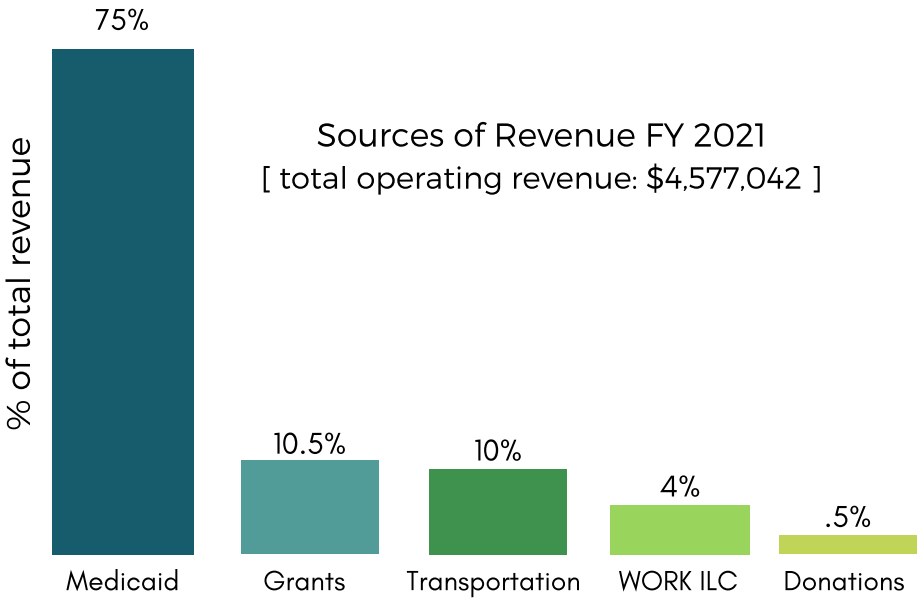
Matthew Gabel

Boog Highberger

Athena Johnson

Dustin Stumblingbear

Craig Weinaug



Financial Statement

# Thank you to our Donors!

We enjoyed a record giving season in 2021 with a total of **\$20,053.22** in donations!

*\*gifts from our 2021 campaigns that were not received/posted until Jan. 2022 are included*

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Amazon Smile  
Audrey Kamb-Studdard  
Austin Turney  
Barbara Sabol  
Barbara Watkins  
Bernard Judge  
Bill & Beverly Bartscher  
Brad Wertz  
Brian & Deborah Norwood  
Bruce & Jeanie Bundy  
Captain & Kitty Gray  
Carrie Hall  
Cathy Reinhardt  
Cecilia Welch  
Christeen Thomas  
Cindy Williams  
David & Diana Ice  
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Boog Highberger  
Dennis Brown Painting  
Dick & Barbara Schowen  
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Dward & Jeanine Moore  
Eleanor Unruh  
Eleanor Woodyard  
Ellen Paulsen  
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Jerry & Ascencion Schultz  
Jill Dudley  
Joan & Web Golden  
Jody Anderson & Jim McGovern  
John Frydman  
John & Nancy Sue Howard  
Judy Johnson FOE Auxiliary 309  
Karen Heeb  
Karen & Randall McGrath  
Karen VanMeter  
Karl Altman & Sarah Haavik  
Ken & Annette Wertzberger  
Kenneth Rowen  
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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  
Ranjbar Orthodontics  
Robert Antonio  
Tom West

We value our partners and supporters and during the ongoing COVID pandemic, We need YOU more than ever as we work to support and advocate for equal access and the independent living needs of people with disabilities in our communities. 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 every body is able to experience inclusion and independence. Join us today through advocacy, financial support and community involvement!

Whether it's for a [one-time gift](#) or setting up [recurring gifts](#), visit us at [independenceinc.org/donate/](https://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

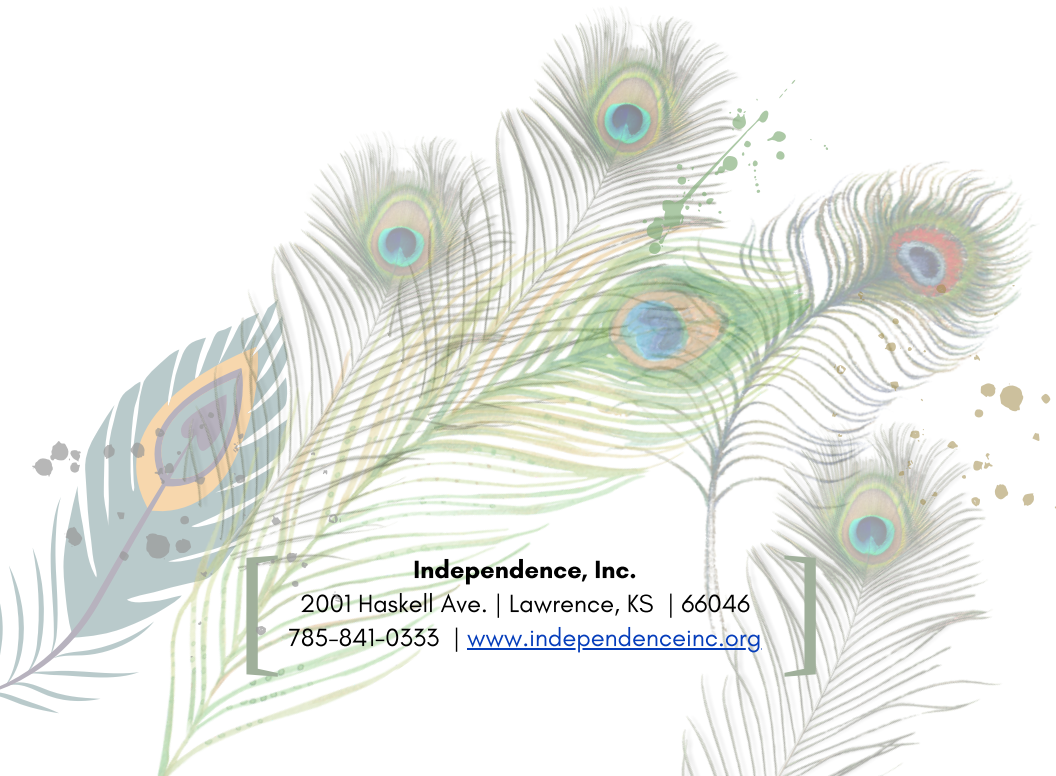
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Leave a legacy and show your lifelong support of disability rights and advocacy by contributing to our mission through a [planned gift](#). Find out how, including the financial benefits to YOU by contacting Chip Blaser, Executive Director, Douglas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

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Visit our [FB page](#) for an onsite "donate" button. While you're there, like and share our posts to show your support and sign up for our quarterly e-newsletter at [www.facebook.com/independenceincCIL/](https://www.facebook.com/independenceincCIL/). You can also follow us on [Twitter \(twitter.com/independenceinc\)](https://twitter.com/independenceinc) and Instagram ([instagram.com/independenceinclawrence/](https://instagram.com/independenceinclawrence/))

Community Support



**Independence, Inc.**

2001 Haskell Ave. | Lawrence, KS | 66046

785-841-0333 | [www.independenceinc.org](http://www.independenceinc.org)