



CLOSED

Office Closures

Spring Holiday
April 3, 2026

Memorial Day
May 25, 2026



We are on the Web!

Visit us at:
www.rcilinc.org
or scan our QR code
below.



Find us on:



Like and Follow us!

RCIL Names Ottawa Resident 2025 Direct Support Worker of the Year



Pictured: The 2025 DSW of the Year Award Rita Barton (left) and Zachary Terry (right).

The Board of Directors of the Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (Osage City) has named Zachary Terry of Ottawa, Kansas as RCIL's 2025 Direct Support Worker (DSW) of the Year. Zachary was nominated for this recognition by Rita Barton, also of Ottawa. Barton had this to say about the support she receives from Terry, "He always comes with a smile and a positive attitude, willing to do whatever needs to be done." Barton added, "He is very good worker and goes above and beyond the call of duty. He does all my housework; he fixes my breakfast and lunch everyday."

"The support that DSWs provide is incredibly valuable, not only is this work rewarding and challenging, it's life-changing", said Deone Wilson, Executive Director of RCIL. Wilson went on to say, "Rita and Zachary have an especially positive relationship. They truly care about each other. Direct Support Workers are the backbone of the Home and Community Based Services that RCIL provides throughout the State of Kansas. Unfortunately, many people are going without the services and support they need because they have been unable to find anyone to hire. More caring people like Zachary are needed for these roles." RCIL helps connect DSWs with the individuals that need assistance with activities of daily living such as cooking, housekeeping, personal care, sleep support, etc. Anyone interested in working as a DSW should call RCIL toll free at 877-929-7655.

Kansas Disability Caucus - August 2026

Do you want a chance to voice the issues affecting Kansans with disabilities, along with solutions? Save the date to attend the Kansas Disability Caucus on August 12 - 14, 2026 at Hotel Topeka at City Center in Topeka. Stay tuned for more information.

**EMPOWERMENT
IN ACTION**

SHAPING OUR
FUTURE



Join us as we work to empower our disability community, encourage action through advocacy, and ultimately shape the future of Kansans with disabilities!

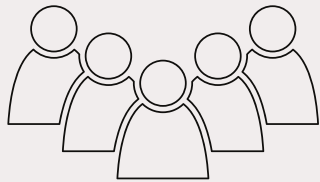
August 12-14, 2026
Hotel Topeka
at City Center



Registration
materials
coming soon!

Kansas Disability Caucus 2026

SAVE THE DATE!



RCIL Board of Directors

Loren DeBaun
Osage City, KS

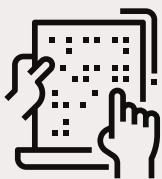
Carrie Hagemann
Topeka, KS

Kraig Kettler
Chairperson
Paola, KS

Dana Pinkston
Lyndon, KS

Tim Reeser
Melvern, KS

Carrie Sunday
Overbrook, KS



Alternate Formats

To receive a copy of this newsletter in an alternate format, please call RCIL at 785-528-3105.

Tips on Hiring a Direct Support Worker

Getting off to a good start when hiring a new Direct Support Worker (DSW) helps ensure a successful relationship in receiving the services you need to remain independent in your own home.

If you have someone that you have interviewed and may want to hire, listed below are some important steps you should complete:

- Ask for work references.
 - Request the names and contact information for individuals or companies for whom the applicant has recently worked.
- Contact the work references.
 - Call or contact the applicant's work references.
 - It is easier and faster to telephone the work references but many employers require a written request with a signed Release of Information by the applicant before providing any information.
 - Even with a signed release many employers will only tell you the dates that a person worked for them and if they are eligible for re-hire.
 - Not being eligible for re-hire is a flag that needs further investigation on your part. If the previous employer will not provide additional information, you may want to ask the applicant.
 - Ask previous employer(s):
 - *Would you hire this person again?*
 - *Was this person reliable? Were they on time?*
 - *Did they perform the tasks they were hired to do?*
 - *They said they worked for you from ____ to ____ (dates)? Is this information correct?*
 - The applicant may ask you not to contact his/her current employer. Please respect this and ask the applicant for another employment reference for you to contact.
 - If the applicant cannot provide you with any work references, ask them why.
 - Have they not worked anywhere else?
 - Do they not want you to talk to their previous employers? Why?
 - There may be a good explanation for this. OR
 - You may not want to hire this person.
- Ensure applicant understands the duties and requirements of the job.
 - Be specific in explaining exactly what your job requires. Examples of what you expect or might require:
 - Reliability and confidentiality are essential.



Pictured: A picture of a person's hands holding another person's hands..

Continued on page 3

Coffey County Resource Guide

Information and Referral (I&R) is a Core Service that RCIL offers to anyone with or without a disability. RCIL staff receive calls from consumers with questions about available community resources in their county. Below are a few resources available in Coffey County.



Pictured: A person dialing their phone to make a phone call.

Contact RCIL at 785-528-3105 if you have questions or need assistance to locate resources in your area.

Agency Name	Services	Phone Number
Coffey County Health Department	Health Education, Immunizations, WIC, Clinic Services, and In Home Services.	620-364-8631
Coffey County Housing Authority	Low Income Housing.	620-364-8895
Coffey County Ministerial Alliance	An Indoor/Outdoor site where you select or receive groceries and/or household items to take home.	620-364-1459
Coffey County Public Transportation	All residents of Coffey County are eligible to ride the bus to medical appointments or for shopping trips.	620-364-1935
East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging	Home Care Services, Meals on Wheels, Legal Assistance, and Caregiver Support Groups.	785-242-7200
Life Care Center of Burlington	Offers inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation and skilled nursing care.	620-364-2117

Tips on Hiring a DSW Continued

Continued from page 2

- Physical requirements (Do you require lifting, transferring, wheelchair maneuvering, lifting/moving of equipment?)
- Housekeeping, meal preparation, laundry (can they cook, physically do housekeeping and laundry?)
- Valid Driver's License (will you need someone to drive you to shop, errands, etc.?)
 - Transportation to Medicaid covered appointments is supposed to be provided by your Managed Care Organization (MCO).

These are just a few of the processes you should follow when hiring a new DSW. For more information and assistance on hiring, managing and terminating your DSWs, please contact RCIL's Information and Assistance Specialists, Lita Bloomquist or Rachel Johnson at 785-528-3105.



HIPAA Privacy Notice

RCIL's Notice of Privacy Practices based on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is available in every RCIL office and on the RCIL website at <http://rcilinc.org/resources>.

You can request a copy of the notice at anytime by contacting RCIL at 1-800-580-7245 or info@rcilinc.org.



Have you Moved?

If you have moved or changed your phone number, name, or email address, call 1-800-580-7245 so we can keep in contact with you!



2026

Upcoming Events

RCIL will be having a booth at the following events below.

If you are in the area, stop by and see us!

April 4 - Topeka

Adapted Recreation Expo

Where:

Crestview
Community Center

Time:

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

April 16 - Osage City

Osage County Senior
Health Fair

Where:

Osage County
Senior Center

Time:

10:00 am – 1:00 pm

April 23 - Topeka

Disability Support
Resource Fair

Where:

The Trust Center at JAG

Time:

4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Continued on page 6



Free Emergency Preparedness Assistance

Springtime in Kansas is an important time to remind all Kansans about being prepared for dangerous weather. As the freezing cold temperatures and snow slowly give way to warmer temperatures and green grass, the thunderstorms, hail, and tornadoes also move in to take their place.

Springtime emergencies may come in all sorts of forms like severe weather, flooding, or fires... are you ready? Do you have an emergency supply kit ready to go at a moment's notice? RCIL's Independent Living Specialists are available to help people with disabilities create a personal emergency preparedness plan before disaster strikes.



Pictured: A picture of an Operation Red File.

Already have a plan? Perhaps "Operation Red File" would be a way to bring an added layer of safety to your home in case of a personal medical emergency. If you are interested in learning more about it, or developing a personal preparedness plan, contact your local RCIL office to learn more.

Kansas ABLÉ Account Savings

ABLE accounts give persons with disabilities the ability to save money. This still preserves their Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits. Want to know more? Call the Kansas ABLÉ Savings Plan at 888-609-8919 or visit their website at <https://savewithable.com/ks/home.html>. Enrollment requires an online application.



Pictured: Kansas ABLÉ Savings Plan logo.

Starting January 2026, persons with disabilities whose disability began before age 46 can open an ABLÉ account. This expands access to millions including more veterans. ABLÉ accounts are tax-advantaged savings accounts that can be used for education, housing and health care plus more expenses. The earnings grow tax deferred and the contributions are made on an after-tax basis. The program helps individuals improve their health, independence and quality of life while maintaining their benefits.

RCIL's New Full Time Staff

RCIL is excited to introduce their newest staff members to their team!



Micheala Lacey, Payroll Clerk, started at RCIL on December 1, 2025 in the Osage City office. She will be providing a variety of payroll functions for consumers who are self-directing their personal care services through HCBS Waivers.

Continued on page 6

2026 RCIL Friends Group Schedule

Friends are groups of individuals who have, or have experienced, a disability. We meet monthly to share and learn about disability related topics, to advocate for change in our communities, and to have fun!

All Friends group meetings are from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm unless otherwise noted on the schedule.

El Dorado

April 15 Emergency Preparedness
 May 20 Service Animals/Emotional Support Animals
 June 17 Tapping for Mental Health
 Location: Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (RCIL)
 120 S. Gordy St., Suite 3, El Dorado, KS 67042

Eureka

April 14 Emergency Preparedness
 May 12 Service Animals/Emotional Support Animals
 June 9 Tapping for Mental Health
 Location: Magic Circle Apartments - South Community Room
 401 Magic Circle Rd., Eureka, KS 67045

Online Meeting Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

April 21 Audio-Reader
 May 19 Self-Advocacy 101
 June 16 Service Dogs
 Location: Zoom - Video Conference by computer or phone

Topeka Meeting Time: 9:00 am - 10:30 am

April 24 Emergency Preparedness
 May 22 Accessible Attractions in Topeka
 June 26 Fun Potluck Social
 Location: Luther Place I Apartments
 5000 SW Huntoon St., Topeka, KS 66604

Emporia

April 27 First Aid Techniques
 May 26 Money Management
 June 29 Home Health and How it Helps
 Location: Broadview Towers Apartments
 110 W. 6th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801

Iola

April 28 Stress Management
 May 26 Mental Health
 June 23 First Aid Techniques
 Location: Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (RCIL)
 214 N. Jefferson Ave., Iola, KS 66749

Osage City

April 29 Learn About St. Croix Hospice
 May 27 Food Pantries & ECKAN Services
 June 22 Emergency Preparedness
 Location: Osage City Public Library
 515 Main St., Osage City, KS 66523

Topeka

April 17 Emergency Preparedness
 May 15 Accessible Attractions in Topeka
 June 19 Crime Awareness
 Location: Resource Center for Independent Living, Inc. (RCIL)
 2200 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66604

PLEASE CALL AHEAD to check the status of your meeting.
 All Friends group meetings are subject to change.

For more information about RCIL Friends group or to request accommodations two weeks prior to a meeting
Contact RCIL at 1-800-580-7245 or info@rcilinc.org

**2026
Upcoming Events
Continued**

Continued from page 4

April 25 - Emporia

Pathways to Hope:

Community Resource Fair

Where:

Lyon County Fairgrounds -

Anderson Building

Time:

9:30 am – 2:00 pm

April 30 - El Dorado

Spring Fling Butler County

Senior Resource Fair

Where:

El Dorado Civic Center

Time:

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

May 2 - Winfield

Cowley County Health &

Safety Fair

Where:

Fairgrounds Barn 4

Time:

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

May 9 - Council Grove

Resource Fair

Where:

Diversicare of
Council Grove

Time:

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

June 4 - Iola

Family Safety Night

Where:

Iola City Square

Time:

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

RCIL's New Full Time Staff Continued

Continued from page 4

Kim Dietrich, Independent Living Specialist, started at RCIL on December 2, 2025 in the Topeka office. She will be providing RCIL's five core services in Shawnee County and surrounding counties. The core services are information and referral, advocacy, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and transition services.



Melissa Johnson, Payroll Clerk, started at RCIL on January 2, 2026 in the Osage City office. She will be providing a variety of payroll functions for consumers who are self-directing their personal care services through HCBS Waivers.

Lisa Drybread, Independent Living Specialist, started at RCIL on February 9, 2026 in the Iola Office. She will be providing RCIL's five core services in Allen County and surrounding counties. The core services are information and referral, advocacy, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and transition services.



Summer Shields transitioned to her new position as EVV Compliance Specialist on February 23, 2026 at RCIL in the Osage City office. She will be working to install the Kansas AuthentiCare mobile application for Direct Support Workers (DSWs) and ensuring geofence compliance.

Scotty Ferris, Independent Living Specialist, started at RCIL on March 11, 2026 in the Osage City office. He will be providing RCIL's five core services in Osage County and surrounding counties. The cores services are information and referral, advocacy, peer counseling, independent living skills training, and transition services.



Laken Beaty, Payroll Clerk, started at RCIL on March 12, 2026 in the Osage City office. She will be providing a variety of payroll functions for consumers who are self-directing their personal care services through HCBS Waivers.

Enter For Your Chance To WIN A FREE Prize!

To be entered into a drawing for a FREE prize, complete the quiz below and turn it in to RCIL by April 29, 2026 in the following ways:

- By mail: RCIL P.O. Box 257 Osage City, KS 66523
- OR emailing your answers to info@rcilinc.org



Pictured: A phrase "Enter to Win!" written on a red circle.

The winning ticket will be drawn on April 30, 2026 and the prize will be mailed to the winner.



Fill in the Blanks

1. Call or contact the applicant's _____
is one of the tips on hiring a DSW.
2. A person whose disability began _____ age 46 can open a Kansas ABLE Savings Plan.
3. RCIL will have a booth at the Resource Fair in Council Grove on _____ from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Settling In and Staying Warm

An Independent Living Specialist (ILS) assisted a consumer with four young children that came into the RCIL office stating she had heard about RCIL through the community. She told the ILS that she had just moved into the area from out of state with nothing but a bag full of clothes for herself and her children. The consumer asked about RCIL services and the ILS explained them to her. The consumer expressed her concerns about keeping her family warm. She explained that they live in a big house that has a floor furnace, but it isn't keeping her children's bedroom warm. She requested a space heater to use to put in her children's bedroom. The ILS and the consumer set up appointments. They met and completed paperwork to obtain a space heater. The consumer received a space heater and she told the ILS a few weeks later that the space heater has been able to keep her children's bedroom warm.



Pictured: A space heater on a wooden floor.



You Asked For It

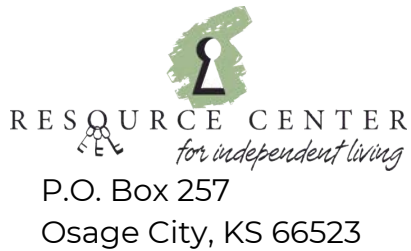
I need a ramp at my home. Can RCIL help me with that?

RCIL has Independent Living Specialists (ILS) that work with individuals with disabilities who need help to get a ramp built at their home. This may involve locating contractors and applying for financial assistance. If you know someone who may need assistance to get a ramp, contact RCIL at 785-528-3105.

Does RCIL have a website?

Yes! RCIL's website is www.rcilinc.org. RCIL also has a Facebook page too! RCIL frequently posts disability related resources or information on their website and Facebook page. Check it out!

If you have questions or need any resources call RCIL at 1-800-580-7245.



Non-Profit
Organization
PAID
Osage City, KS
Permit No. 93

OFFICE CLOSURES
APRIL 3, 2026
MAY 25, 2026

RCIL Home Office

Address

P.O. Box 257
1137 Laing St.
Osage City, KS 66523

Phone

785-528-3105 Voice
800-580-7245 Toll Free
877-929-7655 Payroll Help Desk

Fax

785-528-3665

Payroll Fax

785-528-2938

Satellite Offices

El Dorado

120 S. Gordy St., Suite 3
El Dorado, KS 67042
316-322-7853 Voice
800-960-7853 Toll Free
316-322-7888 Fax

Emporia

624 Commercial St.
Emporia, KS 66801
620-342-1648 Voice
888-458-2036 Toll Free
620-342-1821 Fax

Iola

214 N. Jefferson Ave.
Iola, KS 66749
620-365-8144 Voice
877-944-8144 Toll Free
620-365-7726 Fax

Topeka

2200 SW 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66604
785-267-1717 Voice
877-719-1717 Toll Free
785-267-1711 Fax