



Empowerment through Advocacy, Peer Support and Education.

**Celebrating over 25 years of
independent living in
northwest Colorado**

NWCCI.ORG

Want to help? We are always looking for:

- **New Community Partnerships**
- **Consumer and Staff Referrals**
 - **Volunteers**
- **Financial Assistance and Fundraising Support**

To get in touch, email fundraising@nwcci.org



To donate, please visit: <https://www.coloradogives.org/donate/NWCCI>

Table of Contents

<u>A Note from our Executive Director</u>	3
<u>Services We Provide</u>	5
<u>Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties</u>	6
<u>Routt County</u>	7
<u>Summit County</u>	8
<u>Grand County</u>	9
<u>Transportation</u>	11
<u>Nursing Home Transition and Home Modifications</u>	12
<u>Life Skills Camp</u>	13

A Note from Ian Engle, our Executive Director



NWCCI is people with disabilities working together to achieve greater independence and actively participate in the Colorado mountain communities we've served since 1997. We are proud to be of service and continue to actively engage people with disabilities for achieving independence. Every challenge we face results in being better equipped to perform and execute our

mission: NWCCI works with people who have disabilities to explore options, set goals, develop skills and take action for living more independently. We envision the communities with resources and opportunities for people with disabilities to do for ourselves and establish the active and civically-engaged self-confidence to overcome pity, learned helplessness, stigma and toxic charity.

The Independent Living approach differs from traditional service providers, in that we assist individuals to achieve greater independence through their own action of self-advocacy, peer support and developing skills to explore options, make informed choices and reach goals for living well in our communities. People with disabilities work with NWCCI to engage a network of partner agencies and organizations as we leverage capacity through collaboration.

NWCCI works to realize comfortable spaces where everyone is accepted, regardless of background, ability or belief. We share resources with a commitment to listening, respecting and taking the necessary steps for achieving equitable access. We continue to work with anyone who has a goal for living independently in Grand, Moffat, Rio Blanco, Routt and Summit Counties and meet the diverse array of evolving needs. We thrive in our demonstrated ability to be flexible and accommodating, we adjust, improvise and adapt as a natural course of design.

The NWCCI staff and board of directors are people with disabilities. Our board is actively engaged in strategic development and direction, including financial guidance and a dedicated commitment to supporting staff, recognizing that our staff is the foundation of our success with the individuals we serve.

NWCCI is supported by government contracts, grants, donations, fundraising, and third-party fee for service program revenue, with no charge to anyone using our services. We continue to successfully diversify our sources of financial support. Your generous donations are integral to furthering our mission.

Thank you for partnering with us to celebrate more than 25 years of living independently in northwest Colorado!



Mark your calendars: On September 14, 2024 we will be hosting a celebration of disabilities at NWCCI's community event, Hungry for Independence, at the Yampa River Botanic Park. More information to follow.

To donate, please visit: <https://www.coloradogives.org/donate/NWCCI>

We accomplish our mission through the following services and programs:

- **Advocacy:** Individuals setting goals and developing plans of action to incorporate identified supports and services, and working together to see systems change by sharing lived experience with elected officials and key decision makers.
- **Peer Mentoring:** NWCCI staff, board members, volunteers and consumers with disabilities supporting one another as we share experience, strength, hope, tools, techniques and resources.
- **Independent Living Skills Development:** Developing and implementing skills for managing finances, benefits, health, nutrition, social and civic engagement, employment opportunities and ability to choose and direct services.
- **Information and Referral:** Connecting people with services, resources and support from community partners, faith-based organizations and government agencies. NWCCI works with individuals to obtain assistive technology devices, adaptive equipment, service animals and all manner of tools and resources for achieving greater independence.
- **Transition Services:** Assisting individuals to explore options for moving out of institutional or custodial environments into the community with the ability to choose and direct services and supports.
- **Outreach and Support:** Guidance and technical assistance for educational facilities, businesses, government agencies, community partners and landlords, focusing on the advantages of an inclusive, diverse workforce and community.
- **Transportation Services:** Identifying and engaging accessible transportation for getting to medical appointments, social engagements and achieving freedom from isolation.
- **Youth Services:** We assist young adults in transitioning from school to adult life in the community.

Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties

Our services have been expanding out in Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. We have been gaining more consumers for benefits counseling. A lot of our cases with benefits access had positive outcomes.

Rio Blanco county services have increased significantly. Most are for benefits counseling and our presence in the county has made a difference. We were able to assist a legally blind senior citizen and she was able to adapt better with a donated Da Vinci vision machine until she lost more of her sight.

We have also been involved with the Youth Leadership Forum with the state of Colorado and had another great year, watching many of the participants come out of their shell, engage with their peers and try new activities. The youth had the opportunity to visit Fort Fun in Fort Collins and one individual overcame their fears and rode the go-karts for the very first time.



Staci Nichols is an Independent Living Coordinator(ILC) covering Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties. Staci works with educators and our education partners to implement communication accessibility and ensure that they are equipped to better accommodate deaf and hard of hearing students. She advocates for the students access to education and ability to learn.

Please feel welcome to contact Staci by phone (text only): (970) 819-7027 and email: staci@nwcci.org

Routt County

NWCCI in Routt County supports and advocates for people of all ages with housing, peer support, access to healthcare, application assistance, home modifications, transportation, information and referral services, education, employment, freedom from isolation and continues to assist with many other essential skill building tools for life navigation.

In Routt County, we provide ongoing support to university students – NWCCI has been working with two students for approximately 6 years in partnership with DVR (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation).

In one case, after high school, NWCCI helped them with their initial employment goals and as their job coach via DVR to find and maintain employment. We also helped the consumer set up kick-starter campaigns to raise funds to help them attend university.

Once the student left Steamboat to attend university, we communicated regularly to discuss educational challenges, personal growth, stress management strategies, vocational aspirations and peer support. Now they are returning to Steamboat and NWCCI will continue to work with them as they live well and grow into adulthood.

The second individual who is currently still attending university (and working with DVR) attends weekly meetings with NWCCI to discuss challenges with living on their own for the first time, good practices for keeping up with high volume work-loads and building healthy personal relationships with their peers and instructors. NWCCI continues to work with them as they have a very specific employment goal and being a vendor with DVR, NWCCI also provides job coaching services with this individual as well.



James Higgins is an Independent Living Coordinator (ILC) for Routt County.

Please feel welcome to contact James by phone: (970) 846-8085 or by email: james@nwcci.org

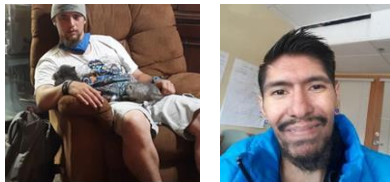
Summit County

In Summit County, we have continued to serve the community in Social Security benefits, including helping one individual to get her benefits reinstated.

We actively engage in the bi-weekly Summit Food Response Team, which works to lower the food inequity throughout the county. This has helped to educate and support the community in tapping into the other food resources available in the county as the cost of living continues to increase. This includes the community dinner supported by the Elks Lodge and the local Rotary Club, SmartBellies from the school district, the Café Food Rescue and the Summit County Food Equity Coalition (of which Leo has been a long-time volunteer). Leo also actively participates in helping with the local food bank.

We continue to participate in the Statewide Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), as we are both 2018 alumni, to support young adults with disabilities, ages 16-26, to achieve independence through peer support and presentations with people with disabilities that teach about disability rights, self-advocacy and team building skills. We continue to maintain our partnerships with the local DVR office and the high school to locally support our youth transition program.

Evan is the chair of the Statewide Independent Living Council, which writes the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) committee. The SPIL is the document that drives the Independent Living Services funds that are received from the state and federal levels, and includes public feedback in developing the main goals of the SPIL. The committee is responsible for developing the SPIL for the next three years and will be going into effect October 1st of this year.



Please feel free to contact our Summit County Independent Living Coordinators, Evan Shockley by phone: (970) 875-4836 or email: evan@nwcci.org, or Leo Santos by phone: (970) 620-1195 or email: leo@nwcci.org.

Grand County

Grand County NWCCI services have continued to provide benefit access to community resources for people with disabilities. This includes access to health care, housing, employment, mental health support, self advocacy, assistive technology, disability income, home health services, transportation, social engagement opportunities and youth in transition services.



Individual Spotlight

Through NWCCI's Home Modification Fund, we were able to support the installation of safety railings at the home of a community member who is blind. Not only were safety railings installed for NWCCI's consumer condo unit, our request brought attention to other areas within the complex in need of safety railings, which were installed and paid for by the Home Owner's Association. NWCCI's consumer has received kind gratitude from her neighbors for the safety railing additions.

Since she has worked with NWCCI, this same consumer has been able to build confidence and connections with other resources, moving from home isolation to joining peer groups with others experiencing vision loss. She has taken regular classes with the CO Center for the Blind in Denver, one of our nation's few specialist centers guiding people with visual impairments to thrive independently. She has gained valuable mobility training, assistive technology tools, library resources, and is beginning to learn Braille. On top of that, she has braved ski classes during the winter months with the National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD) at Winter Park Resort.

Individual Spotlight – Dylan Cuellar

Dylan Cuellar has worked with NWCCI for several years now, beginning as a youth transitioning to adulthood after high school. Dylan has been successfully employed and recognized as a model worker (employer of the month). He is also learning how to drive with his CO DL permit and saving funds for a vehicle. The most delightful news for Dylan this year is that he became engaged to his lovely fiancé, Nikita! They happily live independently in an apartment with their two dogs, Rex and Rose. Dylan enjoys giving back to his community and is a positive mentor to other people living with disabilities.



Joy McCoy is a Lead ILC covering East Grand County, working with NWCCI since 2018. Along with facilitating NWCCI's Life Skills Camp, Joy partners with most Grand County local care providers to foster collaborative support and increase disability awareness. Joy is also on the Town of Fraser's Planning Commission.

Please feel welcome to contact Joy by phone: (970) 846-8038 or email: joymccoy@nwcci.org



Evan Shockley is an ILC covering West Grand County, who joined the NWCCI team a year and a half ago. He previously worked at another Colorado Center for Independent Living as a Loan Closet Technician, Youth Program Coordinator and ILC of the span of 5 years. He partners closely with a multitude of Grand County services and departments to directly impact the residents of the county with disabilities. Evan exemplifies charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity from being a 5 year member and previous office at his local Elk's Lodge.

Transportation

NWCCI's transportation program addresses the growing needs for people with disabilities in underserved rural Colorado counties to achieve their transportation solutions. We provide safe, economically viable (free to user) transportation to non-emergency medical appointments to vulnerable users, primarily in Moffat and Routt County. We now are evolving our program, which has grown into including providing multi-passenger transport to regularly reoccurring appointments within our five counties, and throughout Colorado. We also provide transport for running errands, attending recreational or learning events, and achieving freedom from isolation, and we transport people moving from a nursing home to their own home.

NWCCI consults with each of our consumers to educate them on all interdependent options to meet all their transportation needs, within and outside of their home communities. NWCCI staff educate and join a person to explore available options and make informed choices for using public transportation.



Individual Spotlight:

The transportation team has been assisting a person in a wheelchair who usually goes to the store on his own but due to heavy snow this winter, it has been difficult for him to get around, or even out of his house. He has at times worn himself out trying to do it all on his own and will call us to schedule a ride to the store. One time, because the consumer doesn't have a proper wheelchair ramp at his apartment, the driver came to help him shovel so that he could leave the building.

Nursing Home Transition

NWCCI facilitates opportunities for people with disabilities to successfully transition from nursing home institutions back into the community, or to avoid having to enter an institution in the first place. NWCCI facilitates Rapid Reintegration to begin working with individuals immediately when they arrive at a nursing home, so they can transition back into their home.

NWCCI staff works with, supports and coordinates the network of people surrounding the person transitioning, including providers of services working to make the transition successful. The focus is on identifying and exploring options and opportunities with the individual to develop skills needed to live more independently in the community. People who are supported to overcome learned helplessness and develop skills for choosing and directing community-based services, are best equipped to remain in their communities of their choice. The transition and support continue beyond when a person leaves the nursing home, for at least a year.

Please feel free to contact our Nursing Home Transition Coordinator, Shannon Buchanan by phone: (970) 629-0927 and email: shannon@nwcci.org

Home Modification Program



Many individuals have new or ongoing home modification needs to achieve accessibility solutions and more independence. Some examples of modifications include temporary or permanent ramps, elevator chairs (chair lifts on a rail to go upstairs), and hand rails in showers. We focus on health, safety, and freedom from isolation for

these individuals, assisting them with their move out of the nursing home, or a move back home after new accessibility needs are realized. We provide household set-up services and life skills training, preparing the individual for their arrival home, and providing access.

Life Skills Camp



NWCCI hosts an amazing and impactful summer Life Skills Camp (LSC) for youth transitioning into adulthood. The participants that came to the 2023 LSC, held at STARS (Steamboat Adaptive Recreational Sports) Ranch in Steamboat, came out of the camp with noticeable, increased self confidence. Participants didn't want to leave, feeling profoundly empowered and accepted through the social bonds they built together. Each participant pushed themselves out of their comfort zones, creating a known pride that can only be discovered when overcoming new personal challenges.



Life Skills Camp



All campers and NWCCI staff grew from this special event, gaining countless independent living skills and creative ways to daily navigate the unique difficulties they're faced with. They found and developed their voices through collaborative musical art workshops given by OPERA Steamboat. They visited Fish Creek Falls, created tie dye shirts, connected through team-building activities, prepared meals, rode horses, learned about civil rights and self-advocacy, and held soulful discussions about taking charge of increasing the quality of their lives. A favorite example: One of our participants (who is almost completely paralyzed) stated that he felt like he had legs to walk on again after pushing himself to ride a horse in the STARS arena. This camp is truly a life changing and one-of-a-kind experience!

This year's Life Skills Camp will be hosted on July 25-27, 2024 at STARS Ranch in Steamboat Springs.

It is FREE for youth with disabilities, ages 16-26.

For more information, feel free to call Joy McCoy at (970) 846-8038.

Our support staff is eager to assist individuals to live well in the community. Feel free to contact us at any time. For mail, please use the Steamboat Springs mailing address. For phone calls, contact the ILC in your area or dial (970) 871-4838.

Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties

551 Tucker Street
Craig, CO 81625

Routt County

3001 S. Lincoln Ave, Suite C8
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Grand County

365 East Agate Ave, #B
Granby, CO 80446

Summit County

325 Lake Dillon Drive, Unit 201
Dillon, CO 80435



Empowerment through Advocacy, Peer Support and Education.