

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE ADA



ECI provided information and training so that people with disabilities had accessible buses



ECI provided technical assistance on ADA accessibility requirements for Harbor Park Baseball Stadium



The Youth Advocacy Group advocated for accessible Spirit of Norfolk ticket booth

Disability advocates across the United States have been sponsoring events to celebrate this anniversary of passage of the ADA on July 26, 1990.

At this signing, our civil rights became law that has led to greater opportunities for the disability community in most areas of life including employment, government programs, and public accommodations. The challenge since its passage has been to ensure that the law is being implemented and enforced. ECI has worked hard for 25 years to make sure that this has happened. As with any other civil rights, the struggle continues despite the fact that the law has been in place for many years.

This past year, ECI held a celebration with a community reception including remarks from people who have used the law to gain access of their civil rights. Approximately 100 people attended the luncheon and 25 posters were placed on the walls of the Center each representing a successful advocacy effort to have the ADA implemented and enforced.

Independent Living Centers from every state sent about 1,000 total representatives to the annual National Council on Independent Living Conference in Washington, D.C., which was dedicated to the anniversary. Large crowds of people with disabilities marched to the Capital where a rally was held featuring speeches by legislators and disability advocacy leaders who had a role in the passage of the ADA. The weeklong conference included many workshops to provide information to the community about the ADA as well as celebratory activities during the conference.



In 2002 Young Advocates began their efforts to make lawn seating at the Virginia Beach Amphitheater accessible



Over the years, delegations from other countries including England, Costa Rica, and Guam were hosted and trained on the ADA



Community members, participants and staff came together in an "Ask the Experts" ADA teleconference hosted in 2003

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

➡ Americans with Disabilities Advocacy

During the past year, ECI continued to provide advocacy and training to the local community regarding the ADA and technical assistance to local government and businesses about their responsibilities to comply with the law. Training sessions were also held to inform and update ECI participants on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

➡ Peer Mentoring

In peer mentoring participants work with an ECI Coordinator who also has a disability to talk about independent living goals and any barriers they see holding them back. Peer mentors share their own experiences of removing personal barriers to independence and how they stood up for their rights and maintained their confidence through the process. An Independent Living support group met monthly to discuss disability adjustment and independent living issues with peers across a range of ages and disability types.

➡ Independent Living Skills Training

Participants identified specific independent living skills training goals to expand their independence. Skills training were provided in group and individual settings.

➡ Information & Referral

Information was provided to people with disabilities and others about resources in the community to promote independent living. Information was provided about topics including assistive technology, public benefits, employment, disability rights, housing, education, recreation, transportation, and financial assistance. Referrals were made to other organizations as appropriate.

➡ Advocacy Group

The Advocacy Group met monthly to explore issues of importance to participants. The goal of the group was to promote integration and opportunities. One of their priorities this year was improving public and private transportation opportunities.

➡ Housing Advocacy and Planning

Working with community planning and development offices and public housing agencies, ECI advocated for affordable, accessible housing options. Assistance was provided to people who needed accessible home modifications. Assistance was also provided to people with disabilities who were homeless. Fair Housing Act and HUD 504/FHA training was held.

➡ Education Advocacy

Guidance in the way of information and referral, workshops, and individual counseling sessions was provided to students and their parents. ECI participated in several Special Education Advisory Committees and other public activities to advocate for improved education opportunities.

➡ Employment Services

Through a contract with the Social Security Administration, ECI continued the Work Incentives and Planning Assistance (WIPA) Project whereby, information and benefits counseling regarding work incentives was provided making it possible for individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to explore work options. ECI is also an Employment Network (EN) through the Ticket to Work Program and assisted people who received SSI or SSDI to reach employment goals through the development of individualized work plans and the provision of needed supports and resources.

ECI completed a two-year grant from the Hampton Roads Community Foundation (HRCF) to expand and modify our EN program. Support services were provided with employment search assistance and referral for benefits counseling and other resources in the community. Training was provided to employers on ADA employment provisions and disability sensitivity.

➡ Emergency Preparedness and Response

ECI continued representing people with disabilities and their access and functional needs in all aspects of emergency planning and response. ECI is a representative on numerous local, regional, state, and national committees. ECI has provided training on emergency preparedness for people with disabilities to consumers, community organizations, and emergency management.

➡ Medicaid Advocacy

Information and advocacy related to Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waivers was provided to people with disabilities statewide. ECI facilitated meetings of the Virginia Medicaid Waiver Network and maintained a statewide cadre of Medicaid Waiver Mentors. Advocates and providers use information developed by ECI across the Commonwealth.

➡ Medicaid Waiver Coordination & Facilitation

ECI has provided Medicaid case management to people with developmental disabilities and services facilitation for people who use Medicaid consumer-directed services since the inception of these services in the 1990s. Services included advocacy, training, and monitoring and assistance with implementation, approval, and satisfaction with community supports. ECI played a significant role with the Commonwealth in developing changes to Medicaid Waiver supports that will be implemented in 2016.

➡ Outreach and Transition from Nursing Facilities and other Institutions

ECI visited people living in nursing facilities to reach those who may not otherwise have access to ECI services. These outreach efforts often resulted in people having access to activities outside of the facility and eventually moving back into the community.

Collaborating with the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living, ECI implemented a grant project from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities to develop material and provide training about community services. Hospital discharge planners, medical staff, and other staff responsible for providing information to people with disabilities and their families were the target for this project.

Transition coordination and transition services were provided to people with disabilities who were institutionalized in nursing facilities and psychiatric residential treatment facilities. In addition, ECI provided technical assistance to other organizations throughout the Commonwealth on how to provide these services to people in other regions of the state.



Erin King
Linda Johnson
Shernika Holley
Sharon Franklin
Frances Durham
Lisbet Dula
Vantoria Clay
Felicia Brown
Sylvester Askins, Jr
Julia Allen
Rena Lewis
Independent Living Coordinators

Chryst Trau, Accounting Clerk
Tammy Manno, Administrative Assistant
Carol Crabill, Executive Assistant
Jacqueline Brown, Receptionist
Gwendolyn Bone, Administrative Assistant
Administrative Support Staff

Cheryl Simpson, Operations Manager
Amadeo San Antonio, Finance Director
Maureen Hollowell, Director of Advocacy & Services
Stephen L Johnson, Executive Director
Administration

➔ **Staff Members (October 2015)**

Jeff Byrd
Dorothy Davis
Malcolm B Higgins II
Carmen Mendez
Stephen L Johnson
Ex-Officio:
Deon Latham
Samuel Painter
Jonathan Pope
Serita Scott

➔ **Board Members (October 2015)**

Michael Wang, President
Christopher Dailey, Vice-President
Linda Dew, Treasurer

Service Highlights for 2014-2015

During the past year, the following services were provided:

- 7,102 Individuals with disabilities received direct Services
- 2,692 Independent Living Goals were accomplished by Center Participants

Hours of services directly provided to individuals with disabilities:

- 15,070 Individual Advocacy
- 737 Peer Counseling Services
- 763 Independent Living Skills Training
- 982 Housing, Home Modifications & Shelter Services
- 194 Information & Referral Services to Center participants
- 945 Socialization Services
- 2,624 Transportation Services
- 409 Other Services

Hours of Community Activities Provided:

- 2,076 Collaboration/Networking
- 3,152 Information & Referral
- 1,208 Community Education & Public Information
- 1,492 Community /Systems Advocacy
- 162 Outreach Efforts
- 22 Technical Assistance
- 1,595 Volunteer

Total \$2,022,000

Operating Revenue 2014-15

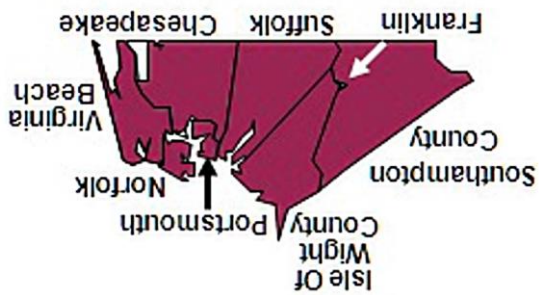
Management & General 17%
Community Services/Advocacy 56%
Services to Individual Consumers 27%

Expenses

Federal Government 31%
State Government 22%
Local Government 5%
Other Grants, Contracts & Fundraising 42%

Public Support and Revenue

Funding



- ➔ Advocacy
- ➔ Peer Mentoring
- ➔ Information and Referral
- ➔ Independent Living Skills Training
- ➔ Transition Services (youth and nursing facility residents)

Core Services

Purpose

The Endependence Center, Incorporated (ECI) is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, non-profit Center for Independent Living (CIL) operated by and for people with disabilities in South Hampton Roads. The purposes of ECI are two-fold: to prepare individuals, and to prepare the community for full integration of people with disabilities into society.



Staff and participants at an ADA pre-signing rally in Washington, DC in 1989



ECI conducted the nation's first statewide training on the ADA in 1991 for 60 advocates

ADA Celebration at ECI – July 2015



We hope that you will continue to partner with us and we welcome your collaboration in our efforts to promote equal opportunities and access in all areas of life.

In 2015, ECI was involved in numerous activities and events celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the ADA. We are committed to continue educating the disability community and the public about the ADA and the importance of enforcement and implementation of our civil rights.

ECI was the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Virginia, which now includes 16 CILs across the state. ECI works towards empowering the disability community to be self-advocates and to break down barriers and negative attitudes in the community that prevent full integration of persons with disabilities.

As an organization that works for people with disabilities, we continue to promote independent living, equal rights, and access for the disability community in South Hampton Roads as we have for 34 years since 1981.

Community Message

Endependence Center, Inc.



Annual Report

"Celebrating 25 Years Americans with Disabilities Act"



National ADA Rally in Washington DC

October 2014 – September 2015

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