

ENDEPENDENCE CENTER NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2023

ECI Operational Plan

Independence Center, Inc. (ECI) recognizes the seriousness and effect that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) can have on the people we work with. So that ECI staff and participants stay safe, we have established the following operational plan:

- ECI's office will be open for scheduled appointments only.
- You can call and speak with your IL Coordinator about scheduling an appointment to discuss your goals.
- ECI staff will be available by phone and e-mail, Monday through Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm.
- ECI will be holding a few in-person group activities.
- ECI will update our Facebook page, website, and newsletter to reflect this policy and any changes.
- ECI will be closed on Monday, January 2, 2023, in observance of New Year's Day.
- ECI will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2023, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Independent Living Skills Training

The next Independent Living Skills Training will be **Tuesday, January 10, 2023, from 2:00pm - 3:30pm** at the Independence Center. The training will focus on issues to consider when selecting a roommate.

Independent Living Day
General Assembly, Richmond
January 18, 2023



Independent Living Day is an opportunity to join other disability advocates across Virginia and to meet with legislators to educate them about the priorities of people with disabilities. If you are interested in attending and have been attending the Advocacy Group or Independent Living Skills Training, **please contact your Independent Living Coordinator by Monday, January 9, 2023**. Your Coordinator will notify the staff organizing the event of your interest, and you will be notified by Friday, January 13, 2023, if there is space available and further information about the event.

Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

ECI Board of Directors appoints the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is made up of active ECI participants. The CAC works on a consumer satisfaction survey each year to get feedback from participants about ECI services and reports to the Board with suggestions. The meeting will be held in person at ECI on **Monday, January 30, 2023, from 2:00pm – 3:00pm** and is open to all participants.

Please call Rena Lewis at (757) 351-1578 for more information.

2022 Participant Holiday Party

It was amazing to resume the ECI Annual Holiday Party in person. Approximately 85 people attended the party at the Holiday Inn on December 14. Everyone had an enjoyable time, and there was plenty to eat and drink. Our DJ helped kick off the party with music, karaoke, and dancing. The photo booth was a big hit, with several backgrounds to choose from, and the photographer took about 300 pictures. There were 30 door prizes, and participants could put their name in a drawing for a chance to win a prize of their choosing. As our guests left the party, they received a candy goodie bag. ECI would like to thank Delegates Nadarious Clark and Angela Williams Graves for attending this year's party. It was wonderful to be with everyone.

The TOUCH Group

The TOUCH Group will meet on **January 21, 2023, from 11:00am–1:00pm**. This group will continue to have meetings every third Saturday of each month. Come and join them for polite conversation, games, and snacks to get to know one another. Blindness and other disabilities are important to the group; they want everyone to come and feel comfortable while introducing themselves to new friends and family. If you are looking for support with no judgment in a family-oriented environment, the TOUCH Group is the place to be. This is not an ECI event and ECI does not provide transportation fare tickets or accommodations.

Contact: Montrell Rodgers (757) 238-1293 or April Harrington (757) 777-1729 or via Relay 711

Winter Weather

Winter is here, and it is vital to prepare for winter storms that can bring extreme cold, freezing rain, snow, ice, and high winds. Winter storms can create a higher risk of vehicle accidents, hypothermia, frostbite, carbon monoxide poisoning, and heart attacks from overexertion.

Taking preparedness actions:

- Keep an emergency supply kit in your vehicle that includes jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks.
- Keep a full tank of gas and, if possible, have a professional check your battery, anti-freeze, and cooling system.
- Gather emergency supplies for the home if you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication.
- Remember the needs of your pets.
- Prepare your home by insulating, caulking, and weather stripping.
- Test all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms.
- Sign up for your locality's alert system through the emergency management office for the locality.

During a winter storm, you can also stay safe by doing the following:

- Stay off the roads.
- Stay indoors and dress warmly.
- Limit your time outside.
- Prepare for power outages.
- Listen for emergency information and alerts.
- Reduce the risk of heart attack by avoiding overexertion when shoveling snow.
- Look for signs of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
- While staying safe from COVID-19, check on your neighbors by texting, emailing, or calling them.

If you need more information, contact your ECI Coordinator.



Silver Bells

Empowerment Weekends for Blind and Low-Vision Seniors

NFB of Virginia has announced the 2nd year of its Silver BELLS Program! They empower seniors 55 years and older with hands-on lessons to thought-provoking discussions, from classic confidence building to new friendships.

If you desire to be the most independent version of yourself, join the NFB for fundamental hands-on home management, technology, travel, and communications training. Learn to take charge of your own personal tasks. Just because you are low-vision or blind does not mean you need to rely on someone else.

Attend the kickoff meet and greet, via Zoom, on Saturday, January 7, from 1pm to 3pm. They will give you a sneak peek of what is in store at one of their three-weekend retreats scheduled in Virginia Beach, February 23 thru 26; in Northern Virginia, March 23 thru 26; and in Richmond, April 27 thru 30. These weekends are provided free of charge to Virginia residents thanks to a grant from the Virginia Board for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia.

Visit **NFBV.org/Silver Bells** for more information or contact the program coordinator, Sandy Halverson, at 703-400-6890 or **silverbells@nfbv.org**.

Access the January 7 open house via Zoom or your telephone:

<https://zoom.us/j/8297256345?pwd=SFAYamlQNU44ZTJ6dUZNMtV4RmhCQT09>

One tap mobile: **+13017158592, 8297256345#**

Phone 1 **(301) 715-8592**

Meeting ID: **829 725 6345#**

Password: **20201940**

G.E.D. Classes

“Taking Steps Toward a Brighter Future”

Adult and continuing education classes are starting soon at the Virginia Career Works, Norfolk location.

Classes will be weekly on Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00am to 12:00pm at Virginia Career Works Norfolk, 861 Glenrock Road, Suite 100 in Norfolk. The phone number for Virginia Career Works is 757-629-4702.

For questions, contact Roberta Clark at Roberta.clark@portsk12.com.



**Disability Advocacy
& Services**

Endeppendence Center, Inc.
6300 East Virginia Beach Blvd
Norfolk, VA 23502

Phone:

(757) 461-8007 Voice
(757) 461-7527 TDD

Fax:

(757) 455-8223 or
(757) 461-5375

E-mail:

ecinorf@endeppendence.org

Website:

www.endeppendence.org

**Alternate formats of this
the newsletter is available upon
request by contacting
757-351-1575**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Norfolk, VA
Permit No. 102

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Place label here

Check the ECI website at
[https://endeppendence.org/upcoming-
events/](https://endeppendence.org/upcoming-events/) for any changes to the
schedule or by calling
461-8007, Option 4

To request an
accommodation,
757-351-1575 Voice,
757-461-7527 TDD
or
csimpson@endeppendence.org



ECI is on Facebook.
You can access it two
different ways.

1. Go to www.endeppendence.org and click on the Facebook image on the right side of the page.
2. Go to your personal Facebook page, and in the search box, look for **Endeppendence Center, Inc. – Norfolk, Virginia**

[https://endeppendence.org/upc
oming-events/](https://endeppendence.org/upcoming-events/)



ECI is on Twitter @ECINorfolk