

Executive Summary
Pre-Employment Transition Services
Request for Services #24-77904

January 15, 2024

Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana, Inc. is requesting funds to implement a two-year Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) project from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2026. The goal of this project is to improve outcomes for eligible students aged 14-22 who are eligible or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) as they transition from school to postsecondary education or employment.

To achieve this goal, Easterseals Arc will expand its existing Pre-ETS program launched in 2016 to serve more schools and students, engage additional collaborative community partners, and incorporate best practices and the LifeCourse framework. Pre-ETS services will provide year-round in-school and community-based opportunities in individual and group settings. These services will include job exploration, work-based learning, counseling on postsecondary educational opportunities, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and instruction on self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring. Work-based learning stipends will be made available to Pre-ETS students on a case-by-case basis.

The proposed project aims to serve 1200 unduplicated students with disabilities in individual and group settings over a 2-year funding period. The project will target the following Indiana counties: Allen, Whitley, Lagrange, Adams, Wells, Kosciusko, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Miami, Cass, White, Carroll, Elkhart, Dekalb, Huntington, Noble, Miami, Steuben, and Wabash. The project will help students identify and develop personal transition goals. Through accredited community partnerships, participants will explore various career options and educational opportunities, such as certification programs, apprenticeships, and trade or technical programs. Participants will also increase employability by developing their hard, soft, and foundational skills.

Easterseals Arc will work with schools to recruit and serve eligible students. Additionally, it will collaborate with Career and Technical Education (CTE) and alternative learning programs to expand the project scope and reach more students. The organization will also collaborate with partners to create community-based job training, employment, and educational opportunities for students. Finally, Easterseals Arc will incorporate best practices and the LifeCourse framework and develop innovative strategies to improve student outcomes.

Easterseals Arc has been providing Pre-Employment services since 2016. During the most recently completed period, Easterseals Arc's Pre-ETS program served 264 youth between the ages of 14-22 across multiple counties in Northeast Indiana. The program also developed new collaborations and community partnerships, including working with Jim Kelley Career Center to provide new job training opportunities in the construction, automotive, and manufacturing trades. Additionally, the Pre-ETS program successfully integrated into Dream Teen camps, enhancing job readiness by developing and implementing a customized manufacturing curriculum.

During 2022, Easterseals Arc was 1 of 7 out of 60 affiliates selected by Easterseals National to launch ES Gaming, a new, nationwide, competitive, multiplayer on-line initiative that uses virtual reality gaming platforms. ES Gaming is designed to enhance workforce readiness for transition-aged youth by using on-line gaming activities, live events, Tournaments and Stream-A-Thons to teach skills in leadership, communication, critical thinking, team building, cognitive acuity and technology. During 2024, these

initiatives will partner with Trine University and other schools and colleges through Northern Indiana to serve and include adaptive lending libraries, camps and a mobile gaming unit that will travel to schools and community venues. In 2023, Easterseals Arc began creating other new virtual opportunities for job training, skill building and exploration.

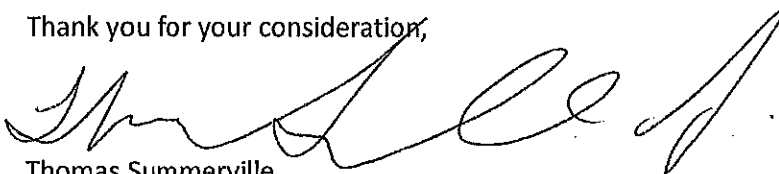
Easterseals Arc has a long history of serving states and governments, with a majority of Easterseals Arc's budget funded through government sources such as Medicaid. From 2001-2021, Easterseals Arc has been contracted to implement home base visits and support for the Division of Child Services and was a Health Family provider. During this time, Easterseals Arc was also the contract holder for cleaning services for the federal building. In 2015, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration awarded Easterseals Arc a grant to transition consumers out of sheltered workshops and into community employment and the agency launched the Employment Readiness Academy. In 2017, Easterseals was awarded a capacity-building grant to develop the infrastructure needed to create more community-based employment opportunities for individuals served through Vocational Rehabilitation Services. In 2019, the agency launched Social Security's Ticket to Work program and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction awarded Easterseals Arc a 2-year grant to provide mental health education and support to transition-aged youth who were dually diagnosed. During 2021, the agency launched a Neurodiversity Workforce Training Initiative (NWTI) teaching local employers to accommodate and support a neurodiverse work force. During 2022, Easterseals Arc was a leader in dissolving its use of sub-minimum wage certificate 14C and was awarded funds from the State of Indiana to pilot value-based models as part of the State's MedWaiver reform.

Thomas Summerville, who is the President of Operations at Easterseals Arc, has been authorized to enter into contractual agreements on behalf of the organization. He will also be the primary point of contact for this proposal. You can reach him by phone at 260-456-4534, extension 269, by email at tsummerville@eastersealsni.org, or by post mail at 4919 Coldwater Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.

The Arc of Northeast Indiana, also known as Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana, is a non-profit organization registered with the Secretary of State. Its establishment dates back to 1954, when it was founded as a 501c3 non-profit in the state of Indiana. In 1999, the organization became an affiliate of Easterseals National and changed its name to Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana. The primary objective of Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana is to promote equity, inclusion, and access for disabled people, families and communities. The organization strives to help individuals challenged by disabilities to become as independent as possible by providing a range of comprehensive programs and services. These programs and services include day services, transition services, respite support, community employment, residential support, and health and wellness coordination.

Easterseals Arc has been a contractor of services with the state of Indiana since its inception, providing support to individuals with intellectual and developmental needs. Currently, the organization operates over 30 Medicaid Waiver sites, 11 Intermediate Care Facilities, four (4) day service locations, and a host of community-based, family, and employment supports. In 2022, Easterseals Arc was awarded a 3-year accreditation by CARF International for Adult Day Services, Behavioral Management, Community Living Supports, Employment Services, Respite Supports, and Structured Family Caregiving.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Summerville', written over a horizontal line.

Thomas Summerville
Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana President of Operations