

Easter Seals New Hampshire, Inc.

Easter Seals NH is a private, not-for-profit, charitable corporation whose mission is to “*create solutions that change the lives of children and adults with disabilities or other special needs and their families.*” As the largest Easter Seals affiliate in the nation, Easter Seals NH serves nearly 20,000 individuals and families each year through 60+ programs, 20+ service sites, and 1700 employees. Named “Non-Profit of the Decade” by *Business NH* magazine, Easter Seals NH is known for meeting the needs of individuals and communities in the most caring, cost effective manner. Easter Seals NH is committed to serving everyone regardless of their ability to pay for services—in the past year approximately \$2 million in free and reduced price services were provided to those who needed, but could not afford, the services. The agency has been ranked #1 by the National Health Agency for the past 25 years for allocating 94% of its total operating budget to direct services.

Easter Seals programs fall into eight primary service areas: Special Education, Residential Services (youth and adult), Camping and Recreation, Inclusive Child Care, Medical Rehabilitation and Early Intervention, Vocational Services, Senior Services, and Transportation. Transportation services are provided through Special Transit Service, Inc. (STS), a subsidiary of Easter Seals NH. STS is the largest paratransit service provider in NH and is looked upon as a leader in the area of community transportation.

Easter Seals NH is a *service* organization whose sole purpose is to meet individual and community needs. When existing services or services systems do not meet needs, Easter Seals builds partnerships to affect systems change. With an emphasis on bringing stakeholders together to create lasting systemic solutions and social capital, the agency has spearheaded several local, regional, and statewide initiatives, including *Seniors Count!*, the Autism Network, and “Getting There.” “Getting There” is a transportation planning and action collaborative engaged in developing transportation planning processes that identify the full range of transportation demand and the full complement of existing and potential resources so as to best meet individual and community need for mobility and access. The “Getting There” program has created several effective partnerships resulting in ongoing development of new transportation services for under-served populations.

Given Easter Seals NH’s extensive experience in serving needy populations and meeting community needs, along with its role as a leader in transportation planning and service provision, the organization can offer considerable technical and service assistance to communities affected by the I-93 project:

- assist communities in developing logical, efficient systems for providing community transportation to address mobility and access changes as a result of the I-93 project
- provide direct service in community transportation through the emerging development of transit in the Greater Derry-Greater Salem area, and through partnership with the Manchester Transit Authority
- assist Regional Planning Commissions in integrating community mobility and access needs into land use and transportation service/facility planning
- facilitate coordinated planning between regions and communities
- provide technical assistance and/or direct services to individuals with disabilities, seniors, and others with special needs who are affected by the I-93 project, in areas such as transportation, housing, vocational rehabilitation, etc