

**About Connections for Independent Living**

Our mission is to promote the full inclusion and integration of people with all types of disabilities into all levels of society. We challenge barriers, both physical and attitudinal, which restrict the rights and personal development opportunities of people with disabilities. With a staff and board of directors that consists mostly of persons with disabilities, we are effective in promoting independent living and empowerment.

**Seeking TechMate Volunteers**

Are you, or someone you know, computer literate and able to volunteer about two hours weekly to help northeastern Colorado residents with disabilities overcome computer technology challenges?

Connections is actively seeking volunteers for our TechMate program, providing knowledge and assistance to registered care consumers to learn skills and practices to use computer technology to improve their lives.

Volunteers provide one-on-one personal assistance to individuals within our county service region. This assistance will be by telephone, Zoom, FaceTime, or other virtual platforms. No travel is required. Help sessions are generally scheduled for evenings and weekends.

TechMates help consumers use and navigate various computer applications and programs, and share technical skills through supportive technology workshops. This program is a great way to make a difference in lives, and to also develop or build on experience in serving clients remotely.

Interested? Contact us by telephone at 970-352-8682, or by email at rick@connections4il.org. We will provide full details.



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**Connections for Independent Living**

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**CONNECTIONS**

**Computer Voucher Program Launching Soon**

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for many Colorado residents, particularly those who live with disabilities. In October, Connections for Independent Living will launch a program that will allow consumers in Weld, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties the opportunity to order and receive a new computer for their personal use.

This computer will allow the user to connect to Internet service, and use technology to join others in support groups. Through the use of the computer, the user obtains the ability to order food, medication, and supplies for home delivery. They can also attend online medical appointments, search for employment, and reduce isolation.

Program funding through the federal CARES Act allows for a maximum of \$350 to be applied to any computer order. There are a limited number of computers available through this program, so those interested should respond to your Independent Living Specialist at Connections by mid-October for full details. Greeley Computer Services will activate the computers, and they will be available for pickup upon notification. For consumers in eastern Colorado, computers may be shipped by UPS or delivered by courier. Any shipping cost will be the responsibility of the consumer.



Consumers may choose to pay an additional amount at their own expense to the \$350 grant to receive a higher level computer. Software like Microsoft Office, Internet service, and associated monthly fees, are the responsibility of the consumer. All applicable sales taxes must also be paid by the consumer at the time of the order. Vouchers are not redeemable for cash, and no change is provided for orders valued at less than \$350. All computer sales are final, meaning that once the computer is delivered, it is the consumer's responsibility for any repairs and costs outside of warranty.

If you are interested in participating in this program, you must contact Connections for Independent Living beginning October 1. You may do so by telephone at **970-352-8682** to speak with your Independent Living Specialist, or by email message at **info@connections4il.org**. The consumer must have proven residency in the Connections service counties and be an active care consumer with Connections. Computer delivery will take up to two weeks from the date of the order.

A waiting list will be created if the maximum number of vouchers are distributed. Connections new TechMate program volunteers will begin in October, providing remote assistance by telephone for any technical questions about the new computers. If you are not currently a registered consumer with Connections, contact us today!



Pawnee Buttes.

Richard Rhinehart

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**Our Organization**

Established in 1986, Connections for Independent Living is one of ten certified Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the State of Colorado. We serve Weld, Morgan, Logan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma Counties. All our services are free and voluntary for our valued participants.



Wikimedia Commons

## Adding SSI/SSDI Benefits can Save a Life

Although many persons receive Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) from the federal government, there are individuals who haven't considered this assistance. Such income can assist in monthly living expenses, and save lives.

Within our seven-county region in northeastern Colorado, Connections recognizes there are individuals who are eligible for this financial assistance program, but have not yet explored the application process.

If you, or a family member or colleague, live with disabilities and do

not currently receive SSI/SSDI benefits, these programs are worth investigating. Connections offers a free assessment service for interested individuals to look into this process.

Through a call to Connections, you can schedule an evaluation with a trained SSI/SSDI benefit specialist. Our knowledgeable specialist can help you navigate the qualification process, and determine whether you are a candidate.

There is no obligation with this program, and it is confidential.

Contact us today by telephone at 970-352-8682 or by email at [info@connections4il.org](mailto:info@connections4il.org).

*Connections offers a free assessment service for consumers within our seven county region to determine eligibility for SSI/SSDI benefits.*

## Welcome to Connections

Connections for Independent Living is growing! In recent months, we have welcomed the following team members.

This April, **Rochelle Miller** made the transition from Interim Executive Director to Executive Director for Connections. Rochelle has an extensive background in nonprofit leadership in northern Colorado and has worked with our organization as a consultant to the board of directors since 2018.

**Hodan Ahmed** is an Independent Living Specialist with Connections. She is a May 2020 graduate of the University of Northern Colorado with a Bachelors of Science degree in Human Services. The leader of Connections' Anxiety Support Group, Hodan has three years of working in the nonprofit sector focusing on youth. She also has two years of working in the nonprofit sector focusing on the immigrant population, teaching the English language and providing resources.

**Rick Rhinehart** joins as Director of Communications. In his role, he will direct internal and external communications, including the website, social media, newsletters, media releases, and more. A journalism graduate from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Rick has several years of nonprofit experience. He served six years with USA Cycling at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, and nearly nine years as Director of Communications for World T.E.A.M. Sports, a national nonprofit that creates inclusive outdoor sporting programs for disabled and able-bodied persons.

## Candidates Forum Planned

Connections is joining four other Weld County agencies in hosting a Candidates Forum in late October. The online forum will include former Governor John Hickenlooper, and a representative from Senator Cory Gardner's campaign. Other local candidates are scheduled to participate. Watch for more details to come!

## Connections Peer Support Groups

### ANXIETY SUPPORT GROUP

Participants share information about how they cope with anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress (PTSD). This group meets every third Thursday from 2–3 p.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86218709472>

📞 dial 1-253-215-8782; using your keypad, enter 86218709472#, then press # again.

### CHRONIC PAIN/ILLNESS PEER SUPPORT

A support group for those living with chronic pain and illness. Group meets every first Thursday of the month from 3–4:30 p.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83030138798>

📞 dial 1-253-215-8782; using your keypad, enter 83030138798#, then press # again.

### LOW VISION PEER SUPPORT

Learn about and share strategies for living with low vision/blindness. This group meets every fourth Tuesday from 11 a.m.—12 noon.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81692498500>

📞 dial 1-669-900-6833; using your keypad, enter 81692498500#, then press # again.

### SELF-ADVOCACY PEER SUPPORT GROUP

This is a participant lead group that teaches people how to advocate for themselves. This group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10–11 a.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84949531378>

📞 dial 1-669-900-6833, using your keypad, enter 84949531378#, then press # again.

### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

The Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group is a peer support group offering information and support to individuals who have experienced a Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or any other type of brain injury. Caregivers are welcome. This group meets the second Monday of each month from 1–2 p.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87692062801>

📞 dial 1-253-215-8782; using your keypad, enter 87692062801#, then press # again.

### VETERANS PEER SUPPORT GROUP

Veterans provide support to each other and learn and share strategies for living in the civilian world. The group meets every Wednesday, from 3:30–5:00 p.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81692498500>

📞 dial 1-669-900-6833; using your keypad, enter 81692498500#, then press # again.

### WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT GROUP

A safe environment for women to support each other. This group meets the fourth Friday of every month from 2–3 p.m.



📞 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89197179026>

📞 dial 1-346-248-7799; using your keypad, enter 89197179026#, then press # again.

## NEWS & NOTES

Would you like to receive future newsletters by email? Has your contact information changed? Let us know! Contact the Connections team by telephone at (970) 352-8682 or by email message at [info@connections4il.org](mailto:info@connections4il.org).

Our Connections team continues to work remotely as Colorado remains under state health restrictions owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our office has a new locked drop-off box. If you have confidential materials you need to bring to our team, use this box for secure transmission.

We have had a face-lift at the Connections building this summer. While staff has been working remotely, the building interior was repainted, and the alley entrance to the parking lot resurfaced. There are no more potholes!

Are you a Facebook user? Follow our Connections page at [facebook.com/CILgreeley/](https://www.facebook.com/CILgreeley/) for regular updates about our organization, and information about persons with disabilities throughout the state.

Connections is published bi-monthly by Connections for Independent Living and distributed at no cost to care consumers, followers, supporters, and partners. Rochelle Miller—Executive Director; Colin Morey—Director of Independent Living Services; Anne Yanez—Finance Assistant; Sarah Augenstein—Director of Interpretations. Richard Rhinehart—Communications Director and Editor. Send change of address to Connections, 1331 8th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80631.