

October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026

ANNUAL REPORT FY2026



Independence
Center, Inc.

Mission



The purpose of ECI is two-fold; to prepare individuals, and to prepare the community for full integration of persons with disabilities into society.

The Endependence Center, Incorporated (ECI) is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential, private, non-profit Center for Independent Living (CIL) operated by and for individuals with disabilities in South Hampton Roads, serving the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach, and Southampton and Isle of Wight counties.

These goals are accomplished by the following strategies:

1. The provision of direct services to individuals with significant disabilities, that result in a greater level of independence and community integration/functioning.
2. The provision of services and advocacy in the community that result in a greater awareness of disability issues, physical and programmatic accessibility, and systems change.

Message from the Executive Director

As we reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of the work of the Endependence Center, Inc. and the dedication of our staff, Board, participants, and community partners. This year, our focus has remained rooted in advocacy, inclusion, and ensuring that people with disabilities have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

At ECI, we believe independent living is about more than simply having services available. It is about ensuring people with disabilities have real choices, meaningful opportunities, and the support necessary to create the lives they want for themselves. Our goal is not for individuals to accept a life based only on what is available to them, but to have the opportunity to pursue the life they desire, with the same choices, rights, and opportunities as everyone else.

I am especially proud of our staff and the work they do every day. Their commitment to the Independent Living philosophy is reflected in the way they provide services, advocate alongside individuals with disabilities, build community partnerships, and respond to changing needs. The accomplishments highlighted throughout this annual report are a reflection of their hard work and of the strength, determination, and leadership of the people with disabilities we serve.

As we move into 2026–2027, advocacy will remain central to our work. Policies and systems continue to be developed and changed that directly affect the lives of people with disabilities. It is essential that those policies are not simply created for people with disabilities, but that people with disabilities have a meaningful voice in their development, implementation, and review.

Access and inclusion must remain more than goals; they must be expectations. We will continue working to ensure that people with disabilities are included in their communities, have access to opportunities, and are supported in exercising choice and control over their own lives.

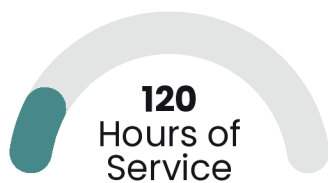
Thank you to everyone who has supported ECI and our mission throughout the year. Together, we will continue advocating, creating opportunities, removing barriers, and working toward communities where people with disabilities can live independently and define for themselves what a meaningful life looks like.

With sincere appreciation,
C. Nichole Davis
Executive Director
Endependence Center, Inc.

Independent Living Services

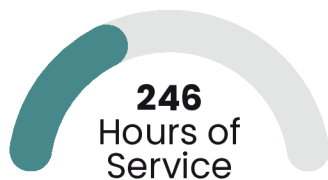
As a Center for Independent Living, ECI provides five core services: Peer Mentoring, Independent Living Skills Training, Transition Services, Information & Referral, and Advocacy. Services are provided both directly to individuals and through community advocacy.

Peer Mentoring



Participants connect with other people with disabilities for support and opportunities to share valuable life experiences – this model is based on the belief that a Peer Mentor with shared disability-related experiences is the best guide to independence.

Independent Living Skills Training



Participants identify training needs to gain skills for living independently. Regular workshops with rotating topics are offered as well. Participants who set personal goals and choose to work with a Peer Mentor also gain independent living skills through the mentoring process.

Information & Referral



ECI connects individuals with resources and services in the community, including affordable housing, transportation, healthcare, and legal assistance.

Transition

ECI staff coordinates resources and services to help prevent individuals with disabilities from going into a nursing facility or institution and to enable individuals with disabilities to leave nursing facilities or institutions. For youth with disabilities (ages 14 to 24 years), ECI provides independent living services that empower youth to achieve self-determination and independence in the community.



Advocacy

Assistance is provided to individuals with disabilities to resolve discrimination complaints. Staff members participate in various activities that result in positive changes and greater accessibility and are involved in a number of systems advocacy efforts locally, regionally and statewide.



Additional Services

- o Assistive technology for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- o Career supports
- o Community education
- o Technical assistance
- o Virginia Housing home modifications for renters, homeowners, and military veterans.
- o Services Facilitation for people using Medicaid Consumer-Directed home and community-based services.
- o Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth with disabilities.

Information & Referral: Number of People Served

Information & referral services connect people with disabilities to available supports in the community, providing guidance as they navigate complex and unfamiliar systems.



Benefits
88



Transportation
153



Youth Transition
151



Housing, Home Modifications, and Shelter Services
1,149



Nursing Home (Prevention & Deinstitutionalization)
410



Education
36



Financial
165



Employment
139

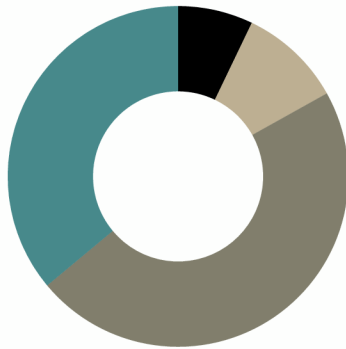
2,495 **COMMUNITY
CONTACTS**

**Individuals may have received information & referral in multiple areas.*

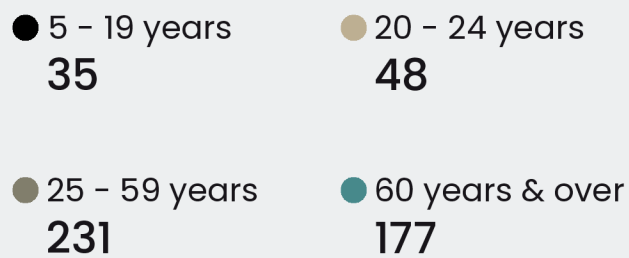
Participant Demographics

Gender

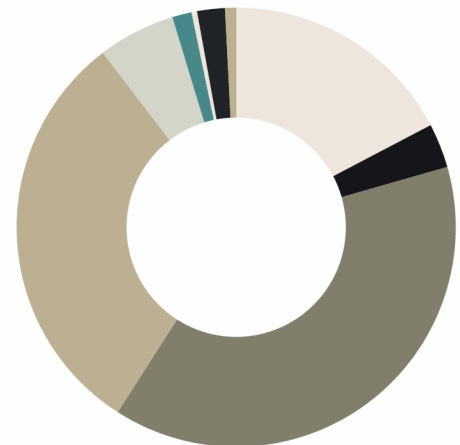
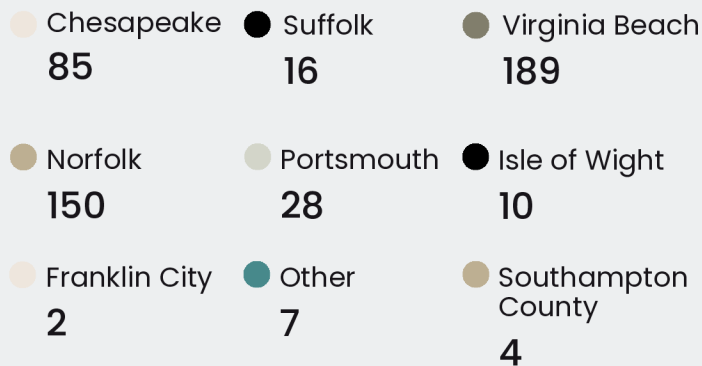
Female Male



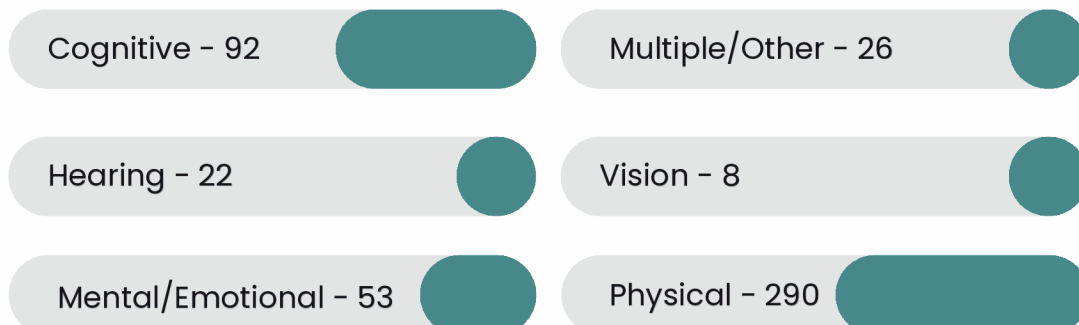
Age



Location



Disabilities



Direct Services: Number of Participants Served



Prevention of Institutionalization

4



Deinstitutionalization

22



Youth Transition

33



Housing, Home Modifications, and Shelter Services

172



Independent Living Skills Training

34



Information & Referral

110



Peer Mentoring

61



Career Supports

35



Benefits Counseling

227

718 PARTICIPANTS SERVED

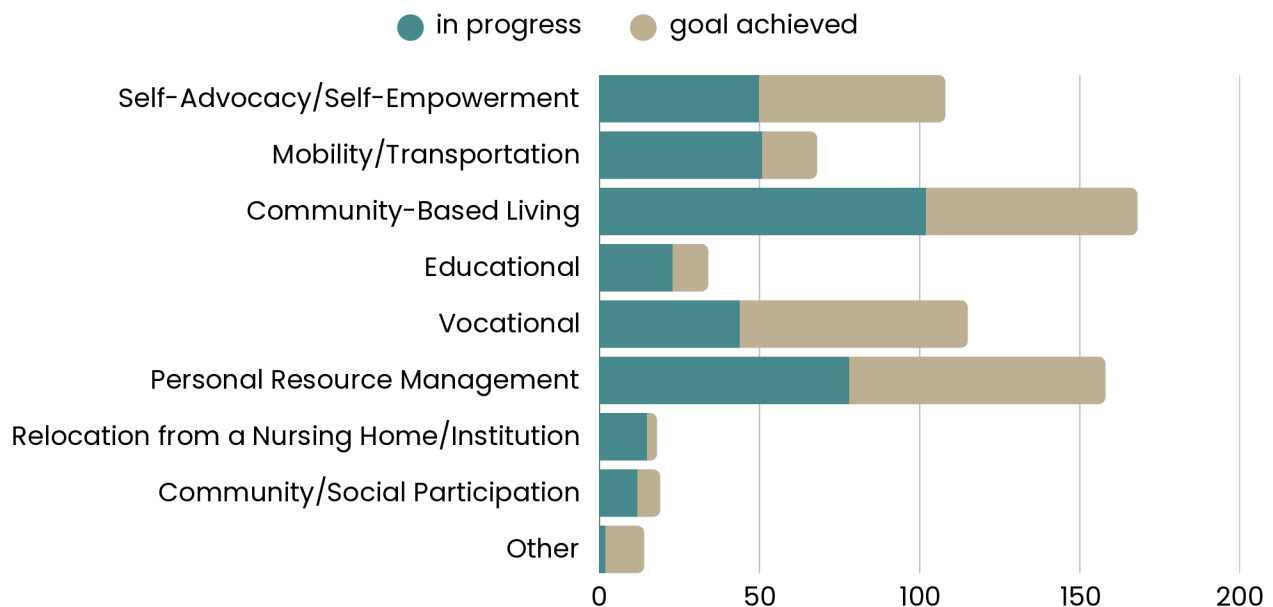
**Participants may have received services in more than one area..*

Participant Goals

Participant Goals	Goals Set	Goals Achieved	In Progress
Self-Advocacy/Self-Empowerment	108	58	50
Mobility/Transportation	68	17	51
Community-Based Living	168	66	102
Educational	34	11	23
Vocational	115	71	44
Personal Resource Management	158	80	78
Relocation from a Nursing Home/Institution	18	3	15
Community/Social Participation	19	7	12
Other	14	2	12

702 GOALS SET

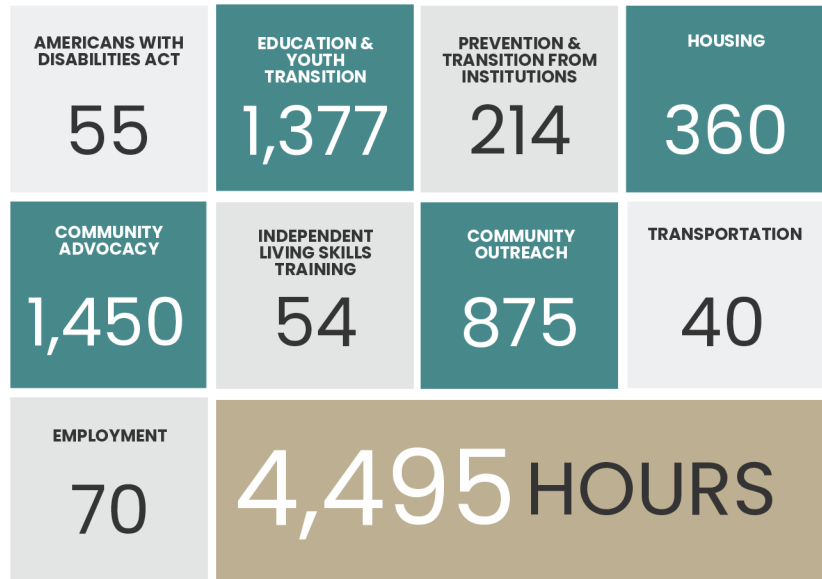
Goal Highlights:



Community Impact

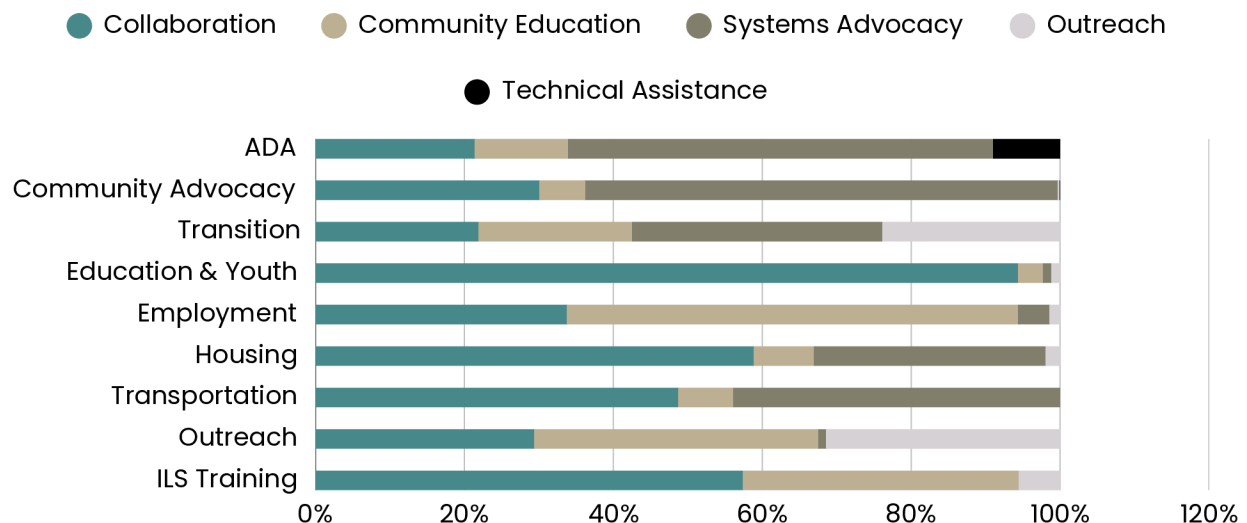
Issue Areas

Staff engage in systems advocacy in the same areas as individual advocacy, such as transportation, education, employment, housing, benefits, and accessibility.



Community Activities

Staff members participate in various activities that result in positive changes and greater accessibility at the local, state, and federal levels. Activities are performed in all issue areas.



ECI Team

During Reporting Period

Board Members

Lisbet Dula, President

Deanna Smith, Vice President

Cee-Cee Simmons, Treasurer

Claudia Godoy

Deon Latham

Ericka Neville

Kaitlyn Hodges

Mark Snyder

Mary Mathena

Staff Members

Nichole Davis, Executive Director

Matt Ballard, Administrative Assistant

Maureen Chappell, Employment Coordinator

Felicia Brown, Facilitation Coordinator

Jackie Brown, Receptionist

Vantoria Clay, Housing Coordinator

Frances Durham, Community Work Incentives Coordinator

Jeanette Flanders, Community Work Incentives Coordinator

Catrina Flowers, Bookkeeper

Emily Hoapili, Operations Manager

Shernika Holley, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Outreach Coordinator

Maureen Hollowell, Director of Advocacy & Services

Justin Johnson, Youth Independent Living Coordinator

Linda Johnson, Director of Employment Programs

Katherine Keesler, Personal Care Attendant

Rena Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator

Tammy Manno, Administrative Assistant

Mary Nicikowski, Deputy Finance Director

Amy Ouellette, Youth Independent Living Coordinator

Amadeo San Antonio, Finance Director

Ben White, Employment Coordinator

Travis Webb, Independent Living Coordinator

Latoshia Wilson-Nixon, Independent Living Coordinator



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