

THE ENDEPENDENCE CENTER

September 2026 Newsletter

Opening Doors to Opportunities

Important Changes Coming to SNAP and Medicaid



New federal rules are changing some Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements and Medicaid work/community engagement requirements in Virginia.

SNAP changes begin October 1, 2026.

New Medicaid work/community engagement requirements begin January 1, 2027.

If you receive SNAP or Medicaid, watch for letters from the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) or Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) explaining how these changes may affect you. **Do not ignore these notices.** If you have questions, need help understanding a notice, or need assistance requesting an

exemption or meeting a requirement, contact your Endependence Center coordinator as soon as possible. We are here to help you understand the changes and navigate the process.

Links for more information provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services and the Department of Medical Assistance Services are on the ECI website at <https://endependence.org/alerts>.

Learn About DARS Pre-ETS Services for Students with Disabilities



Do you have a teen or young adult with a disability, ages 14-22, who is currently enrolled in school? Are you looking for resources and supports to help them successfully transition from high school to adult life? Join us to learn about the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), a program designed to help students with disabilities explore career options, build workplace readiness skills, and prepare for life after high school:

Wednesday, September 16, 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Wednesday, September 30, 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Both sessions will be held in-person at the Endependence Center and via Zoom. To sign up to attend in person, contact Amy Ouellette at (757) 351-1597 or aouellette@endependence.org. To register to attend via Zoom, visit <https://endependence.org/zoom>.

EVENT LISTINGS



SEPTEMBER 2026

ECI Events

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

- 9th WED** **ECI Board of Directors Meeting** 1:00pm - 3:00pm
ECI Board of Directors meetings are open to the public.
- 9th 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.
- 16th WED** **Your Vote Counts** 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Join us for an informative discussion to learn what resources are available to support voters with disabilities and how voting technology and accessibility services are provided.
- 16th WED** **Pre-Employment Transition Information Session** 6:00pm – 7:00pm ***VIRTUAL OPTION***
See page one for details.
- 26th SAT** **Youth Independent Living Skills Training: Managing Stress** 1:30pm – 3:00pm
Feeling overwhelmed with school, work, family, or friends? Let's explore practical strategies for managing stress, staying organized, and balancing responsibilities to feel more confident and in control of your daily life.
- 29th TUE** **Independent Living Skills Training on Podcasts** 2:00pm - 3:30pm
This month we'll learn how to edit clips and put our fifth episode together.
- 30th 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.
- 30th WED** **Pre-Employment Transition Information Session** 6:00pm – 7:00pm ***VIRTUAL OPTION***
See page one for details.

Community Events

Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.

- 2nd WED** **Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC)** 6:00pm
Hampton Roads Transit (3400 Victoria Blvd., Hampton)
The Transit Riders Advisory Committee (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.
- 15th TUE** **Participant-Led Event** 12noon – 2:30pm
Norfolk Premium Outlets (1600 Premium Outlets Blvd., Norfolk)
This event is organized by participants.
- 25th FRI** **Women's Group** 3:00pm – 4:00pm
Endeppence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)
This month's participant-led Women's Group will focus on mental health.

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 HRT Transit Riders Committee* @ TDCHR (Hampton) 6:00pm	3	4 Silent Dinner* @ Lynnhaven Mall 5:30pm – 8:00pm	5
6	7 ECI Closed (Labor Day)	8	9 Board Meeting @ ECI 1:00pm – 3:00pm Connect & Grow @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	10	11	12 ASL Hangout* @ New Realm Brewing 6:00pm ASL Sip & Sign* (Voices Off) @ Pinup Coffee at Farmhouse 10:00am – 11:00am
13	14	15 Participant-Led Event* @ Norfolk Premium Outlets 12noon – 2:30pm	16 Your Vote Counts @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm Pre-ETS Info Session @ ECI/Virtual 6:00pm – 7:00pm	17	18 Early Voting Begins	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Women's Group* @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	26 Youth ILS: Managing Stress @ ECI 1:30pm – 3:00pm
27	28	29 ILS Training on Podcasts @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	30 Group Peer Mentoring @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm Pre-ETS Info Session @ ECI/Virtual 6:00pm – 7:00pm	<i>Events subject to change. Check the ECI website and Facebook for up-to-date information.</i> *This event is not organized by ECI; bus and Paratransit tickets will not be provided.		

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

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

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