

THE DEPENDENCE CENTER

November 2026 Newsletter

Opening Doors to Opportunities



Annual Holiday Party: RSVP by November 19

This year's annual participant holiday party will be held on Thursday, December 3, 12:00pm – 3:00pm. **The party is open to participants only.** The cost is \$5.00 per person and payable at the door by cash, check, or debit or credit card. Participants may register one guest for \$5.00.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Contact Katherine Keesler, kkeesler@endependence.org or 757-351-1569, to register by Thursday, November 19.

You are encouraged to be responsible for your own transportation to and from the party.



Election Day is November 3: Make a Plan to Vote

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3. This year, Virginians will cast ballots for the US Senate, House of Representatives, three amendments to the Virginia Constitution, and some City Council and School Board seats. Visit the Election Hub on the ECI website (<https://endependence.org/election>) for information on accessible voting, voter protection, and the constitutional amendments, as well as links to check your registration status, find out who is on your ballot, and more.



Save the Date: Retirement Celebration for Rena Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator

Rena Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator, retired in October after more than 30 years of service to the Endependence Center and the disability community. To celebrate Rena and her lasting impact, please join us on Tuesday, December 1, 2:00pm – 3:30pm, at ECI. More information will be shared as the date approaches.



Reminder: SNAP and Medicaid Work Requirements Changing

New federal rules changed SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) work requirements and Medicaid work/community engagement requirements. Watch for letters from the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) or the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) – do not ignore these notices. For links for more information, visit <https://endependence.org/alerts>.

Advocacy & 45 Years of Making an Impact

ECI ANNUAL MEETING

Endeppendence Center's annual meeting was held on October 14 at the Jordan-Newby Anchor Branch Library in Norfolk. This year's program, "Advocacy & 45 Years of Making an Impact", showcased ECI's long history of advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels, while honoring local community leaders and participants.

2026 ECI Award Recipients

Jerry O'Bryan Freedom Award – Charles Bryant

Outstanding City Award – City of Norfolk

Outstanding Service Award – Senator Angelia Williams Graves

William Patrick White Award for Advocacy – Delegate Phil Hernandez

Outstanding Agency Award – Hope House Foundation

Jane L. Majer Award for Independence – Erin Eveleigh

Lucy Salzberg Outstanding Student Award – Madison Boyd (not pictured)





Pictured left: Congressman Bobby Scott, who represents the 3rd District of Virginia.

Pictured below: ECI Board President Lisbet Dula delivers closing remarks.



Pictured above: Delegate Phil Hernandez converses in ASL with ECI's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Coordinator, Shernika Holley.

Pictured right: Guest Speaker Ed Turner shares "Why Advocacy Matters"



For more about this year's annual meeting, please visit <https://endependence.org/annual> or scan the QR code on the left.

EVENT LISTINGS



NOVEMBER 2026

ECI Events

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

- 4th WED** **Independent Living Skills Training: ABCs of Housing 2:00pm - 3:30pm**
Join us for The ABCs of Housing, a presentation designed to help people with disabilities who have very low income learn about affordable housing options. We'll cover how different housing programs work, how to apply, resources to help with your housing search, helpful application tips, and new tenant rights laws.
- 18th WED** **ECI Board of Directors Meeting 1:00pm - 3:00pm**
ECI Board of Directors meetings are open to the public.
- 18th 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.
- 19th THU** **City of Norfolk: Presentation of ADA Self-Evaluation 2:00pm - 3:30pm**
The City of Norfolk has completed its ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan process. Please join us for a presentation from Adrianna Giddings, Management Analyst with the City of Norfolk, about the findings of the self-evaluation and what's next for the City.

Community Events

Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.

There are no PEATC community office hours in November.

- 4th WED** **Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) 6:00pm**
Hampton Roads Transit Norfolk Office (509 East 18th Street, Bldg. 4, Norfolk)
The Transit Riders Advisory Committee offers guidance to the Transportation District Commission of Hampton Roads (TDCHR) by providing feedback on service operations and customer experience. For more information, contact Henry Ryto at (757) 222-6000 or hryto@hrtransit.org.
- 17th TUE** **Participant-Led Event 12noon – 2:30pm**
Crazy Buffet & Grill (1745 Parkview Drive, Chesapeake)
This event is organized by participants.
- 21st SAT** **TOUCH Group 11:00am – 1:00pm**
Endeppence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)
Come and join us for some Bystander CPR Training with Emily Terifay, the Community Engagement Learning Program Coordinator at ODU, with medical students from Virginia Health Sciences. For questions, contact Montrell Rodgers at 757-238-1293 or VATOUCH.22@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  Daylight Saving Time Ends	2	3  Election Day	4 ILS Training: ABCs of Housing @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm HRT Transit Riders Committee* @ HRT (Norfolk) 6:00pm	5	6 Silent Dinner* @ Lynnhaven Mall 5:30pm – 8:00pm	7
8	9	10	11  Veteran's Day (ECI Closed)	12	13	14 ASL Sip & Sign (Voices Off)* @ Pinup Coffee at Farmhouse 10:00am – 11:00am ASL Hangout* @ Bull Island Brewing Co. 6:00pm – 9:00pm
15	16	17 Participant-Led Event* @ Crazy Buffet & Grill 12noon – 2:30pm	18 Board Meeting @ ECI 1:00pm – 3:00pm Connect & Grow @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	19 Norfolk ADA Transition Plan Presentation @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm Deadline to Register for Participant Holiday Party	20	21 TOUCH Group* @ ECI 11:00am – 1:00pm
22	23	24	25  ECI Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving			28
29	30	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.				

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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Disability Advocacy & Services

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E-Mail:

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Website:

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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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