

GRAINS OF RICE



Older Kansans Employment Program

Have you recently retired and can't find something to keep your mind and body busy? Would you like a little more spending money for a vacation or home improvement project? There may be an

answer for you with the Older Kansans Employment Program (OKEP). This program is funded by the Kansas Legislature and is designed to provide employment placement services to Kansans 55 years of age and over with an emphasis on employment in the private sector.

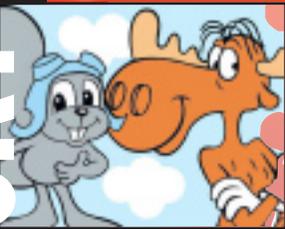
Priority is given to unemployed, older Kansans who are the most in need. OKEP provides skills assessment, resume preparation, counseling, job-seeking skills training, limited classroom training, job clubs, referrals, job development services, and mentoring services. In addition, OKEP provides assistance to potential employers in utilizing the contributions of older Kansans as part of their workforce.

One of the challenges of re-entering employment after retiring is that many things have changed. So we have to adapt and adjust to those changes and sometimes we need help. Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR) has been assisting people with disabilities since 1997 in Central Kansas in the areas of independent living and employment. Their experience in helping others has given them the ability to assist the older workers of Kansas in finding employment. They can help you in your search for meaning through being employed as a mature, experienced Senior Adult Worker.

OKEP is funded in part through a grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce. The eligibility requirements for this program are few. You must be at least 55 or over, and a resident of Kansas. OKEP is offered as a free service for Kansans. They have found many of us need to work. We may need to work for additional income or we may need to work because we need to have a purpose in our lives after the age of retirement. Many of us have found this business of getting older is more challenging than we ever thought it would be.

PILR offers assistance in applying for jobs, assistance in putting together resumes, assistance in re-learning how to apply for jobs in this digital age, and encouragement. Finding a new direction after retirement is part of the challenge. Finding why I need to work is another part of the challenge. If interested in finding employment during your retirement years, please call PILR of Hutchinson, KS (620-663-3989) and speak to Bob Gilbert.

NO BULL FROM ROCKY



I see by the old clock on the wall it's time for another editorial, by definition my personal opinion. And I see by the old clock on the wall that it's stuck at pretty much where it was last year and the year before regarding this seemingly never-ending pandemic. A few quick Covid facts as of Jan 14:

	Total Cases	Total Deaths
US	65,000,000	849,000
Kansas	752,974	7,820
Rice County	2,531	22

And the numbers just keep growing (for graph junkies, the lines appear almost asymptotic) and that's bad. Schools closed. Hospital ICUs packed full...So 2,531 cases don't look too bad—until you realize that's over **25% of our county**. *Why is that?*

I believe the reason is clear. As Pogo said in another century, "We have met the enemy and it is us." For various reasons, a large number of citizens of the United States, Kansas, Rice County, etc. have chosen to disregard recommendations to wear masks when around others, ignore social distancing, and refuse to get vaccinated. It's staggering to know some folks will take horse de-wormer or remedies from "Doctor Love's Traveling Salvation Show" or other potentially damag-

ing concoctions because of the flood of disinformation coming through certain media outlets. The Russians call it *maskirovka*—disinformation.

In my opinion, it seems like some folks prefer to stick to their misinformed guns and risk hospitalization or the "long haul" or death for them or their family members. When you think about it, 22 deaths—so far--in the county doesn't seem like much, unless it's your child, your grandchild, your spouse, your friend—you. Then it's a little more personal.

The best way for all of us to get back out there in life is for us ALL to follow the guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Rice County Public Health Department, and our primary care physicians: First and foremost, get your series of vaccinations. "The life you save may be your own."



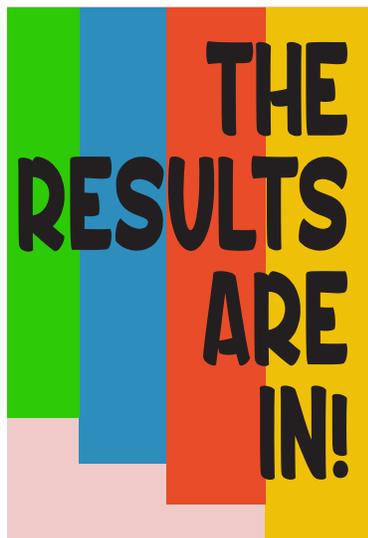
ROCKY
GAINES

RCCA
BOARD
PRESIDENT

2021 MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT REVIEW

By Daylene Linville, Senior Services Advisor

The Rice County Council on Aging's Medicare counselors were kept very busy during the 2021 Medicare Open Enrollment period helping Rice County residents with their prescription drug plans for 2022. It was also a very trying period due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, so our office safety precautions were followed to protect all of our clients. Due to reduced direct in-office contacts, more phone or email contacts were required per client to ensure each client was enrolled for the most economic plan. Through it all, the RCCA Medicare counselors were able to service 305 individuals during the seven-week enrollment period providing for the client's specific needs. Our clients will save a combined total of \$286,583 on the costs of their Part D drug plans for 2022. Some of our clients decided to continue with their current plan for 2022. Several RCCA clients with a Medicare drug plan found these plans to be their best choice for a 2022 drug plan.



LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

Is your household eligible for heating assistance this winter?

LIEAP Registration is Happening NOW!

Call to make your appointment before March 31.

620-257-5153

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- 1) An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
- 2) Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

There are income guidelines and you can contact our office for an appointment to see if you qualify.

Things to bring to your appointment:

- 1) Info on all persons living in the home, including Social Security numbers & DOB.
- 2) Documentation of **ALL** income.
- 3) Copies of the last **THREE** months utility bills for each vendor.

Check this out!

The income guidelines increased this year.

You may now qualify for assistance!

2022 Income Eligibility Guidelines

Persons Living at the Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,610
2	\$2,178
3	\$2,745
4	\$3,313
5	\$3,880

Healthy Tips to Take Care of Your Heart

Your heart is the powerhouse of your whole body, that's why it's important to provide it with the attention and care it needs. When you care for your heart, your entire body benefits. When your heart is healthy, all aspects of your physical health will be too. Here are five effective ways to improve and maintain heart health:

EAT THE RIGHT THINGS

Consuming the vitamins and minerals your heart needs provides the foundation for a healthy heart. Foods that support heart health by reducing cholesterol, lowering blood pressure, and reducing inflammation include: Oats and barley, fatty fish, dark leafy greens, nuts and seeds, beets, avocados, olive oil, legumes, and low-fat dairy. Sodium is a silent but harmful ingredient in most foods. The average American gets about 80% of their daily salt intake from these alone. By limiting the number of processed foods you consume, you may be able to eliminate excess sodium from your diet. Look for alternatives to flavor your foods. Try adding a bit of lemon, vinegar, or different herbs. This adds flavor without the negative effects of sodium.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Not getting enough sleep puts you at a higher risk for cardiovascular disease and coronary heart disease, regardless of age, weight, smoking, and exercise habits. Sleeping too

little changes the way our body functions and can affect blood pressure. This also goes the other way. Too much sleep can also negatively impact heart health. Make sure to get the recommended seven hours to nine hours of sleep every night, and you'll be on track for supporting better heart health.

EXERCISE DAILY

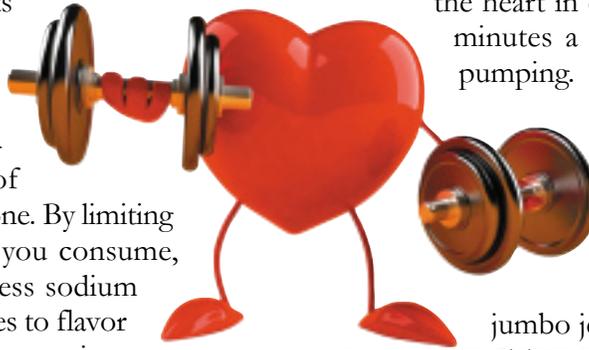
Three types of exercise are vital to heart health: aerobic, resistance, and flexibility (think running, strength training, and yoga, for example). By varying the type of exercises that are performed every day, you can strengthen and train the heart in different ways. Get a minimum of 30 minutes a day of movement to get your heart pumping.

STOP SMOKING

Smoking, with all of its negative side effects, is detrimental to heart health and is the cause of many diseases. In the U.S. alone, smoking kills the equivalent of three crashed jumbo jets every day.

MANAGE STRESS

We all have busy lives and stress is inevitable. While we can't avoid it entirely, we can make attempts to manage stress healthily. Take a yoga class, set aside 30 minutes of "me" time, or practice deep breathing. A little goes a long way in time and stress management. Small steps like these each day can lead to big strides toward better heart health.



In these days of increased requests for service & decreased funding, we are most grateful for each one that donates.

- Cheryl Bernhardt
- William & Judith Best
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- Janice Branham
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- Bonnie Cain
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X Y X H I R E D S K I N S T E J E
S B D U S K W A H A E S A I N T S
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G R O F R E A G L E S O C N O R B

Packers
Jets
Chiefs
Colts
Cowboys

Dolphins
Steelers
Raiders
Niners
Bears

Giants
Redskins
Broncos
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Patriots

Buccaneers
Saints
Seahawks
Eagles
Rams

HEY BARY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE!

What is Hypothermia?

(National Institute on Aging Publication No. 18-AG-7349)

If you are like most people, you feel cold now and then during the winter. What you may not know is that being cold can make you very sick. Older adults can lose body heat fast, faster than when they were young. A big chill can turn into a dangerous problem before an older person even knows what's happening. Doctors call this serious problem hypothermia.

Hypothermia is what happens when your body temperature gets very low. For an older person, a body temperature of 95° or lower can cause many health problems, such as a heart attack, kidney problems, liver damage, or worse.

Being outside in the cold, or even being in a very cold house, can lead to hypothermia. You can take steps to lower your chance of getting hypothermia.

KEEP WARM INSIDE

Living in a cold house, apartment, or other building can cause hypothermia. People who are sick may have special problems keeping warm. Do not let it get too cold inside and dress warmly.

Tips for keeping warm inside:

- Set your heat to at least 68° – 70°. To save on heating bills, close off rooms you are not using. Place a rolled towel in front of all doors to keep out drafts.
- Make sure your house isn't losing heat through windows. Keep your blinds and curtains closed.
- To keep warm at home, wear long underwear under your clothes. Use a blanket to keep your legs and shoulders warm. Wear socks and slippers.
- Make sure you eat enough food to keep up your weight. You need some body fat to stay warm.
- When the weather is cold, avoid alcohol. It can make you lose body heat.
- When you go to sleep, wear long underwear under your pajamas, and use extra covers. Wear a nightcap or stocking hat.
- Ask family or friends to check on you during cold weather. If a power outage leaves you without heat, try to stay with a relative or friend.

BUNDLE UP ON WINDY, COOL DAYS

A heavy wind can quickly lower your body temperature. Check the weather forecast for windy and cold days. On those days, try to stay inside or in a warm place. If you have to go out, wear warm clothes, and don't stay out for a long time.

Tips for bundling up:

- Dress for the weather if you have to go out on chilly, cold, or damp days.
- Wear loose layers of clothing. The air between the layers helps to keep you warm.
- Put on a hat and scarf. You lose a lot of body heat when your head and neck are uncovered.
- Wear a waterproof coat or jacket if it's snowy.
- Change your clothes right away if they get damp or wet.

Warning Signs of Hypothermia



weather.gov/cold

WARNING SIGNS OF HYPOTHERMIA

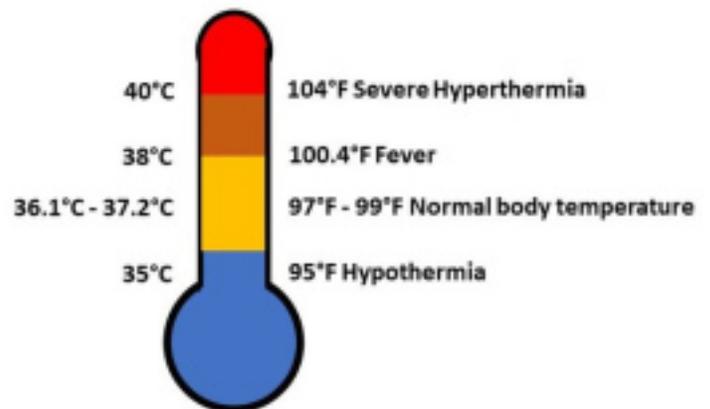
Sometimes it is hard to tell if a person has hypothermia. Look for clues. Is the house very cold? Is the person not dressed for cold weather? Is the person speaking slower than normal and having trouble keeping his or her balance? Watch for the signs of hypothermia in yourself, too. You might become confused if your body temperature gets very low. Talk to your family and friends about the warning signs so they can look out for you.

Early signs of hypothermia:

- Cold feet and hands
- Puffy or swollen face
- Pale skin
- Shivering (*in some cases the person does not shiver*)
- Slower than normal speech or slurred words
- Acting sleepy
- Being angry or confused

Later signs of hypothermia:

- Moving slowly, trouble walking, or being clumsy
- Stiff and jerky arm or leg movements
- Slow heartbeat
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Blacking out or losing consciousness



Call 911 right away if you think someone has warning signs of hypothermia.

You may be able to get help with your heating bills. You can apply for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program. For certain households with low monthly incomes, there is help from the Department of Children and Families. This year, the income levels have changed for this assistance. The Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program could also help with insulation, energy-efficient windows, and doors. Call the RCCA (620-257-5153) or come by to see if you would be eligible for these programs, and pick up an application.

Social Security Cost of Living Increase & Medicare Costs

FOR 2022

By Daylene Linville, Medicare Counselor

This past fall, all beneficiaries receiving Social Security monthly benefits (retirement, disability, and survivors) received some good news about the 5.9% Cost of Living raise. However, it comes at a cost. Medicare Part B premiums, copays, and deductibles will increase in 2022. So how many actual dollars will be available to use for increases in food, transportation fuel, and natural gas to heat our homes, clothing, and most of all, prescription drugs?

I don't have information to share concerning most of those daily needs, but I can share with you the increases of Medicare Parts A & B for 2022. The following is a comparison of 2021 and 2022 expenses:

	2021	2022
Medicare Part A In-Patient Hospital Copays:		
First 60 days	\$1,484	\$1,556
Days 61 - 90	\$352 per day coinsurance	\$389 per day coinsurance
Days 91 - 150	\$704 per day coinsurance	\$778 per day coinsurance
Medicare Part A Skilled Nursing Facility		
Days 21 - 100	\$176 per day coinsurance	\$194.50 per day coinsurance
Medicare Part B Monthly Premiums	\$148.50	\$170.10
Medicare Part B Annual Deductible	\$203	\$233

The steep increase in Supplement Plans with Medicare all depends if you still have Plans C or F. Since January 1, 2020, individuals new to Medicare Insurance can't purchase Plans C or F because those plans covered the annual deductible expense under Part B. Several years ago the independent insurance companies that carry Supplement Plans petitioned Medicare that everyone should pay their annual deductible. Those individuals who still have those plans, will continue to receive the annual deductible as a covered benefit. Annual premium increases are based on a 6% to 8% raise for Plans D, G, and N. But for the C and F Plans, the increases are based on a raise of 10% to 15%. And, it's not going to get any better waiting it out. If you still have a Supplement Plan F or C and find it increasingly difficult to keep that plan, now may be the time to downsize to a Plan G for lower insurance premiums. Changing Supplement Plans can be done any time of the year, and not just during Open Enrollment.

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is also setting aside money in its reserves in the event it decides to have Medicare cover Aduhelm, a new Alzheimer's drug that was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last year. The CMS is still analyzing to determine whether to pay for Aduhelm treatments, estimated at \$56,000 a year.

Are you 60 or older?

If you would like to talk about our services:
Call 620.257.5153 or email: aleciagrcca@gmail.com

Housekeeping & Attendant Care Services

Let us help you, with the things we all hate to do!

Our Housekeepers can assist with:

- General House Cleaning
- Laundry
- Meal Prep
- Local Errands

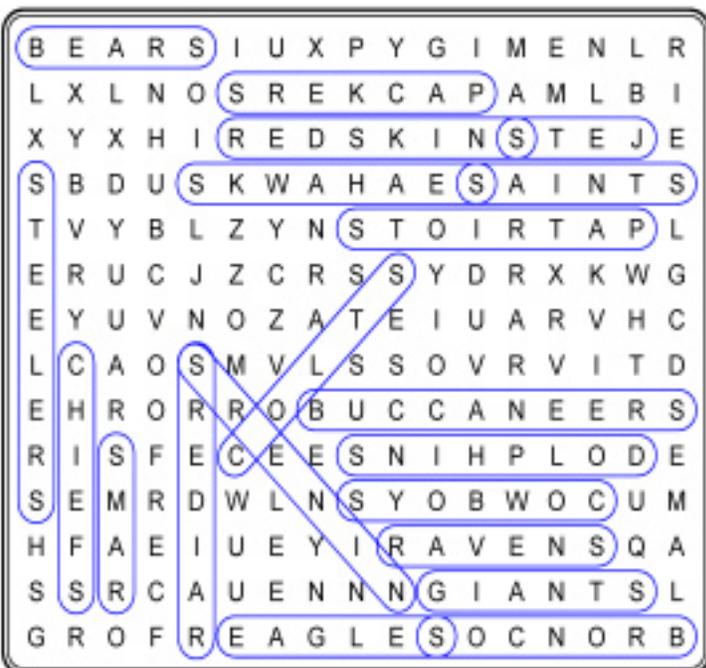
Our Housekeeping Services can help you with the household tasks that we all hate to do. No one likes to dust, vacuum, or do laundry. Also, why does a vacuum cause so much pain? Not to mention how dangerous cleaning a bathtub actually is. The Rice County Council on Aging can assist you with all of those mundane and unsafe jobs.



Our Attendant Care Provider can assist with:

- Medication Management
- Bathing
- Local Pharmacy Pick-ups

Our Attendant Care provider will assist you in daily living tasks. She will help you with bathing, dressing, and other areas of self-care, as well as pharmacy pick-ups and medication preparation. She will give you the supervision and/or help with any area you may need under the direction of a licensed health care professional.

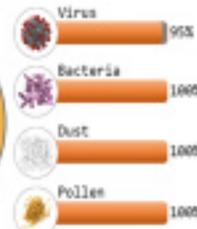


SOLUTION TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 5.

MASK PROTECTION EFFICIENCY

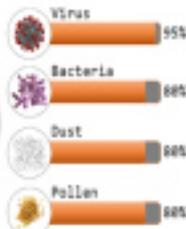
N95

Strongest Protection



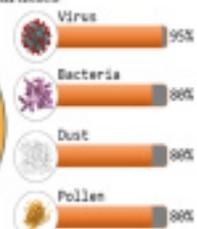
Surgical Mask

Medical Use



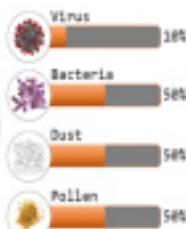
FFP1

Isolate Suspended Particles



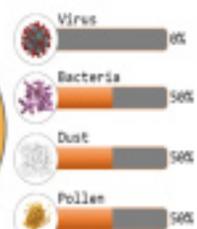
Activated Carbon

Stop Odour



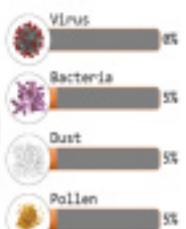
Cloth Mask

DIY



Sponge Mask

Fashion Use





Protect Yourself From Pills That Raise Your Blood Pressure

by Cynthia E. Keen, AARP, October 22, 2021

If you have hypertension, beware of taking certain prescription and OTC medications

Nearly half of all adult Americans and 3 out of 4 people 60+ have high blood pressure. That's about 108 million people at increased risk of heart disease or stroke.

Yet a remarkable 19% of adults with hypertension are currently taking one or more medications that could be elevating their blood pressure, according to a study of more than 10,600 patients presented earlier this year by John Vitarello, M.D., an internal medicine resident at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

If you're treating your hypertension, good for you — keep it up. But be aware that you may well be undermining your own well-being by mixing your blood pressure meds with one of the medications below.

Over-the-counter trouble

Ibuprofen and naproxen, for example, are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), which can increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke with high doses or prolonged use, according to the American College of Cardiology (ACC). They're among many prescription and OTC drugs the ACC says can raise blood pressure — or prevent the drugs that lower blood pressure from working properly.

That list includes products for cough, colds and flu; decongestants; weight-loss stimulants; antacids high in sodium; and some herbal remedies and dietary supplements. If you regularly take an OTC medication, read the label carefully and talk with your doctor about safer alternatives.

Prescriptive dangers

Fifteen percent of the U.S. population uses five or more prescription medications, says Matthew C. Foy, M.D., a nephrologist at Louisiana State University Health Science Center in Baton Rouge. "There is

likely a sizable fraction of the hypertensive population with disease induced or exacerbated by polypharmacy," Foy writes.

Among the prescriptions that can raise blood pressure:

- Certain antidepressants, such as fluoxetine, monoamine oxidase inhibitors and tricyclic antidepressants
- Oral steroids used to treat conditions such as gout, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis
- Immunosuppressants, central nervous system stimulants and drugs used to treat autoimmune diseases and cancers

How to protect yourself

PIMsPlus.org is a searchable database of prescription and OTC drugs that provides evidence-based guidelines on potentially inappropriate medications for older adults. Of course, be sure to keep a complete list of medications you take, even those given to you as samples, to show your doctor.

In addition, use a single pharmacy whenever possible; if you use multiple pharmacies, make sure that each one has a record of all your drugs. When filling prescriptions, pharmacists will be alerted automatically if the drug is potentially inappropriate for you.

If you take drugs for multiple health issues, consider a consultation with a senior care pharmacist, advises Chad Worz, a pharmacist and CEO of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP). Senior care pharmacists keep abreast of the latest research around medications and can work with your primary care provider to improve drug outcomes and your quality of life.

The ASCP Foundation maintains a patient-oriented website, at HelpWithMyMeds.org, with helpful information for seniors and a directory of senior care pharmacists accredited by the ASCP.

Ride.

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BY THE KDOT TRANSPORTATION
PROGRAM AND THE RCCA.



Part-time Driver Needed!

Retired? Bored?
Husband or Wife need space?

The Rice County Council on Aging needs you! We need part-time drivers to fill our empty vans. We need you to drive clients from Lyons or other cities to Wichita, Salina, Hays, and points in between.

- We work around your schedule
- \$14.00 an hour to start
- Physically able to assist elderly passengers in wheelchairs
- Able to lift 50 pounds
- Must pass pre-employment drug screening

Would you like an email
copy of the Grains of Rice?

Call the office to sign up!
620-257-5153

HOMESTEAD/SAFE SENIOR REFUND

The Homestead Refund/Safe Senior Refund is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's home. The maximum refund is \$700 for the Homestead or possibly more for the Safe Senior.

To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be \$36,600 or less for the Homestead or \$20,900 or less for the Safe Senior Tax Refund.

In order to qualify, you must also meet one of the following requirements:

- 1) You were born before Jan.1, 1966; **OR**
- 2) You must have been totally and permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age; **OR**
- 3) You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born before 1/1/21, and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

Documentation to bring to your appointment:

- 1) Documentation of **ALL** income.
- 2) Documentation of all persons living in the home, including social security numbers & birth dates.
- 3) Copy of your last property tax statement.

COUNT ME IN!

Please take a little time to fill out the coupon below. This helps us to use the funds we have wisely and to know whether Grains of Rice is serving the seniors of our community.

I want to support the Grains of Rice, enclosed is my donation.

I wish to receive the Grains of Rice as an email attachment. My email address is:

As a non-profit organization, the Rice County Council on Aging advocates for, serves and empowers the aging citizens of Rice County, Kansas, providing them with the resources needed to continue living an active, healthy and independent lifestyle.



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Daylene Linville, I&A Supervisor
Alecia Gaines, Supervisor of Operations
Donna Grizzle, Dispatcher/Receptionist

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Gena Kelly, CMA, HSKP & AC
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