



CONNECTOR

Summer Picnics Were a Blast!

We had such a great time with everyone who was able to join us. It was wonderful to be able to be together again! Check out some pictures of the fun.

Mid Valley RCO



South Valley RCO



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What is an ONA Assessor?

The federal government requires people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have a needs assessment to receive services. The Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) in Oregon uses an assessment tool called the Oregon Needs Assessment (ONA).

An Assessor conducts the ONA while objectively ensuring everyone is assessed the same way. Having someone who is not your Personal Agent (PA) complete your ONA lets your PA focus on helping you develop your Individual Support Plan (ISP). The PA and Assessor work together to support you through the ONA process.

Anyone who wants a copy of their ONA can ask for it. The Assessor or your PA can provide a copy of the ONA once it is completed. If you have questions or don't think the ONA results accurately reflect your needs, you can:

- Talk to your Personal Agent, who will follow up with the Assessor.
- Talk to the Assessor directly.
- File a complaint if there are disagreements or concerns.



The ONA is used to determine a person's Service Group, which will eventually determine the number of monthly hours a person receives for services. However, individuals who receive in-home services (like at RCO) will not see a change in their monthly hours until sometime after March 2025. Currently, the Adult Needs Assessment (ANA) is still the assessment tool that determines the number of monthly hours a person receives services.

Kelli Evans

My name is Kelli Evans and I am the Lead Assessor at RCO for both Mid Valley and South Valley brokerages. I have been an Assessor at RCO since the introduction of the Oregon Needs Assessment (ONA) in 2018. Before that, I worked as a Personal Agent for 6 years. I oversee our Assessor Team and help make sure that all ONAs are consistent and accurate. I have enjoyed being an Assessor most because I love meeting new people every day and learning about all of our Customers.



Meet RCO's ONA Assessor Team

Elizabeth Partridge

I have been a PA 4 years prior to becoming an Assessor. I am looking forward to working as an assessor and being able to support individuals by ensuring that their support needs are identified. I enjoy being able to support individuals and create a safe environment for them to share details about their lives without feeling judgement.



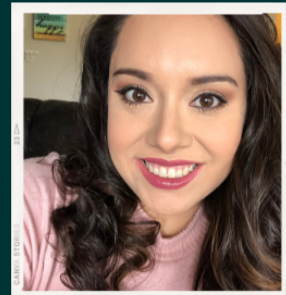
David Crites

I started working in the social services field in 1986 when living in Maine. I worked in residential group homes as a direct care worker then as a home manager. I returned to Oregon in 2008 and started at Mentor Oregon Mid Valley Brokerage from 2008 through 2018 as a Personal Agent. In 2018 I became an Oregon Needs Assessment Assessor at Mentor before starting at RCO.



Anabel Manzo

I have been at RCO as a Bilingual PA since 2018. I am a first generation Mexican American, and I am very passionate about equity work. I hope to continue expanding equity work in my new role. I am very excited to be RCO's first bilingual assessor and look forward to providing assessments in English and Spanish.



Melinda Petersen

I've been a PSW, DSP and I spent 4 years managing group homes before I became a Personal Agent. I have been working here (both Mentor and RCO) for 3 years, 1 ½ of them as an assessor. Being an assessor at RCO has been very rewarding. Every day I get to do my part to help our clients access the resources to achieve their goals. That's a great feeling.



New Beginnings and Support

Aaron Moves to the Wild Wild West

Aaron Warthan is a cowboy at heart, and he is finding his community. Aaron recently moved from Lane County to a new town in Linn County and his new Personal Agent, Sam, connected him with a community member, Janis, who owns property and horses.

Janis is the sister to a late RCO customer who passed away in 2020. Janis has had Aaron out to ride and brush the horses. He and her late sister have a lot in common, so it has been a positive connection for them both.

Aaron likes to dress the part when working with the horses and puts on his finest western gear, hat included! His Personal Agent is also helping Aaron add a Day Support Activities (DSA) program to his plan so he can meet new people. While change can be hard, with this move, Aaron was able to find new things to enjoy!



RCO is a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors that helps to make decisions and provides organizational oversight for the agency. RCO is seeking new board members, specifically those representing the South Valley/Eugene area.

Whether you have board experience, or specific skills that you can contribute, or just want to be an active part of RCO's mission, please inquire! The board meets a

few times a year. Attendance and participation in board meetings is a key part of the membership. Contact Executive

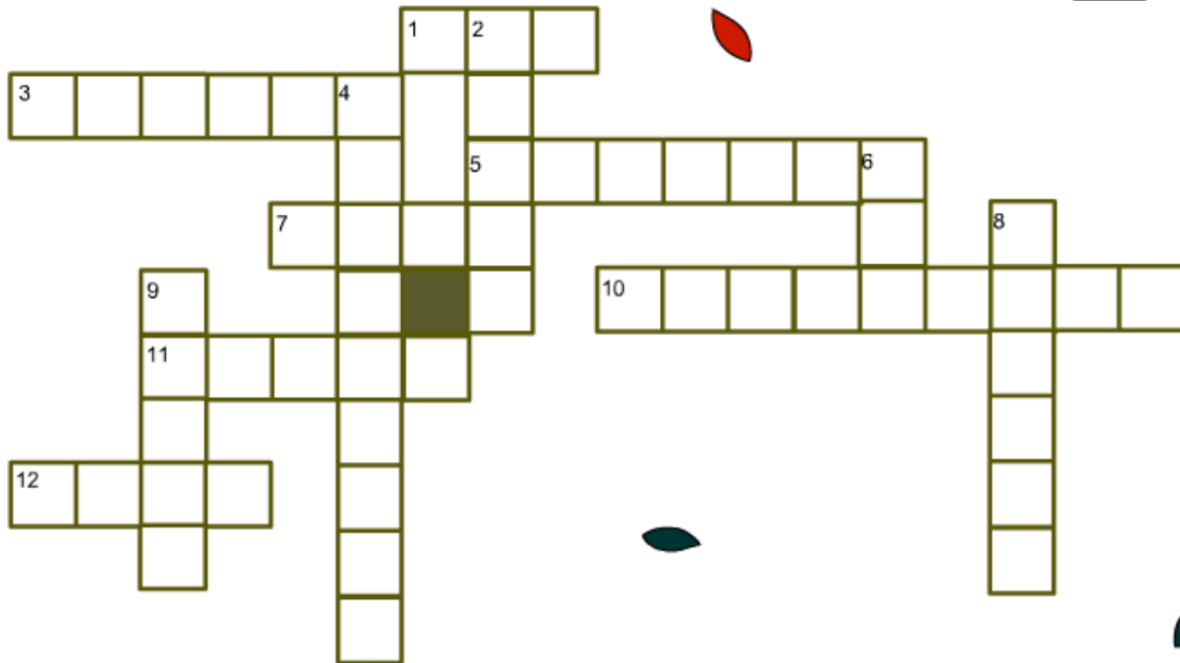
Director, Adam Ayers, or email info@rcoregon.org for more details.



**NEW BOARD
MEMBERS**

WANTED

Fall Crossword Puzzle



Down:

2. The forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge
4. An object made to resemble a human figure, that is set up to scare birds away from a field where crops are growing.
6. A fruit consisting of a hard or tough nutshell protecting a kernel which is usually edible.
8. Another word for fall
9. The nut of the oaks

Across:

1. Grass that has been mown and dried for use as fodder.
3. They turn yellow, orange, and red in the fall season.
5. You carve this to make a Jack-o-lantern
7. The season after Summer.
10. These were roasting on an open fire as per a famous Christmas song
11. A beverage made from the fermented juice of apples.
12. The main ingredient to make cornbread



www.MyPartyGames.com

Answer key on next page

Meet RCO Advisory Council Members

RCO's Advisory Councils were launched in April of 2022. We would love for more customers to join the group!

Loren has a history of being on Advisory Councils. He believes in the importance of independence and good relationships. He wants people to know that his Autism is important and he embraces it. He feels like the Advisory Council is a place to come and celebrate and embrace your disability. Loren wants to let others know that, **"It is a good meeting where if you have problems with RCO and you want a solution, or if you want more fun activities or other ideas. Everyone has a voice."** Loren wants new members to be committed and involved in the council. "Attending meetings and participating is important."



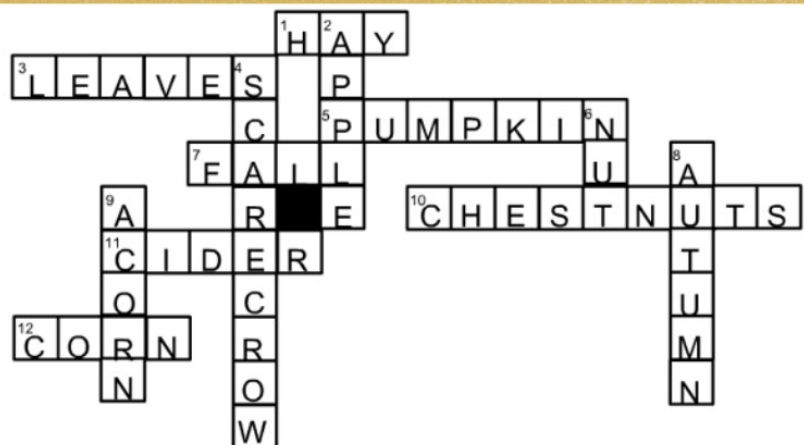
Natasha, "Tash", is also an RCO Council member that has been attending meetings. Tash has been a part of RCO for over 11 years. Things that are important to her are being social and having friends. She is also very proud of her job at Safeway in Stayton where she works 2 days a week. Tash's Personal Agent, Courtney helps her out a lot and she says that she is

awesome to work with. Tash likes being a part of the Advisory Council for many reasons, but she most likes that everyone has a voice. **"We hope that you reach out to your PA today and get involved with the council to have YOUR voice heard!"**



It's a pretty good meeting. I like talking with other people in the meetings. -Tash

Fall Crossword Answer Key



3rd Annual Holiday Card Contest

We know Fall just arrived which means we have Halloween and Thanksgiving to look forward to. It also means that it is time for RCO's 3rd annual Holiday Card Contest. Your entry could be the winner!

The winner will have their artwork published as our official 2022 Holiday Card, which will be sent to everyone in the RCO community.

Details:

- Entries must be received by November 18th.
- Contest is open to all RCO customers.
- Pictures only - no words, please.
- The size of our holiday card is 8.5 x 5.5. Please try and submit designs as close to these specifications as possible. They don't need to be exact, but the closer the better. (Portrait and landscape will both be accepted.)
- Submissions can be in color or black and white. Submissions can be produced by hand or computer.
- Please avoid submitting artwork with copyrighted content. (It must be your original artwork)

How to submit:

- Send completed drawing to your PA or
- Mail to RCO 1775 32nd Place NE Suite A Salem, OR 97301
- Make sure to include your full name
- Digital files should be saved as a JPEG or PDF. These can be sent to info@rcoregon.org

Good luck, have fun, and thank you for your time and *creativity!*

Trick or Treat at RCO

Yes, that is right! On October 31st, RCO offices will be waiting and watching for all customers who want to come and trick and trick or treat our offices. Come on by and say, 'hi'. Better yet, show up in costume and join in on the fun.





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Bringing our
communities together

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McMinnville, OR 97128

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Eugene, OR 97401

541-799-0545

Albany Office:

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Albany, OR 97322

541-704-2720

**Turning
Dreams
Into
Achievements**