

# THE ENDEPENDENCE CENTER

May 2026 Newsletter

*Opening Doors to Opportunities*

## Connect & Grow: Building Connections in a Fun, Welcoming Space



Connect & Grow is a fun, welcoming space created just for ECI participants. It's a place to unwind, make new connections, share laughs, and enjoy time with peers. Whether you're playing games, relaxing, or learning something new together, Connect & Grow offers a supportive environment for participants to work on their personal socialization goals and where everyone can feel comfortable being themselves.

This group is all about building community, strengthening independence, and having a great time along the way – and it's just for you. May's Connect & Grow will be Wednesday, May 13 at 2:00pm - 3:30pm. Please speak with your IL Coordinator to attend.

## Supported Decision-Making: Free Virtual Training

A free virtual training will be held on Tuesday, May 19, 2:00pm - 3:30pm. Learn how Supported Decision-Making empowers individuals with disabilities to make their own choices with the support they need, while maintaining independence and control over their own lives. This virtual informative session will be led by Dana Traynham, Senior Attorney at the DisAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV), and will cover practical strategies, legal considerations, and ways to promote autonomy in everyday decision-making. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.** A registration link can be found at <https://endependence.org/zoom>.

## Spring is Here: Get Notified for Severe Weather



Did you know you can sign up to receive emergency alerts from the city you live and/or work in? Local cities send text and/or email alerts for weather watches and warnings and other emergencies. You can sign up for these alerts on localities' websites—the links to visit each city or county website can be found on our website, as well as links to find out what flood zone your house or workplace are in. Knowing your flood zone helps residents know what to expect, and if an area needs to evacuate, help you better understand instructions from City officials.

# EVENT LISTINGS



MAY 2026

## ECI Events

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

- 13<sup>th</sup> WED** **Board of Directors Meeting 1:00pm – 3:00pm**  
ECI Board of Directors meetings are open to the public.
- 13<sup>th</sup> WED** **Connect & Grow 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
See page one for details.
- 20<sup>th</sup> WED** **Independent Living Skills Training: Paratransit 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
We'll discuss rules and regulations for Paratransit services, and how to apply.
- 26<sup>th</sup> TUE** **Independent Living Skills Training on Podcasts 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
This month, participants will interview staff.
- 27<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 28<sup>th</sup> THU** **Advocacy Coalition 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
Collaborative conversations help us identify shared needs, strengthen partnerships, and advance inclusive communities. This gathering will highlight current issues, allow organizations to learn from one another, and encourage coordinated advocacy.
- 30<sup>th</sup> SAT** **Youth Independent Living Skills Training 1:30pm – 3:00pm**  
This month, we will be having a conversation and discussion about self-advocacy. This includes what self-advocacy means, ways to speak up for yourself, and ways to make your voice heard.

## Community Events

*Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> SAT** **TOUCH Group: Bowling Event 12noon – 2:00pm**  
**AMF Norfolk Lanes (2441 E. Little Creek Road, Norfolk)**  
For questions, contact Montrell Rodgers at 757-238-1293 or [VATOUCH.22@gmail.com](mailto:VATOUCH.22@gmail.com).
- 6<sup>th</sup> WED** **Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) 6:00pm**  
**Hampton Roads Transit (3400 Victoria Blvd., Hampton)**  
TRAC offers guidance to HRT by providing feedback on service operations and customer experience. For more information, contact Henry Ryto at (757) 222-6000 or [hryto@hrtransit.org](mailto:hryto@hrtransit.org).
- 16<sup>th</sup> SAT** **TOUCH Group 11:00am – 1:00pm**  
**Endeppence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)**  
Let's get together and discuss how we can continue to motivate and encourage one another, as people with disabilities. For questions, contact Montrell Rodgers at 757-238-1293 or [VATOUCH.22@gmail.com](mailto:VATOUCH.22@gmail.com).
- 19<sup>th</sup> TUE** **Participant-Led Event 12noon – 2:30pm**  
**Denny's (6360 Newtown Road, Norfolk)**  
This event is organized by participants.
- 19<sup>th</sup> TUE** **Supported Decision-Making: Free Statewide Virtual Training 2:00pm - 3:30pm**  
See page one for details. Registration is required.

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

# MAY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Events subject to change. Check the ECI website and Facebook for up-to-date information.</p> <p><b>*This event is not organized by ECI; bus and Paratransit tickets will not be provided.</b></p>					1	2
			6	7	8	9
3	4	5	<p><b>HRT TRAC Meeting*</b> @ HRT Hampton Office 6:00pm</p>			
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
			<p><b>Board of Directors Meeting</b> @ ECI 1:00pm – 3:00pm</p> <p><b>Connect &amp; Grow</b> @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>			<p><b>ASL Hangout*</b> @ Chick's Oyster Bar 6:00pm – 9:00pm</p> <p><b>TOUCH Group*</b> @ ECI 11:00am – 1:00pm</p>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		<p><b>Participant-Led Event*</b> @ Denny's (Norfolk) 12noon – 2:30pm</p> <p><b>Supported Decision-Making: Virtual Training</b> 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p><b>ILS Training: Paratransit</b> @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	<p><b>Memorial Day (ECI Office Closed)</b></p>	<p><b>ILS Training on Podcasts</b> @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p><b>Group Peer Mentoring</b> @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>	<p><b>Advocacy Coalition</b> @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm</p>		<p><b>Youth ILS</b> @ ECI 1:30pm – 3:00pm</p>
31						

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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



Disability Advocacy & Services

## **Endeppendence Center, Inc.**

6300 East Virginia Beach Blvd  
Norfolk, VA 23502

### **Phone:**

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

### **E-Mail:**

[ecinorf@endeppendence.org](mailto:ecinorf@endeppendence.org)

### **Website:**

[endeppendence.org](http://endeppendence.org)

## **Accommodations**

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

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

## **Facebook**



**@ECINorfolk**

Endeppendence Center, Inc.  
Norfolk Virginia

## **Support ECI**



Scan the QR code above  
to make a tax-deductible  
donation to ECI via our  
website, or visit:  
[endeppendence.org/donate](http://endeppendence.org/donate)