

NOVEMBER 2025

THE SOURCE

COUNCIL ON AGING



Live Well. Age Well.

711 Marshall Street, Suite 100

Leavenworth, KS 66048

Phone: 913.684.0777

Fax: 913.684.0779

Transportation: 913.684.0778

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Our Programs

Chore Assistance

Errand & Shopping Support

Information & Assistance

Legal Service

Leisure & Learning Program

Nutrition Program

Pets & Loving Seniors Program
(PALS)

Pet2Vet Program

Prescription Drop Off

Senior Health Insurance Counseling

Social Services

Support Groups

Telephone & Visiting Support

Senior Express Transportation

The COA also partners with organizations, churches and individuals to "sponsor" older adults who need a little more help and support during the holiday season during our Big Christmas project. Those sponsoring an older adult are provided a personalized list of items; the person buys and wraps the presents, delivers them to the COA and we deliver them before Christmas. All Big Christmas project presents need to be delivered to the COA no later than Friday, November 21.

Those interested wanting to bring joy and light to an older adult by sponsoring them for Christmas should contact Dawn Owens at dowens@leavenworthcounty.gov or at 913.684.0786.

We want to thank everyone for the donations we have received!

Items Still Needed: sugar free candy • snack packages of cookies and crackers • Jell-O snack cups and pudding cups • applesauce (sweetened and no-sugar added) • toothpaste • cookies (regular & sugar free) • small canned meats, fruit, vegetables • word search and crossword puzzle books • winter gloves, hats and scarves for men and women • small Kleenex

The COA will continue to collect Christmas stocking items until close of business on November 21st.





Live Well. Age Well.



FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM

The Friendly Visitor Program pairs volunteers with homebound seniors in Leavenworth County for in person visits or phone calls. Share conversation, laughter, and companionship.

✓ **Companionship**

✓ **Flexible Visits or Phone Calls**

✓ **Lasting Friendship**

✓ **Improve Quality of Life**

for more information contact: **Amybeth Richardson (913) 684-0780**

COUNCIL ON AGING



711 Marshall St., Suite 100
Leavenworth, KS 66048



913.684.0777



seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov



www.leavenworthcounty.gov/COA

Help starts here

211 connects you to expert, caring help.

Every call is completely confidential.

TOP FIVE NEEDS

- * Utility Assistance
- * Housing Stability
- * Unhoused Services
- * New Housing Needs
- * Transportation

Every hour of every day, residents of the 23 counties surrounding Kansas City call United Way 211 or look to 211KC.org in search of essential human services. United Way's 211 services is the only Inform USA regionally accredited information and referral service available locally. View the resource database online or call to connect with caring Community Resource Specialists who are trained to search a database of more than 7,000 community services.

Open **24/7** with language interpretation services available.

Click [here](#) to access the resource database or dial 2-1-1/816-474-5112.



VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

----- **VITA** -----

Looking for a volunteer opportunity in your community?

The Leavenworth County COA is looking for volunteers for the 2025 tax season. Volunteer roles include client greeter/screener and tax preparer.

The IRS's VITA program offers free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals. The VITA program has operated for over 50 years, and specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors.

VITA services are not only free, they are also a reliable and trusted source for preparing tax returns. All VITA volunteers who prepare returns must take and pass tax law training that meets or exceeds IRS standards. All volunteers complete training on maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all taxpayer information.

A tax background is not required. Training will be provided in January 2026. The VITA program runs through the end of March.

If you are interested or need more information, please contact Jessica at 913.684.0733 or email jpontbriant@leavenworthcounty.gov.



LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIEAP can help pay your home heating bills!

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

The start date of the 2026 LIEAP season is contingent on approval of federal funding for the program. DCF is awaiting updates from the federal government regarding the required financial support. If the federal funding becomes available, DCF will continue planning the 2026 LIEAP. Information regarding the next application period will be provided when it is available.



Traveling for Thanksgiving? Plan ahead with KanDrive.

KanDrive helps you stay informed with real-time updates on road conditions, construction detours, and travel weather information for Kansas roads, including the Kansas Turnpike and major highways. Access KanDrive via website, mobile application or phone call. Download the mobile apps:

KanDrive on Google Play
KanDrive on Apple App Store



KanDrive
Kansas Department of Transportation

Features of KanDrive — available online or as an app:

Interactive Kansas Map: Access a detailed map displaying current road conditions and construction/detour information.

Highway Cameras: View live footage from highway cameras across the state.

Dynamic Message Signs: Receive updates from traffic management centers.

Multiple Access Points: Use the KanDrive website, mobile app, or the 511 phone system for convenient access.

Explore more and find details on how to download the app on the KanDrive website—kandrive.gov.

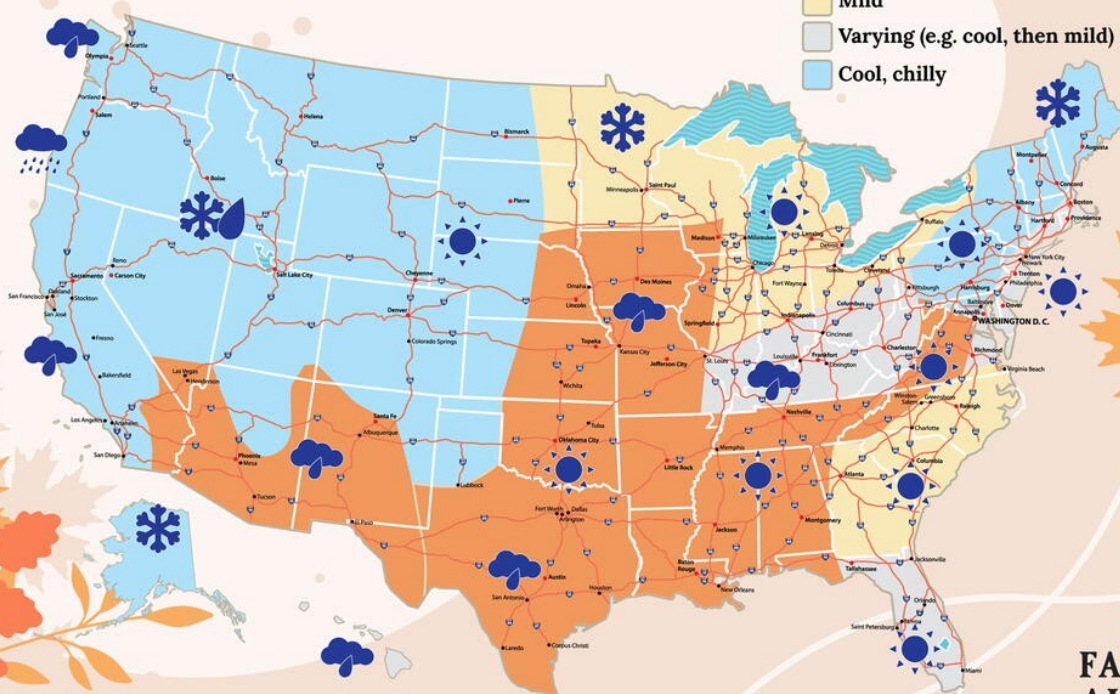
Get Real-Time Travel Information with a Phone Call:

Call 511: Dial "511" from any phone within Kansas to learn about road conditions, construction detours, and travel weather information for the Kansas Turnpike and any interstate, U.S., or state highway in Kansas and Nebraska.

Nationwide Access: Reach Kansas 511 from anywhere in the U.S. or Puerto Rico by calling 1-866-511-KDOT (5368). If dialing 511 doesn't work from your phone, use this number instead.

THANKSGIVING WEATHER FORECAST 2025

- Warm
- Mild
- Varying (e.g. cool, then mild)
- Cool, chilly



THE OLD
FARMER'S
ALMANAC

What Is Medicaid Estate Recovery? And How Does It Work?

"If I get Medicaid, can the state take my home?"

That's a question many older adults and their caregivers worry about. Federal law permits states to attempt to recoup some of the costs of Medicaid nursing facility services, home and community-based services, and related hospital and prescription drug services from a person's estate—a process called estate recovery.

Who does estate recovery affect?

Medicaid estate recovery applies to anyone who is age 55 or older when receiving Medicaid benefits, and people of any age who are permanently institutionalized.

States also can pursue estate recovery for other Medicaid services for these individuals, except for payment of Medicare premiums.

One way to think about estate recovery is that Medicaid "loans" beneficiaries financial support for long-term services and supports, and once the person becomes permanently institutionalized or passes away, the interest-free loan becomes due back to the state.

[Click here](#) to get the facts about estate recovery.

Does estate recovery apply to all Medicaid benefits?

No. It is important to understand that Medicare beneficiaries who qualify for help paying their premiums through one of the four Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs)—the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB), Specified Low-Income Beneficiary (SLMB), Qualifying Individual (QI) or Qualified Working Disabled Individual (QDWI)—are not subject to estate recovery for those benefits.

Some states combine the application for full Medicaid with MSP benefits. You and/or your loved one can choose to apply for a Medicare Savings Program without applying for full Medicaid, and therefore not be subject to estate recovery.

How does estate recovery work?

When a Medicaid beneficiary dies, the value of their estate (if they have one) is used to pay back debts before transferring to any heirs. The estate includes any assets, such as a home or savings or retirement account, that are solely in the name of the beneficiary. Depending on your state's rules, jointly owned

property, living trusts, and other assets can also be subject to estate recovery.

If the person has no assets at the time of death, there is nothing else the state can do. The state cannot ask the beneficiary's living heirs for repayment if there is no estate.

Also, if the beneficiary has a spouse living in the community, a certain amount of their combined resources is protected for that spouse, so they are able to continue living independently. This is called the "spousal impoverishment" provision. In 2025, it protects assets worth up to \$157,920.

Can Medicaid take away someone's home?

Part of the estate recovery process looks at property owned by the Medicaid beneficiary and recovering some of the debt through the value of that property (this is called putting a lien on the house).

The state can file a lien when the Medicaid recipient is placed in residential care and not expected to return home, or after the beneficiary's death. But the state cannot seize or place a lien on a home if any of the following of the beneficiary's family reside there:

- A living spouse
- A child under age 21
- A child of any age who is blind or has a disability
- A sibling with equity interest in the home, who has lived there for at least one year prior to the beneficiary entering a nursing home

The lien is removed if the beneficiary returns home or the house is sold and Medicaid is reimbursed. Some states only put a lien on the home when the beneficiary is alive; others do this after death.

Where can I get help with estate recovery?

The rules around Medicaid estate recovery are complicated and vary by state. To get advice, you may want to reach out to:

- Your state or local Medicaid office
- Your local legal aid office serving low-income Americans
- An estate recovery program helpline or website in your state, if available

Also, every state has a State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) that can help people with Medicare apply for the Medicare Savings Programs.

Source: National Council on Aging, 07/2025



KanCare Important Update: Beginning July 1 2025, late eligibility reviews will be treated as a new application. To be considered for backdated coverage, the member must answer "yes" to the question about prior medical expenses in the review. Click the link for more information: [Kancare.ks.gov/ReconsiderationPolicy](https://www.kancare.ks.gov/ReconsiderationPolicy).

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open Enrollment happens from October 15 – December 7 and is the time each year when you can make changes to your coverage. The changes you make during Open Enrollment are effective January 1 of next year (the plan must get your enrollment request by December 7).

YOUR OPTIONS DURING OPEN ENROLLMENT

During Open Enrollment what you can do depends on the kind of coverage you have now.

Change your Medicare Advantage Plan

Join, drop, or switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan with or without drug coverage (or add or drop drug coverage).

Find Plans

Change your drug plan

Join, drop, or switch to another Medicare drug plan if you're in Original Medicare.

Find Plans

Change how you get coverage

Join, drop, or switch to another Medicare drug plan if you're in Original Medicare.

Compare Coverage Options

Where can people find Medicare plan information or compare plans?

You can explore Medicare coverage options by:

- ⇒ Going to www.medicare.gov - Find health & drug plans
- ⇒ Calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1.800.633.4227) and speaking to a real person. TTY users can call 1.877.486.2048.
- ⇒ Making an appointment with a Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) counselor. To schedule an appointment, call the COA at 913.684.0777.

Looking for a way to give back to the community?

VOLUNTEER WITH LEAVENWORTH COUNTY

THE POWER OF A KNOCK

A knock at the door might not seem like a big deal to many of us. But, to a homebound senior, it could signal the arrival of the only person they might see all day or all week long. It brings hope. It brings health. It brings the nutrition and care that will completely make their day. A knock from Meals on Wheels can even save lives.

The power of a knock transforms lives.

What is the power of a knock?



- Do you have 90 minutes during the week? (late morning)
- Do you like meeting new people?
- Do you want to help those in our community?
- Do you drive?

For information about volunteering for Meals on Wheels, please contact Dawn Owens at dowens@leavenworthcounty.gov or at 913.684.0786.

*All Meals on Wheels volunteers must be able to pass a criminal background check.





43RD ANNUAL KANSAS SILVER HAIR ED LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 43rd Annual Session for the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature was held October 7 - 9, 2025 at the Capitol.

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (KSHL), a non-partisan, volunteer legislative body representing Kansans age 60 and older, concluded its annual session at the Kansas State Capital in Topeka. Delegates adopted five key resolutions that will be formally presented to the Kansas Legislature and Governor for consideration during the 2026 legislative session.

• **Medical Cannabis Access—Supporting Senate Bill 294**

KSHL passed a resolution supporting Senate Bill 294, the Kansas Medical Cannabis Act. This bill provides for the licensure and regulation of the cultivation, processing, manufacturing, distribution, sale, and use of medical cannabis and medical cannabis products. Delegates underscored the potential benefits for Kansans living with chronic pain, debilitating illnesses, and other health conditions for which medical cannabis offers therapeutic relief.

• **Property Tax Relief for Seniors—Supporting Senate Bill 215 or Similar Legislation**

A resolution was passed supporting Senate Bill 215 (2025), or similar legislation, during the 2026 regular legislative session, to provide property tax relief for certain senior citizens. Rising property taxes continue to threaten seniors' ability to maintain their homes and standard of living. Delegates emphasized that targeted relief would allow older adults to age in place with stability and dignity.

• **Preserving and Expanding Medicaid and Food Assistance**

Delegates adopted a resolution urging the Kansas Legislature to preserve Medicaid services, home and community-based services, and SNAP food assistance, as well as to support Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Expanding Medicaid would leverage federal resources to finance healthcare reform and strengthen the safety net for vulnerable populations.

• **Protecting Voting Rights for Kansas Seniors**

KSHL adopted a resolution opposing any efforts to restrict voting rights that would make it more difficult or impossible for Kansas senior citizens to cast a ballot. Seniors represent 25% of registered voters in Kansas, with 79.9% voting in the 2024 general election—the highest turnout of any age group. Delegates emphasized that protecting voting access is essential to maintaining seniors' civic voice and engagement.

• **Supporting Collaborative Community-Based Senior Transportation**

KSHL passed a resolution urging the Kansas Legislature to continue supporting and funding collaborative community-based transportation systems for seniors citizens, including micro-transit support in rural, remote, and metropolitan areas.



DISCOVER
WHAT MATTERS
TO YOU

Live Whole Health.

The Council on Aging & Eastern Ks Healthcare System
presents

LIVING WHOLE HEALTH



Join Whole Health Coaches
Laura Alexander & Billie Blenden
around the Circle of Health to
promote physical and mental
wellbeing!

While attending this class, you will be introduced to various tools created to help you set goals that align with the things that are most meaningful and important to you in your life.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 24
1 PM - 3 PM

Register by November 17th by calling or stopping
by the COA office



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Leavenworth, KS 66048
Phone: 913.684.0777

THANKSGIVING SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR PETS

Thanksgiving is a time for friends, family and holiday feasts—but can also be a very hectic day. With so much going on, curious pets often find a way to snoop where they shouldn't, so it's important to keep them top of mind while giving thanks.

Check out the following tips from our experts at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) for a fulfilling Thanksgiving that your pets can enjoy, too!

- ◆ **Just a Taste:** While we recommend sticking to your pet's normal diet on Thanksgiving, we understand that even our furry friends can't resist the smell of a delicious turkey or other festive dishes. If you do decide to feed your pet a small bite of turkey or other meat, make sure it's boneless and fully cooked. Raw or undercooked turkey may contain salmonella bacteria and poultry bones can be a major choking hazard.

Make sure you are mindful of the ingredients and spices in your food as well. Onions and garlic are both prevalent in a lot of Thanksgiving dishes and can be toxic to pets. Bouillon cubes used for making stocks and gravy contain high amounts of sodium which can lead to gastrointestinal problems and even seizures. Raw yeast bread dough can also be toxic to pets. The raw dough can expand in the stomach, causing them to become bloated, and the ethanol (alcohol) will be absorbed by the body, leading to drunkenness and other serious side effects. You can find more information about potential food toxins with the APCC's full list.

- ◆ **Don't Let Them Eat Cake:** If you plan to bake Thanksgiving desserts, be sure your pets keep their noses out of the batter, especially if it includes raw eggs—they could contain salmonella bacteria that may lead to food poisoning. Desserts containing artificial sweeteners, like xylitol, can cause low blood sugar, liver damage or even death. Chocolate is also a major hazard to our four-legged friends and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death.
- ◆ **A Feast Fit for a King:** While your family enjoys a special meal, give your cat and dog a small feast of their own. Try mixing some pieces of turkey, sweet potatoes and green beans into their usual dinner. You can even top it off with a drizzle of gravy. You can also opt to stuff their Thanksgiving treats into a puzzle toy to keep them occupied during your meal.
- ◆ **Watch out for Guests and Holiday Decor:** If you are hosting guests, just remember that more people in your home may be overwhelming for pets. Try leaving a few blankets on the floor or a bedroom door open so they have a quiet place to curl up and relax. Additionally, keep in mind that your guests may have personal items, like medication, on them. Pets ingesting medication is all too common and can be very dangerous. Remind your guests to keep their personal items up and out of paws' reach.

You will also want to pay attention to the holiday decorations, like floral arrangements and plants. Use the APCC toxic plants list to know what to look out for.

- ◆ **Don't Forget to Take Out the Trash:** This may be the last thing on your mind while trying to keep up in the kitchen, but your garbage can fill up with bones, chocolate, onions and plenty of other holiday hazards mentioned above. Try to remember to empty your trash throughout the day so that curious pets don't get into trouble. Or, do your best to keep your pet out of the area where the trash is.
- ◆ **Be Kind to All Animals on Thanksgiving:** It can be hard to navigate grocery stores during the busy holiday season, and it can sometimes feel even harder to navigate confusing labels on animal products. Not all companies are humane, so if you plan to purchase meat, eggs or dairy this Thanksgiving, be sure to look for welfare-certified products and try to Shop with Your Heart with our helpful resources. You can also use our Grocery List with many items available online or at supermarkets across the country.

If you suspect your pet may have ingested a toxic substance, please contact your veterinarian or call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435 immediately.



To be added to our email distribution list, please contact us @seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov



For our full events and activities calendar, visit our homepage @Council on Aging



**FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK**



CLICK HERE TO BE DIRECTED TO OUR PAGE.

AGING RESOURCES

- Adult Protective Services.....1.800.922.5330
- Emergency Respite:
Country Care.....913.773.5517
Medical Lodge.....913.772.1844
- Guidance Center.....913.682.5118
- Kansas Aging and Disability Resource Center
.....855.200.2372
- Leavenworth County Health Department
.....913.250.2000
- Medicare1.800.633.4227
- Poison Control Center.....1.800.222.1222
- Property Fraud LV County.....1.913.684.0424
- Social Security Office1.800.772.1213
- Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging
.....913.573.8531

To best accommodate all of our clients, the COA is set to take payments and donations online through **PayPal**.

Scan the QR code or in PayPal search for **Leavenworth County Council on Aging** or use @LVCOA



Some services are funded in part by the Older Americans Act and are provided without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origins or sex. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Area Agency on Aging @ 1.888.661.1444

This informational brochure is published by:
Leavenworth County Council on Aging

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Email: seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov

Website: [Council on Aging \(leavenworthcounty.gov\)](http://Council on Aging (leavenworthcounty.gov))



Driver Safety

course with volunteer instructor,
Jennifer Grasela

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
COUNCIL ON AGING

\$20 AARP members

\$25 non-members

Bring your AARP card/membership number with you.

Fee collected by instructor by cash or check at the beginning of class.

Reserve your spot today!



COUNCIL ON AGING



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711 Marshall St., Suite 100
Leavenworth, KS 66048



913.684.0777



seniors1st@leavenworthcounty.gov



www.leavenworthcounty.gov/COA

LEAVENWORTH COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD

The Leavenworth County Council on Aging's Advisory Board works in an advisory capacity to further the agency's mission. Working collaboratively with the Executive Director, the Advisory Board ensures accountability and transparency, enhances the agency's visibility and partnerships, champions and represents the interests of the agency and ensures there are adequate resources to carry out the Council on Aging's mission to help older adults in Leavenworth County live and age well. All Advisory Board meetings are open to the public.

NEXT MEETING:

November 19, 2025 at 1:30pm
711 Marshall Street, Suite 100
Leavenworth, KS 66048
913.684.0777

The Leavenworth County Council on Aging Advisory Board is looking for applicants to fill an open seat on the Board. For information on how to apply, contact Connie Harmon at 913.684.0784.