

THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Opening Doors to Opportunities



Independence Center participants had a productive year! You kept working on goals set last year and set 496 new ones. Since 2025 started, you achieved 424 goals, and as 2026 begins, you're making progress on 375 more.

As 2026 starts, ECI staff is looking forward to supporting you to set and achieve even more goals and working in the community towards new advocacy opportunities.

A new Participant-Led Women's Group will meet in January (see page two), and we'll be launching more new groups throughout the year. More details coming soon—be on the lookout!

Advocacy Coalition: Bringing Local Organizations Together to Advocate



As we enter January and focus on the upcoming General Assembly session, ECI is bringing together organizations across Tidewater that advocate with and support people with disabilities. Collaborative conversations help us identify shared needs, strengthen partnerships, and advance inclusive communities.

Join us Wednesday, January 20, 2:00pm - 3:30pm. This gathering will highlight current issues, allow organizations to learn from one another, and encourage coordinated advocacy.

We hope you can join us, and we appreciate everyone who can attend.

EVENT LISTINGS

JANUARY 2026



ECI Events

Unless noted otherwise, events are held at ECI (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)

- 7th WED** **Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
We will discuss the survey and what the committee did in 2025.
- 14th WED** **Board of Directors Meeting** **1:00pm - 3:00pm**
ECI Board of Directors meetings are open to the public.
- 20th WED** **Advocacy Coalition** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
See page one for details.
- 21st WED** **Group Peer Mentoring** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
The monthly Group Peer Mentoring Discussion is an opportunity for participants to share experiences, provide information, and support one another to accomplish their goals.
- 24th SAT** **Youth Independent Living Skills Training** **1:30pm – 3:00pm**
This month, we will be working on a vision board that you will create with goals, big or small that you would like to accomplish in 2026. Please RSVP to Amy Ouellette at (757) 351-1597 or aouellette@endependence.org no later than 5pm on Wednesday, January 21st. We look forward to a year of fun, learning, and advocacy!
- 27th TUE** **Independent Living Skills Training on Podcasts** **3:00pm - 4:30pm**
This month, we'll go over questions for our next episode and begin recording.

Community Events & News

Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.

- 20th TUE** **Participant-Led Event** **12noon – 2:30pm**
Jollie Bean (4541 S. Plaza Trail, Virginia Beach)
This event is organized by participants.
- 30th FRI** ***NEW* Women's Group** **3:00pm – 4:00pm**
Endependence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)
Women's Group is a new participant-led monthly gathering. Meetings will be at ECI. The first topic will be women's right to vote and Independent Living Day.

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Events subject to change. Check the ECI website and Facebook for up-to-date information. *This event is not organized by ECI; bus and Paratransit tickets will not be provided.				1 ECI Closed in Observance of New Year	2	3
4	5	6	7 CAC Meeting @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Board of Directors Meeting @ ECI 1:00pm – 3:00pm	15	16	17
18	19 ECI Closed in Observance Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	20 Advocacy Coalition @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm Participant-Led Event* @ Jollie Bean 12noon – 2:30pm	21 Group Peer Mentoring @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	22	23	24 Youth ILS Training @ ECI 1:30pm – 3:00pm
25	26	27 ILS Training on Podcasts @ ECI 3:00pm – 4:30pm	28	29	30 Women's Group* @ ECI 3:00pm – 4:00pm	31

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Disability Advocacy & Services

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Accommodations

To request accommodations
for ECI activities:
(757) 351-1586 voice
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To request an alternate
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(757) 351-1598 voice
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