

THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

2022 - March/April

Volume 30, Issue 2

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

Senior Citizens Utility Tax and Sales Tax Rebates are offered to eligible citizens who live in Kansas City, Kansas for a portion of their BPU, Gas or AT&T utility bills and/or have paid sales tax.

To qualify for the refund, ALL THREE of the following must apply:

1. Resident of Kansas City, KS;
2. 65 years of age or older during the entire 2021 calendar year;
3. Gross household income does not exceed \$25,000.

To apply you'll need the following information:

- Name
 - Last four digits of your social security number
 - Mailing address
 - Date of birth
 - Telephone number
 - Copy of your 2021 gas, BPU, and phone bills
 - Proof of 2021 income (social security, pensions, disability, W2 tax reports, interest, etc.), including your spouse's income.
- Submit your information via mail, fax, or in-person at 701 N. 7th Street, Room 323, Kansas City, Kansas 66101. All applications must be received or postmarked by March 31, 2022.



Homestead Rebates are offered to eligible citizens who live in Wyandotte County, Kansas for a portion of their property taxes.

If you were a Kansas resident for all of 2021 and owned and occupied a homestead, you are eligible for a refund of \$700 if your total household income is \$36,000 or less, AND you:

- Were born before January 1, 1966; OR
- Were totally and permanently disabled or blind for the entire year of 2021; OR
- Have a dependent child who lived with you the entire year that was born before January 1, 2021 and was under the age of 18 for all of 2021; OR
- Are a disabled veteran (50% or more) or the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who has not remarried, or the surviving spouse of an active duty military personnel who died in the line of duty and not remarried.

As a Kansas resident for all of 2021 who owned AND occupied a homestead, you are eligible for a refund of 75% of your property taxes paid if your total household income including social security is \$20,900 or less, AND you:

- Were 65 years or older for all of 2021;
- Must not have delinquent property taxes in 2021.

Household income is generally all taxable and non-taxable income received by all members of the household. You can complete a Form K-40H or K-40PT electronically or have our Clerk's Office help you complete the required documentation.

If you are a senior who was 65 all of last year, you may contact the Clerk's Office for assistance filing either of the above mentioned tax programs by contacting their office at 913-573-5260. The income tax deadline is Monday, April 18, 2022.

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COVID-19 UPDATES FROM THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Report At-Home COVID Tests Online

If you have taken an at-home COVID-19 test, you can now report your results using a new online form from the UGPHD. This only applies to rapid antigen tests done at home, not testing done at a testing clinic. To fill out the form, go to wycokck.org/COVID-19 and click on the "Report a Home COVID Test" button.

Where to Get At-Home COVID-19 Tests

You can get up to 4 free COVID at-home tests from the federal government at covidtests.gov. These can also be purchased at your local pharmacy or they can be ordered online. At-home tests are different than the PCR tests that are given by hospitals and public health testing sites. **It's very important to follow the directions on your at-home test exactly as they are written.**

If you test positive for COVID-19, please stay home for at least five days (and until you feel better and you are fever-free for 24 hours) and wear a mask around others for another five days after that. If you were near anyone while contagious (up to 2 days before symptoms), please let them know they have been exposed.

Higher Grade Masks Recommended for Better Protection

The UGPHD recommends people wear higher grade masks to help stop the spread of COVID in Wyandotte County. High filtration masks such as N95 or KN95 masks are highly recommended because they filter out up to 95% of airborne particles. In addition, this type of mask seals tightly to the face when fitted properly. If an N95 or KN95 is not available, double-masking with a cloth mask over a surgical mask can increase protection. Remember: mask quality matters, but any mask worn correctly (covering the nose and mouth) offers more protection than no mask.

What Mask Should I Wear?

Along with getting vaccinated and boosted, experts recommend upgrading your mask if you want optimal protection.

No Protection	Some Protection	Most Protection
No Mask or Improper Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mask should fit over your nose and mouth and be snug against your face with no gaps Don't use masks that are damp, dirty or damaged Don't wear masks with exhalation valves, which allow virus particles to escape 	Cloth Masks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washable and reusable. Masks should be washed at least once a day or as soon as they become dirty Multiple layers of woven, breathable fabric 	Surgical Masks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disposable, intended for one time use Multiple layers of non-woven material Provides protection against large droplets
	<p>High Filtration Masks <i>(Respirators - N95, KN95, KF94)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies by mask type, but reusable up to 5 times with proper care Filters up to 95% of particles in the air Seals tightly to the face when fitted properly (some facial hair can interfere with this seal) Designed and regulated to meet international standards. Check lists of trusted manufacturers from CDC and Project N95 to avoid counterfeit masks 	
	<p>! If you don't have access to a high filtration respirator mask, double up. Single layer masks, such as bandanas and gaiters, are less effective, so wear a cloth mask with multiple layers or wear a cloth mask over a surgical mask. Be sure your mask fits properly—nose wires improve fit.</p>	

To find out the latest COVID information, you may contact the Wyandotte County COVID Hotline at:

Unified Government Public Health Department
Wycovaccines.org
3-1-1 (913-573-5311)



CAREGIVERS FOR SENIORS AND STRESS: HOW DO YOU COPE?

Caregiver stress occurs because providing care to loved ones over an extended time can create physical and emotional strain. It is stressful to manage the health needs of aging loved ones, especially when it feels like you are alone. It is not unusual to see caregivers for seniors having little time to themselves. Most people in this position are in an on-call position daily. Being in a caregiver position may mean there is little time for other family members or social events with friends. It can even require someone to leave their job because of the amount of care that their loved one needs. Caregiving can be a rewarding experience. When you spend more time together, the circumstances can draw you closer to each other.

What Are the Symptoms of Caregiver Stress?

People who experience the symptoms of caregiver stress can see it develop in unique ways. It is not unusual to feel helpless in one moment and angry a second later. Caregivers often cope by drinking alcohol or smoking as a way to relieve their stress. Other symptoms of caregiver stress may include feeling alone and isolated, ongoing fatigue, headaches, body aches, and losing interest in the activities you used to enjoy. Some caregivers experience significant gains or losses in weight. Changes to individual sleep cycles frequently happen because of the ongoing care needs of a loved one. Anyone experiencing symptoms like these should speak with their medical provider about how they can cope with stress. It is also helpful to let others provide you with a break. Reaching out to senior referral agencies can help you or your family understand senior living options in and around your community.

How to Manage Caregiver Stress

Caregiver support can help you to experience more of the rewards by taking some of the stress out of your situation. Anyone can develop caregiver stress. Women have a higher risk of experiencing health problems from this issue, especially when caring for a loved one who has constant supervision and medical requirements. Having a loved one with dementia or Alzheimer's disease creates a significant risk of anxiety or depression issues. These stressful situations are especially prevalent when children take care of their elderly parents. Taking care of yourself enables you to become a better caregiver. Knowing how to manage or prevent stressful situations can make it easier to unlock the rewards that come with this role.

Here are some practical steps that you can take today to start feeling better.

Look for more efficient ways to help.

Many hospitals, long-term care facilities, and local charities provide classes that can teach you how to be an effective caregiver.

Join a caregiving support group.

Speaking with others who face similar challenges can help you to feel less isolated. Some communities have groups for caregivers who manage specific disabilities or illnesses. Sharing caregiving tips, stories, and problems can help you to build an essential support network.

Stay organized as much as possible.

It helps to create a daily routine that you can manage comfortably. Making a to-do list that covers each essential task can make it much easier to meet your loved one's needs.

Be willing to accept help from others.

Everyone in your family can support you in the position of a caregiver. It may be helpful to let those that can assist choose the role or tasks that they can provide in support. Having someone fill your shoes at home to run a critical errand for a couple of hours can reduce stress levels immediately. Some people may be more comfortable taking care of those chores, such as grocery shopping, for you so that you can focus on your loved one.

Find caregiving resources in your community.

Caregiver stress can have a significant impact on everyone in the family. Take care of yourself, ask for help, and use your community resources to find the balance you need.

If you find yourself in a caregiver role, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531 to see how we can help.



2022 Medicare Costs

Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) Costs

Part A monthly premium

Most people don't pay a Part A premium because they paid Medicare taxes while working. If you don't get premium-free Part A, you pay up to \$499 each month. If you don't buy Part A when you're first eligible for Medicare (usually when you turn 65), you might pay a penalty.



Skilled Nursing Facility stay

In 2022, you pay:

- \$0 for the first 20 days of each benefit period
- \$194.50 per day for days 21–100 of each benefit period
- All costs for each day after day 100 of the benefit period

Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) Costs

Part B monthly premium

Most people pay the standard Part B monthly premium amount (\$170.10 in 2022).

Social Security will tell you the exact amount you'll pay for Part B in 2022.

You pay the standard premium amount if:

- You enroll in Part B for the first time in 2022
- You don't get Social Security benefits
- You're directly billed for your Part B premiums

If you have Medicare and Medicaid, and Medicaid pays your premiums. (Your state will pay the standard premium amount of \$170.10 in 2022).

If your modified adjusted gross income as reported on your IRS tax return from 2 years ago is above a certain amount, you'll pay the standard Part B premium and an income-related monthly adjustment amount.

If your yearly income in 2020 was:

File individual tax return	File joint tax return	File married & separate tax return	You pay (in 2022)
\$91,000 or less	\$182,000 or less	\$91,000 or less	\$170.10

Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C) and Medicare Drug Plans (Part D) Premiums

Visit [Medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare) to get plan premiums or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

JUST FOR FUN!

(for entertainment purpose only)

It is said that Leprechauns are a type of male fairy and are a class of fairy folk that dwell in tiny underground caves or hollow tree trunks.



According to Irish mythology,

Leprechauns were once mighty warriors. An evil magician and his army conquered Ireland in a battle and banished these mighty warriors to live underground.

The word Leprechaun is Gaelic for "shoemaker," which makes sense because the occupation of a Leprechaun is a shoemaker to the fairies. This profession is what earns them their iconic pots of gold.

According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called Osterhase.



Children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs.

Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry from all his hopping.



WHY DO WE HAVE DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME?

Daylight Saving Time was previously known as 'Fast Time' in the United States. It is the practice of setting the clocks forward one hour from standard time during the warmer parts of the year (usually summer months), and back again in the colder parts (usually fall), in order to make better use of natural daylight so that evenings have more daylight and mornings have less.

NEWSLETTER DONATIONS ENCOURAGED

For years **"The Communicator"** has served as a vital means for providing seniors in Wyandotte County important information regarding aging news, events, programs, services and much more! The newsletter's continuity depends on your donations for its existence. Please help us continue to provide this important publication by becoming a sponsor.

Donations should be made payable to:
Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging
849 North 47th Street, Suite C, KCK 66102.

Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter.

Names are listed in alphabetical order.

Victoria Estrada
Barbara Jordon
Janerian M. Phillips

- _____ \$100 **Advocate**
defensor
- _____ \$50 **Benefactor**
benefactor
- _____ \$25 **Patron**
patron
- _____ \$10 **Contributor**
contribuidor
- _____ **Other**
otro

NUTRIENTS AND YOUR NEEDS

Nutrients are substances in your food that keep your body working well. Eating too much or too little of some nutrients may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease and high blood pressure.

Older adults have different nutritional needs than other age groups. The Nutrition Facts label can help you monitor some of the nutrients in your diet.

Get more of the following nutrients: Dietary Fiber, Vitamin D, Calcium, and Potassium.

Many older adults do not get the recommended amount of these nutrients. Compare and choose foods that provide more nutrients.



Dietary fiber, also known as roughage, is the indigestible part of plant food. Fiber has a host of health benefits, including reducing the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Fiber is mostly in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes.

Calcium is a mineral your body needs to build and maintain strong bones and to carry out many important functions. Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body. Almost all calcium in the body is stored in bones and teeth, giving them structure and hardness. It also helps with muscle and nerve function, blood clotting and hormone secretion. Diets higher in calcium can reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis (weak and brittle bones).

Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and is important for bone health. It also plays a role in blood pressure management, hormone production, and immune and nervous system function.

Potassium is an essential mineral that is needed by all tissues in the body. It is sometimes referred to as an electrolyte because it carries a small electrical charge that activates various cell and nerve functions. Potassium is found naturally in many foods and as a supplement.

Examples of Fiber enriched foods include:

- * Beans
- * Berries
- * Broccoli
- * Avocados
- * Dried Fruits

Examples of Calcium enriched foods include:

- * Cheese
- * Yogurt
- * Milk
- * Dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, turnips or collard greens

Examples of foods containing Vitamin D include:

- * Fatty fish such as tuna or salmon
- * Mushrooms
- * Egg yolk
- * Spinach

Examples of foods high in potassium include:

- * Bananas
- * Potatoes
- * Figs
- * Brussel Sprouts
- * Nuts/Seeds

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with your request.



Did you know you can hire family and friends to provide your care?

With self-direction, you can stay in your home and choose who supports you, including family or friends that you love and trust.

GT takes care of the paperwork and payroll, so you can live your life hassle-free.



Want to learn more?

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Andrea Johnson | Director of Operations
ajohnson@gtindependence.com | 316.350.7210

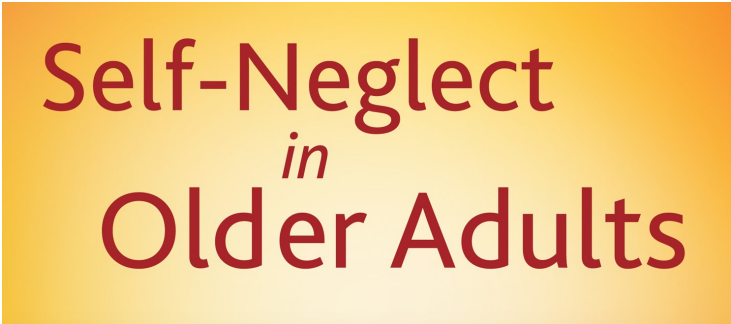
gtindependence.com

SELF-NEGLECT IN THE ELDERLY: KNOWING WHEN AND HOW TO INTERVENE

Most people are aware that seniors can be very vulnerable and that this population is often targeted by scammers and abusers. Elder abuse, whether it is physical, financial, emotional or sexual, is a legitimate concern for family members of seniors, especially those who are physically disabled or cognitively impaired. However, there is another threat to the elderly that receives far less attention: self-neglect.

WHAT IS ELDER SELF-NEGLECT?

Imagine entering the home of an elderly loved one and being greeted by a foul-smelling odor that seems to have no identifiable source. The house is in disarray and there are papers, dirty dishes and other debris covering most of the countertops. Your loved one is wearing soiled clothing and appears as if they haven't bathed in days or weeks, but they act as if everything is totally normal. Understandably, you are shocked by this scene. The last time you visited just a few months ago, both their house and their physical appearance were nearly immaculate. This is a classic example of elder self-neglect, and scenarios like these are often what initially cause family members to step into the caregiving role.



The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services defines elder self-neglect as “behavior of an elderly person that threaten his/her own health or safety and generally manifests itself by failure to provide himself/herself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, personal hygiene, medication and safety precautions.”

Although self-neglect can begin quite suddenly and dramatically, it doesn't always occur that way. For example, long-standing hoarding behaviors can slowly create a living environment that endangers an elder's health and safety and prevents them from meeting even their most basic needs. Extreme cases of hoarding commonly result in self-neglect.

THE IMPACT AND PREVALENCE OF SELF-NEGLECT

Elder self-neglect is a more prevalent problem than most people recognize. In fact, most research points to self-neglect being the most common form of elder abuse - a confusing statement, since this form of mistreatment doesn't involve other people at all.

DETECTING AND PREVENTING SELF-NEGLECT AMONG SENIORS

Self-neglect comes in many forms. Some elders stop taking their medication, others cease cleaning their homes. Seniors who have limited or nonexistent social networks are more prone to falling into a dangerous pattern of self-neglect. This may explain why long-distance family members are often blindsided by discoveries like the hypothetical one presented above when they come for infrequent visits. Family members should look for a decline in cognition, mobility and the ability to accomplish daily tasks independently.

Signs of Self-Neglect in Elderly Individuals

- ⇒ Confusion
- ⇒ Inability to accomplish activities of daily living
- ⇒ Loss of ability to complete instrumental activities of daily living
- ⇒ Symptoms of depression
- ⇒ Excessive drinking or drug use
- ⇒ Frequent falls
- ⇒ Signs of poor hygiene in both self-care and physical surroundings
- ⇒ Signs of poor physical health, such as weight loss, dehydration, poor medication adherence, etc.
- ⇒ Indicators that a senior is not getting care for problems with eyesight, hearing, dental issues, incontinence, etc.
- ⇒ Unpaid bills
- ⇒ Utility disconnects

SELF-NEGLECT INTERVENTIONS CAN BE DIFFICULT

Self-neglect is increasingly common among seniors who are physically handicapped, mentally ill and/or cognitively impaired because they do not have the ability to properly care for themselves. However, some elders who are fully functional still make poor decisions that result in outcomes that appear to be self-neglect. The challenging aspect in cases like these is that competent older adults can make hazardous lifestyle choices freely and without intervention as long as they are not causing immediate harm to other people.

THE RIGHT TO REFUSE CARE

“Self-Neglectors” with higher levels of cognitive and physical function may refuse suggested interventions by health care professionals and social service agencies, which then respect the elder's autonomy and rights to self-determination and will not intervene any further.

Seniors in the mild-to-moderate stages of dementia often fall into this gray area as well. Early on in the course of the disease, dementia patients are often able to compensate for their cognitive decline quite convincingly under certain circumstances. To make matters worse, patients may also be in denial of their compromised mental function or be incapable of recognizing their deficits. The perfect storm makes it exceedingly difficult for family members, medical professionals and social services agencies to intervene in cases of self-neglect among seniors with dementia.

Even if a self-neglecting senior doesn't officially require outside care yet, it's important to keep a close eye on the situation. Illnesses or conditions that follow a progressive pattern, such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, may lead to a gradual loss of ability or interest in self care. Sadly as a neglectful situation deteriorates, it may take more than one APS report or major medical setback or some other kind of emergency to instigate a full intervention and get an elder the help they need.



SHRIMP FRIED RICE

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 cups cold cooked rice
- 1 package (16oz) frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 lb. uncooked medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 8 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat. Pour eggs into skillet. As eggs set, lift edges, letting uncooked portion flow underneath. Remove eggs and keep warm.
2. In the same skillet, melt the remaining 3 tbsp butter. Add the rice, vegetables and shrimp; cook and stir for 5 minutes or until shrimp turn pink. Meanwhile, chop eggs into small pieces. Return eggs to the pan; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook until health through, stirring occasionally. Top with bacon, if desired.



SPRING IS ON ITS WAY

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- ALLERGIES
- APRIL FOOLS DAY
- ARBOR DAY
- BASEBALL
- BASKET
- COLORED EGGS
- DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
- FAT TUESDAY
- FOUR LEAF CLOVER
- GARDENING
- GOLD COINS
- GRASSHOPPER
- GREEN
- HOMESTEAD
- INCOME TAX
- JELLY BEANS
- KITES
- LEPRECHAUN
- LILLIES
- LUCK OF THE IRISH
- PASTEL
- POT OF GOLD
- RABBIT
- RAIN
- RAINBOW
- ROBIN
- SEEDS
- SHAMROCK
- SPRING
- SPRING CLEANING
- ST PATRICKS DAY
- TULIPS
- UMBRELLA
- UNCLE SAM
- UTILITY TAX REBATE
- WINDY

A	G	B	P	E	C	J	V	N	R	U	I	B	W	L	J	N	I	B	O	R	F	C	K	Z
G	P	N	L	A	P	G	I	Q	G	P	M	F	X	E	A	Z	E	V	G	O	U	O	C	X
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N	D	D	O	I	B	I	O	A	B	K	M	W	S	F	A	M	A	S	V	U	B	E	S	C
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G	A	S	J	T	W	X	R	H	U	P	A	V	W	P	U	N	C	L	E	S	A	M	R	O
Q	W	G	F	O	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	M	Y	L	N	Q	Z	A	Q	D	N	E	B	Z
D	U	N	R	C	Y	M	M	N	T	B	X	S	M	P	X	B	W	Z	N	T	A	P	N	R

WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING

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60Plus...Call on Us!

**PRESORTED STANDARD
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MARCH >>>

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS

Sunday, March 13, 2022

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Thursday, March 17, 2022

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Donations are suggested.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, or handicap.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services at 1-800-432-3535.



Linda Ramirez, Editor

APRIL >>>

APRIL FOOLS DAY

Friday, April 1, 2022

SPRING HOLIDAY

Friday, April 15, 2022

Unified Government Offices Closed

Easter

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Earth Day

Friday, April 22, 2022