



2007-2009 Operating Revenues : \$3,450,000

Management & General	17%
Community Services	33%
Services to Individual Consumers	50%
Federal Government	38%
State Government	26%
Local Government	9%
Other Grants, Contracts & Fundraising	27%

Public Support and Revenue

Funding

- ⇒ Peer Counseling
- ⇒ Independent Living Skills Training
- ⇒ Individual and Systems Advocacy
- ⇒ Information and Referral
- ⇒ Community Education/Training

Services

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. The purposes of ECI are to prepare individuals and to prepare the community for full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. 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/advocacy in the community that result in a greater awareness of disability issues, physical and programmatic accessibility and systems change.

Purpose

As an organization that works on behalf of people with disabilities, we have promoted Independent Living, equal rights and access for people with disabilities in South Hampton Roads for 27 years. In 1981, the Endependence Center, Inc. (ECI) opened its doors and became the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Virginia of which there are now 16 CILs assisting the disability community with direct services towards independence and breaking down barriers and attitudes in the community that prevent full integration of persons with disabilities. Our mission statement is "Opening Doors to Opportunities". We have participated in the passage and implementation of the 1973 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the 1985 Virginians with Disabilities Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. In our time, as part of the disability community in South Hampton Roads, we have seen barriers to independence slowly diminish as buildings became accessible, and support services such as Medicaid Waivers became available. The Tides Stadium in Norfolk has won awards for its model accessibility, and the Oceanfront in Virginia Beach has established wheelchair access to the sand. Accessible public transportation is available in some areas. Some local movie theaters now offer options with close captioning or audio description. Yet, accessible and affordable housing is scarce for those who desire to move out of nursing homes or family homes to independent lives in the community. The disability community has made significant progress, but there remains much to be done. We hope you will continue to partner with the Endependence Center and the local disability community as we enter the next phase of advocacy and independent living. We welcome your collaboration in our efforts to empower people with disabilities and provide opportunities for self determination and equal access to all areas of life in South Hampton Roads.

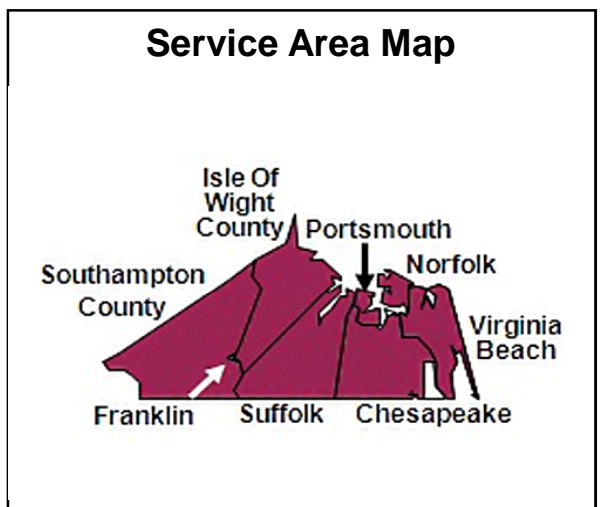
Community Message

Endependence Center, Inc.



Biennial Report

October 2007 - September 2009



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Staff Members (January 2010)

Administration

- Stephen Johnson, Executive Director
- Maureen Hollowell, Director of Advocacy and Services
- Lisbet Dula, Director of Advocacy and Services
- Amadeo San Antonio, Finance Director
- Cheryl Simpson, Operations Manager

Administrative Support

- Carol Crabill, Executive Assistant
- Barbara Dixon, Accounting Clerk
- Tammy Manno, Administrative Assistant
- Pandora Rosenquest, Receptionist/Admin Assistant
- Lonnie Sublett, Network Administrator
- Anna Williams, Office Assistant/Attendant

Independent Living Coordinators

- Felicia Brown
- Teacia Cogdell
- Vantoria Clay
- Frances Durham
- Brenda Estes
- Kelly Gonzalez
- Anton Kromoff
- Rena Lewis
- Catherine Rector
- Cheryl Ward

Board Members (January 2010)

Service Highlights for 2007-2009

During the past two years, the following services were provided:

- 1,385 Individuals with disabilities received direct services
- 5,141 Independent Living goals were accomplished by Center Participants

Hours of services directly provided to individuals with disabilities:

- 15,242 Individual Advocacy
- 3,107 Peer Counseling Services
- 2,656 Independent Living Skills Training
- 1,035 Housing, Home Modifications & Shelter Services
- 550 Assistive Devices/Equipment, Communication and Rehabilitation Technology Services
- 674 Information & Referral Services to Center participants
- 1,041 Socialization Services
- 3,626 Transportation Services
- 634 Other Services

Hours of Community Activities Provided:

- 4,359 Collaboration/Networking
- 4,106 Information & Referral
- 3,902 Community Education & Public Information
- 5,187 Community/Systems Advocacy
- 421 Outreach Efforts
- 826 Technical Assistance
- 1,333 Volunteer

October 2007 to September 2009

Highlights

⇒ Peer Mentoring

In Peer Mentoring the participant works with a staff member to identify and reach their independent living goals. The staff Peer Mentor acts as a role model, and provides information, support and personal independent living experience as the participant works toward their goal. An independent living support group is offered once a month and provides an additional peer networking opportunity to discuss disability adjustment and independent living issues with peers across a range of ages and disability types. This peer empowerment model is based on the belief that a Mentor with shared life experience is the best guide to independence. One example is a young woman with Cerebral Palsy and learning disabilities who worked consistently with her Peer Mentor to learn skills to schedule her own appointments and transportation, identify assistive technology and obtain it and learn to use it, apply for housing, and is soon to move into her own apartment. A middle aged man who is losing his eyesight came in to find assistive technology and software to allow him to continue to pay bills and pursue his goal to start a home business, as well as to adjust to his new disability.

⇒ Nursing Home Outreach

Regular outreach is done by a staff member to nursing homes in our service area to reach individuals who may not know about ECI and options to move out of the facility and live independently. Participation in ECI's groups and activities are offered to residents as well as assistance to plan for a transition back to the community. Some highlights of people who have successfully transitioned include someone who had been in the nursing home for several years following a stroke who has moved to her own apartment. She uses Medicaid Waiver services, rides HandiRide, does her own shopping and is active in the community. Another nursing home resident who moved out is a man who had become suddenly disabled and felt that he would spend the rest of his life in the nursing home. We were able to assist him with locating housing and modifying it to be accessible for him, and he was able to reunite with his wife and children. He uses Medicaid Waiver services, is active in the community and has spoken as an advocate for more services for people with disabilities.

⇒ Independent Living Skills Training

Trainings on skills for independent living are offered in group and individual settings to build skills and help in reaching goals. Some examples of the types of trainings that participants request are how to live in the community independently, budgeting, emergency preparedness, applying for and obtaining housing, transportation options and how to schedule their own transportation, and learning about their rights and how to advocate for change. ECI offers a monthly IL workshop and Peer Mentors assist individuals one on one in peer mentoring sessions to work on skills necessary to achieving their individual independent living goals.

⇒ Project WISE

The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) staff provided services to approximately 700 individuals between the ages of 14-64 through the Social Security Ticket to Work Program. Our Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWIC's) provided information and benefits counseling about Work Incentives. Work Incentives are special rules that make it possible for people receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to explore work options. The Work Incentives also provide safety nets to allow beneficiaries to remain eligible for Social Security Benefits and Healthcare Programs until they are able to support themselves. Project WISE supports individuals with disabilities as they pursue potential career paths to empower themselves to reach their goals and expand their options for economic self-sufficiency. For example, one young adult just a couple years out of high school secured a part time job, and a CWIC assisted her to understand and access the Work Incentives available to her. She also learned about an option to write a PASS plan to obtain a car adapted with hand controls, and plans to pursue this to support her ability to maintain her employment and pursue her goals to go to college and pursue a career in business.

⇒ Information & Referral

is a core service that provides the public with resources in the community to promote independent living or to facilitate independent living skills. Information is provided on a multitude of different topics to include housing, financial assistance, durable medical equipment, transportation, and referrals are made to organizations as appropriate.

⇒ Virginia ADA Coalition

The Virginia ADA Coalition, a DBTAC grant project, provided a variety of ADA training and awareness activities. The Coalition partnered with DSBS in Southwest Virginia to provide employment and accommodation training to business and government entities. The Coalition provided hospitality and hotel survey training for VACIL members to support VACIL's goal of using only accessible conference sites. The Coalition, the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Virginia Assistive Technology System hosted Ask the Experts, addressing AT for access. Training was also provided to Department of Rehabilitative Services, and Virginia Parks and Recreation Society and Virginia Beach's Housing Services.

⇒ Medicaid DD Waiver Coordination

Approximately 90 individuals who received Medicaid DD Waiver services selected ECI to assist with providing coordination of their Medicaid services. ECI Coordinators monitor the implementation, approval, and satisfaction of DD Waiver Services by having regular contact with participants and/or their family, reviewing reports from providers, and obtaining approval from DMSA and a pre-authorization agency. Coordinators link participants to local resources that benefit them in independent living. The providers, services, and regulations are ever-changing. Participants are kept abreast of these changes. Participants who choose to use consumer directed services also received services facilitation from ECI for their respite, attendant and companion services. Facilitation provides management training for the participant, monitoring of services and troubleshooting payroll and other consumer directed issues.

⇒ Medicaid EDCD Waiver Services Facilitation

Facilitation supports participants in their role as a consumer directed employer. Plans for services were implemented with approximately 125 participants. Facilitators provided training to participants on responsibilities of being CD employers including hiring, management practices and paperwork. EDCD Waiver services prevent participants from nursing home placement by providing meaningful care in the home. It allows them to direct their own care or have a caregiver direct their personal care and respite services.

⇒ Teleworking

A new program through a grant from DOT was introduced at ECI teleworking. Ten employees participated in a program that brought benefits to ECI, ECI employees, and our community. Teleworking allowed employees to prove their independence and effectiveness by allowing them to work from home for six days a month. The benefits are many, from the flexibility of the work schedule, coverage during any type of weather or crisis, uninterrupted focus on work responsibilities, reduced stress from travel, less fuel expenses and consumption, as well as reduction in traffic and environmental pollution for our community. This program has been a success for all involved.

⇒ Educational Advocacy

Our role in teaching advocacy extends to the education arena by helping participants and their families gain the knowledge they need to better prepare them for the special education process and all it involves. ECI offered various training opportunities, information and strategy sharing, and basic knowledge of rights through workshops and individual counseling. ECI is committed to helping students and their families learn effective communication and collaboration practices to enable them to be equal partners of the educational team. We continually endeavor to provide support that allows students to achieve academic success and develop educational plans that address the unique needs of each student.

⇒ Medicaid Advocacy

Information and advocacy related to Medicaid and especially, Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers was provided to people with disabilities statewide. ECI maintained a toll free number for people to call for assistance in working through Medicaid problems they encountered. Workshops about Medicaid Waivers were provided quarterly.

⇒ Money Follows the Person

Medicaid has a demonstration project, Money Follows the Person that assists people with planning for transitioning from a nursing home or other institution. Medicaid will also pay for certain costs related to the transition. ECI assisted two (2) people to transition from nursing homes with Money Follows the Person. An additional four (4) people have begun the transition process.

⇒ Transportation

ECI staff was involved in increasing awareness on the need to expand on accessible transportation options. ECI collaborated with Senior Services of SeVA for their Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund (RSIF) grant project to provide accessible transportation to people with disabilities less than 60 years of age. We met with a representative from Black & White Cabs of Virginia Beach in regards to their New Freedom funding award to provide accessible cab service to Virginia Beach residents. ECI staff participated in the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) public forums to provide input on the accessible transportation needs of people with disabilities.

⇒ Housing Advocacy and Planning

ECI received a grant from the SILC to increase awareness concerning Money Follows the Person and the housing needs of individuals who want to transition from institutional settings, such as nursing homes, and of those in the community at risk of institutional placement. Staff met with local community planning and development offices concerning the need for CDBG and HOME funded projects to expand on affordable, accessible housing opportunities and to include data on the number of individuals who want to transition from nursing homes. We met with local PHA staff to recommend applying for targeted vouchers and setting a preference for people who want to transition from nursing homes and other institutional settings and to expand on affordable, accessible housing. ECI held workshops on the following topics: housing and transportation options for transition, MFP Housing Task Force recommendations, and local housing plans.

⇒ Advocacy Group

The Advocacy Group, meeting the fourth Wednesday of each month, is composed of participants and staff. Our goal is to advocate making our community more accessible. The advocacy group worked on projects to increase the turn-out of voters with disabilities and encouraging accessible taxi services to the Hampton Roads area.

⇒ Polling Site Surveys

ECI conducted election polling site surveys at the request of the State Board of Elections. Beginning May 2008, staff traveled to chosen precincts to identify key issues associated to accessibility for people with disabilities. Parking lots, path of travel, drop-off areas, and hallways to the polling area, height of signs posted inside the precinct and out, as well as width and height issues pertaining to the polling machines and any tables used to assist in the voting process were reviewed. Additionally, voting machines were reviewed to assess the accessible features. These site surveys were coordinated with the local voting General Registrar offices.

⇒ Children in Institutions

The Endependence Center worked with the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living to implement a grant project from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The purpose of the grant was to provide outreach services in institutions where children lived so that families and nursing home staff would have the information people needed so that children could transition from the institutions. In addition, 28 advocates from throughout Virginia were trained to be Medicaid Waiver Mentors for people who need to use home and community based services in order to avert placement in a nursing home or other institution. ECI provided statewide coordination for this project.