

THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER

April 2026 Newsletter

Opening Doors to Opportunities

April is Fair Housing Month



On April 11, 1968, the Federal Fair Housing Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. It prohibited discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, or sex in housing sales, rentals, and financing. The Virginia Fair Housing Act was passed in 1972 and included the same protected classes as the federal law.

In 1988, the Federal Fair Housing Act was amended, and people with disabilities were added to the list of protected classes from discrimination. The Virginia act was similarly amended that year.

Today, the Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, or disability. The Virginia Fair Housing Act also prohibits discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, aged 55 and over, source of funds, and military status.

Celebrate Fair Housing Month with us on April 15 at 2:00pm until 3:30pm, at ECI or via Zoom, with a presentation on federal and state Fair Housing laws. Find out what unfair treatment looks like in housing for people with disabilities and what you can do if you have a complaint. Visit the ECI website for Zoom registration information.

Paratransit Advisory Committee Meeting

The Paratransit Advisory Committee provides a communication link for the Transportation District Commission (TDCHR), persons with disabilities who use or may use Hampton Roads Transit (HRT) services, and service providers to the disabled community on matters related to Paratransit service within HRT's service area.

The next committee meeting will be Wednesday, April 8 at 1:00pm, at the TDCHR Peninsula office (3400 Victoria Boulevard, Hampton). All meetings are free and open to the public in person or via Zoom. For more information, call (757) 222-6087 or e-mail paratransitdept@hrtransit.org. For alternate communication services, contact Barry Bland at (757) 222-6100.

PEATC: Community Office Hours to Start in April

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) offers free and confidential services to assist families with students who have disabilities in navigating the special education system. PEATC will resume community office hours at ECI, offering one-on-one, in-person support on the first Monday of the month, 9:00am – 11:00am. For questions, call PEATC's Region 2 Family Support Specialist at (703) 923-0010 or visit <https://peatc.org>.

EVENT LISTINGS



April 2026

ECI Events

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

- 1ST WED** **Consumer Advisory Committee** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
This month, the Committee will discuss the annual Participant Satisfaction Survey and recommendations or potential changes to the next version.
- 8TH WED** **Connect & Grow** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
Connect & Grow is a fun, welcoming space where ECI participants come together to make connections, share laughs, learn, and grow together as part of our independent living community.
- 15TH WED** **Federal & State Fair Housing Laws Presentation** **2:00pm - 3:30pm** ***VIRTUAL OPTION***
See page one for details. To register to attend via Zoom, visit <https://endependence.org/zoom>.
- 25TH SAT** **Youth Independent Living Skills Training** **1:30pm – 3:00pm**
Join us and learn basic first aid from a member of the Norfolk Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). This is an exciting, interactive training that will be fun and teach you a new skill.
- 28TH TUE** ***NEW TIME* Independent Living Skills Training on Podcasts** **2:00pm - 3:30pm**
Episode 5: Participants will have a chance to interview staff for the next episode.
- 29TH 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.

Community Events

Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.

- 6TH MON** **PEATC Community Office Hours** **9:00am – 11:00am**
Endeppence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)
See page one for details.
- 8TH WED** **Paratransit Advisory Committee** **1:00pm**
TDCHR Peninsula Office (3400 Victoria Boulevard, Hampton)
See page one for details.
- 18TH SAT** **TOUCH Group** **10:00am – 2:00pm**
17th Street Park (1701 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach)
This month, the TOUCH Group will meet at the Oceanfront to participate in the 2026 Hampton Roads VisionWalk. For questions, contact Montrell Rodgers at 757-238-1293 or VATOUCH.22@gmail.com.
- 21ST TUE** **Participant-Led Event** **12noon – 2:30pm**
Golden Corral Buffet & Grill (400 S. Independence Blvd., Virginia Beach)
This event is organized by participants.

The Participant-Led Women's Group will not meet in April.

APRIL 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Events subject to change. Check the ECI website and Facebook for up-to-date information.</i></p>			<p>1</p> <p>CAC Meeting @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Silent Dinner* @ Lynnhaven Mall 5:30pm – 8:00pm</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>PEATC Community Office Hours* @ ECI 9:00am – 11:00am</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Connect & Grow @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p> <p>Paratransit Advisory Committee* @ TDCHR (Hampton) 1:00pm</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>ASL Hangout* @ MoMac Brewing (Hampton) 6:00pm – 9:00pm</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Fair Housing Presentation @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>TOUCH Group (VisionWalk)* @ Oceanfront 10:00am – 2:00pm</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Participant-Led Event* @ Golden Corral (Virginia Beach) 12noon – 2:30pm</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Youth ILS @ ECI 1:30pm – 3:00pm</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>*NEW TIME* ILS Training on Podcasts @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Group Peer Mentoring @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p>30</p>	<p><i>*This event is not organized by ECI; bus and Paratransit tickets will not be provided.</i></p>	

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Disability Advocacy & Services

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E-Mail:

ecinorf@endeppendence.org

Website:

endeppendence.org

Accommodations

To request accommodations
for ECI activities:
(757) 351-1586 voice
(757) 461-7527 TDD
tmano@endeppendence.org

To request an alternate
format of our newsletter:
(757) 351-1598 voice
(757) 461-7527 TDD
ehoapili@endeppendence.org

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