

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore

2020 Annual Report



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1974, Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore is a private nonprofit organization serving 28 cities and towns that are made up of communities rich with diversity. Our mission was created to support an individual's desire to make his or her own decisions, secure independence, and remain living in the community safely.

ESMV-NS is a designated federal Area Agency on Aging (AAA), state Aging Service Access Point (ASAP), and elder protective services agency for this region. We have developed a strong partnership with healthcare organizations through our Healthy Living Center of Excellence programs, as well as through our Merrimack Valley Community Partner Program. In addition, we established an Aging and Disability Resource Consortium with partner agencies to extend our assistance to populations with disabilities and to families caring for disabled adults.

Our service area

Amesbury	Haverhill	Peabody
Andover	Lawrence	Rowley
Billerica	Lowell	Salisbury
Boxford	Marblehead	Salem
Chelmsford	Merrimac	Tewksbury
Danvers	Methuen	Tyngsboro
Dracut	Middleton	Westford
Dunstable	Newbury	West Newbury
Georgetown	Newburyport	
Groveland	North Andover	

Our mission

To ensure that choices of programs and services are available and accessible to meet the diverse needs and changing lifestyles of older adults.

Our vision

Choices for a life-long journey.

Our values

We believe home-based care, community services, and supportive living programs maintain the dignity of human life by promoting self-determination and by encouraging the maximum independence of the people they are designed to serve.

Our foundation

We believe our staff, volunteers, community partners and donors are key to the agency's success and must be valued and supported in doing the work they love to do.

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Joan Hatem-Roy
Chief Executive Officer

Letter from the CEO and Board President

We are taking time to reflect on the past year and look ahead at what comes next. ESMV-NS found 2020 to be a taxing but transformative year for our agency. The COVID-19 pandemic presented an unexpected challenge, but we rallied and learned what we are capable of as an agency and from it we have grown. As always, we could not do what we do without the support from our staff, the community and our partners.

Last March, we quickly made changes to allow our employees to work remotely as needed. Since then, we have implemented a robust response and recovery plan while keeping our employees safe and well-informed at every step. COVID pushed us to adapt our programs and services while continuing to meet the needs of our consumers. This highlighted the need to address those who lack access to or cannot use such online technology.

We also saw an increased demand for nutrition services and a rise in social isolation, especially with consumers who live alone or are unable to leave their homes. Our staff expanded their outreach efforts, including wellness checks, telephone calls and other support services. Through it all, we continued to receive the invaluable help of dedicated volunteers and donors.

In 2021, we are taking time to think about our experiences and grow from them. ESMV-NS has undergone many changes in its long history, all with an eye toward improving outcomes for the people we serve.

We know that healthy aging starts before people turn 65. For that reason, we have expanded our partnerships with healthcare organizations to offer programs for younger adults and some children - to encourage healthy habits and improve the conditions where people live, learn, work and play. To embrace these changes and increase awareness about our work, we are refreshing our identity to better reflect who we are, and allow us to be more adaptive and inclusive of the people across northeastern Massachusetts. This past year has offered us an unprecedented opportunity to reflect upon our mission and how we can continue to help the communities it is our privilege to serve.



Michael P. Rurak, CPA
ESMV-NS Board President



Staying innovative and flexible during a global pandemic

We believe aging is a journey, not a number. Our mission is to help people live independently, and our work means serving and supporting individuals and their families as they age. Over the past year, we have expanded those services to reach younger individuals, their caregivers and families, by helping them access food, healthcare, and housing to have and retain a healthy and safe lifestyle.

While COVID prevented us from always being available in person, we adapted quickly and creatively by delivering remote services. Through it all, our agency remained open and staffed while continuing to hire new employees and initiate new programs.

Keeping consumers safe and secure

With the onset of the pandemic, the ability for many older adults and people with disabilities to get out and buy groceries, go to restaurants, or shop for essentials was diminished. Families had to adjust to new circumstances in food insecurity, financial challenges, and isolation brought on by the virus.

Our Nutrition program staff, with the help of many dedicated volunteers, worked hard so that more than 2,700 consumers across 28 cities and towns received more than 3,100 daily meals. Our [MEALS ON WHEELS saw an increase as high as 40 percent](#) more in May and a sustained 30 percent increase compared to the start of the pandemic. Part of the increase was because the congregate meal sites in our service area closed last March and remained so through the year.

Over the year, the generous support of grant money from Meals on Wheels America and local foundations allowed us to keep up with the increased demand and make sure seniors had nutritious food. Our meal-delivery drivers, outfitted with personal protective equipment, continued to provide critical daily wellness checks as they may be the only people a consumer sees regularly.

We continued to supplement the food needs of seniors through our monthly Brown Bag program. Each month, staff and community volunteers work in cooperation with the Greater Boston Food Bank to pack and distribute 2,500 bags with about 15 pounds of fresh and non-perishable foods through sites in the Greater Haverhill, Greater Lawrence, and the Greater Lowell areas.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Members who are eligible for Medicare as well as MassHealth can receive services through our **Managed Care Programs**. These programs continued to see growth despite the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, we continued to work closely with our partners from the Senior Care

Options, MassHealth, and OneCare organizations to ensure the needs of the members were being met. We also helped support those caregivers who had more responsibilities in their family members' lives.

Our six **HOME CARE**

programs met the needs of 4,569 consumers. Home Care staff have continued to provide critical services and much-needed emotional support to our consumers and their families through this tough time.

Our **PROTECTIVE SERVICES program received 5,161 reports of abuse and neglect** in 2020.

While there was a slight dip at the beginning of the pandemic, the reporting volume has climbed back to pre-COVID levels since last May.

Home visits have continued, using COVID safety protocols. For example, an adult with developmental delays and physical disabilities reported he was being abused by a household member and was living in fear. With his cooperation, we were able to get him out of the house and into a nursing home, while arranging for long-term placement with payment by Medicaid. We have been able to keep the man's location confidential, and he is being cared for and is safe.

While this isn't a typical situation, it is representative of the work Protective Services staff do every day to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable adults.

Keeping consumers connected

We kept our consumers connected by **converting to virtual forums for our MEMORY CAFES, caregiver support groups, volunteer meetings, ELDER NETWORK meetings and VETERANS COLLABORATIVE** across our service area.

For the first time, we were able to offer remote Medicare counseling during open enrollment, thanks to our **Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone (SHINE)** program staff and volunteers.

Additionally, our **HEALTHY LIVING CENTER OF EXCELLENCE** converted its 18 evidence-based programs to a remote platform with remarkable success. For example, we offered an online version of the popular **MATTER OF BALANCE program**, which helps reduce the risk of falling by teaching coping strategies and encouraging increased physical activity. We were the first agency in the nation to train coaches and pilot the remote version using Zoom. This milestone was made possible through a partnership with Maine Health and funding from the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation.

As a result, more than 300 people from across New England were able to take Matter of Balance classes.

For the first time, we were able to offer remote Medicare counseling during open enrollment.



In 2020, Managed Care programs served:

- 6,928 Senior Care Options clients
- 3,194 Personal Care Attendant clients
- 280 One Care clients

2020 INITIATIVES

Throughout 2020, we have adapted to meet the needs of consumers, our partners, and our staff, while continuing to be a great place to work. We made a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a goal to embed these practices and maintain a culture within our agency to fight injustice, intolerance, and discrimination. We also found creative ways to stay connected and fiscally sound, and we continued to innovate and launch new initiatives.

New caregiver services

ESMV-NS was one of only a dozen organizations in the country and the only one in Massachusetts to receive an **Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative grant** from the Administration for Community Living. The award is for a total of \$854,147, over three years.



The funding helps expand our current caregiver programs and starts a new initiative for caregivers of those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, a population that is more at risk for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

ESMV-NS will work with family caregivers and staff of Bridgewell, Inc., and Fidelity House Human Services & Career Resources Corp., who serve adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We will also train our own staff and volunteers about recognizing behaviors related to dementia - to connect individuals with appropriate services.

Reaching caregivers with new on-demand technology

We also introduced a **new evidence-informed program called Trualta**, which is designed to reach 375 caregivers statewide over three years. This e-learning platform has on-demand content for caregivers and was introduced under a previous grant through the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation to 11 participants in 2020.

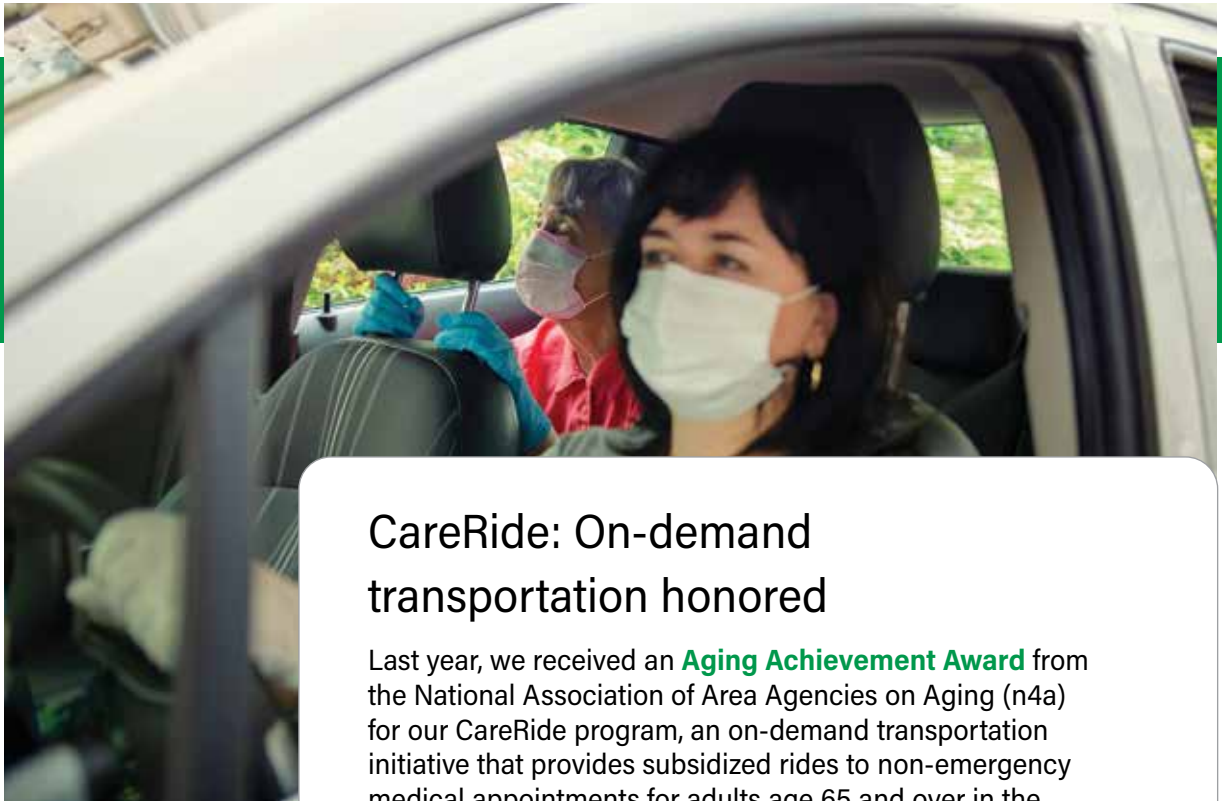
Informative community TV program launches

"All Things Aging", our community TV show produced at Billerica Access Television, debuted on September 29. It explores the many programs and services available from our agency and partners that can help older adults, caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout the Merrimack Valley and North Shore.

Hosted by Community Outreach Coordinator Nandi Munson and Resident Services Coordinator Katie Houle, "All Things Aging" is an informal and informative conversation between hosts and guests. Two episodes are taped each month and broadcast in 20 towns and cities across our service area.



"It's been very exciting to reach a wider audience by connecting with people through television," says Munson. "Our hope is that 'All Things Aging' provides helpful information, as well as the warmth of a friendly conversation with guests who care deeply about our communities."



CareRide: On-demand transportation honored

Last year, we received an **Aging Achievement Award** from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) for our CareRide program, an on-demand transportation initiative that provides subsidized rides to non-emergency medical appointments for adults age 65 and over in the Greater Lowell area.

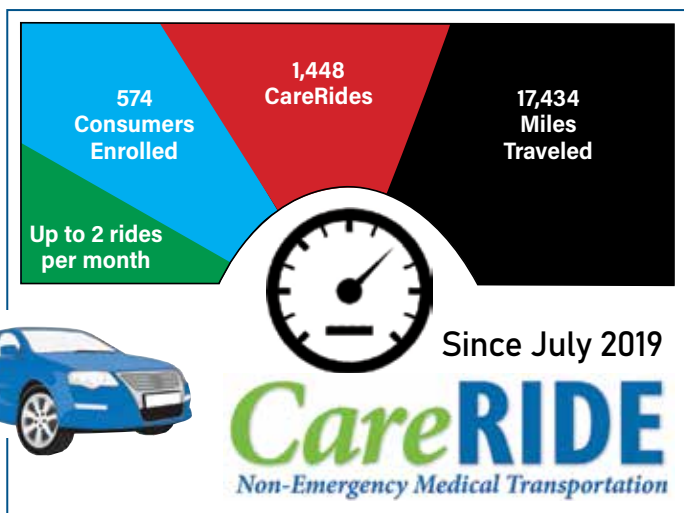
ESMV-NS realized having safe, reliable transportation is a health issue for many older adults. If someone can't get a ride to an important doctor's appointment, they may postpone or go without crucial medical care. Thanks to funding from Lowell General Hospital, we started CareRide in June 2019. Since then, it has provided 1,448 rides for consumers in the Greater Lowell area (Lowell, Dracut, Billerica, Tewksbury, Chelmsford, Dunstable, Tyngsboro, and Westford) to doctors' appointments, dialysis, and chemotherapy treatments.

"I have so many good things to say about CareRide, but most importantly, without this program's ride assistance and community coordination for the additional rides, I would not be able to make my 12 cancer treatment appointments to Boston," says Frank Karuso of Lowell.

Another Lowell resident, James "Jimmy" Kimmel, agrees, "I have to go to the VA hospital in Medford, and I recently had surgery. Without CareRide, I wouldn't be able to go to my follow-up appointments, especially during this pandemic."

The referral-based program uses the Lyft ride-sharing platform to provide safe, convenient rides for non-emergency medical appointments. Smartphones are not required.

Special handicap vans can be arranged with notice.



To make a referral or for more information, contact Alexandra Luciano at 978-651-3118 or aluciano@esmv.org.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past year, ESMV-NS has expanded its efforts to help a younger population age well. By reaching people at a younger age and even children, we can encourage them to cultivate healthy habits, that, over time, can allow them to stay active, independent, and in their own homes for a much longer period.

Through our Merrimack Valley Community Partner and Flex Services programs our agency serves people from as young as 3, up to age 64, who need long-term services and support.

If you are interested in Care Coordination with MVCP, please contact us and we will help you through the process.

Call 978-651-3080 or email admin@mvcpc.org.

Merrimack Valley Community Partner (MVCP) Program

People are referred to the **Merrimack Valley Community Partner (MVCP) Program** through MassHealth and other medical providers. MVCP, a partnership with Northeast Independent Living Program, conducts outreach, engagement, and care coordination services.

Once members are referred to the program, they are assigned a Care Coordinator/Navigator who steers them to the appropriate services.

In addition, the MVCP program helps people who make frequent trips to the emergency room or are in need of long-term assistance with basic needs. Members who need those services and supports must meet certain income and health guidelines, such as high-risk pregnancy, uncontrolled diabetes, asthma, or hypertension.

One of the members aided by the MVCP program is "Antonio", an 8-year-old Lowell boy, who has a congenital brain and vision condition. In addition, Antonio has a rare form of diabetes and relies on his mother and grandmother for all aspects of his care.

Before Antonio enrolled in the MVCP program in 2018, he was experiencing frequent emergency hospitalizations. Since joining the program, his mother reports his health has been far more stable. In addition, the Navigator aided the family in customizing their home to better accommodate the boy's needs.

Through Title 7 funding, the Navigator helped the family obtain a wheelchair ramp and a chairlift between the first and second floors. These saved Antonio's mother from struggling with the wheelchair or carrying her son, both safety hazards as he grew older and heavier.





Flex Services

Our agency also offers a **Flex Services Program** to those enrolled in one of MassHealth's Accountable Care Organizations who meet certain criteria, and it is also available to MVCP members. Flex Services addresses housing and nutrition needs.

Recently, one of our community nutritionists, Jean Lussier, RD, LDN, CDE, met a Flex Services client at a local grocery store.

Lussier provides one-on-one nutrition services as part of the Flex Services Program, and sometimes that means going grocery shopping with clients like Joseph Andrade, 60, of Lynnfield. He has Type 1 diabetes and other medical issues, so watching what he eats is critical.

"It's not just having him learn about carb counting," Lussier says, "but also trying to help him budget - how to eat healthy on a budget."

"I think it really helps people - it's helped me."

Together, they walk through the store, reading food labels and looking at prices. The key is finding healthy products he enjoys eating.

As part of the Flex Services Program, Andrade receives a monthly \$100 gift card for three months to help with groceries, in addition to the one-on-one nutrition counseling. He also receives food through Meals on Wheels.

"I didn't know this program was even out there," he says. "I think it really helps people - it's helped me. I've learned a lot from her."





Each year, we help nearly 40,000 older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.

Volunteers

Volunteer Coordinator Sheila Hewitt describes our volunteers as “the backbone of the agency, essential to all of the work.” She estimates that 200 people volunteer in nine program areas:

- Elder Brown Bag
- Friend in Deed
- Healthy Living Center of Excellence
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- MA Senior Medicare Patrol
- Meals on Wheels
- Medical Advocacy
- Money Management Services
- Nutrition
- SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone)
- Special events

Volunteers are drawn to Elder Services for a variety of reasons. Many have recently retired and have an urge to give back to society. Others have family members who were aided by the agency.

Of course, volunteers have had to adapt to this year's COVID conditions. If they drive clients, they wear a mask and request passengers to follow suit and sit in the back seat of the vehicle. If they meet clients, they use an outside venue like a patio for their conversation. Ombudsman program volunteers were able to continue their work online or using the phone, as did volunteers working for SHINE.



VOLUNTEER PROFILES

Frank and Kathy are among our dedicated volunteers. Frank works assisting with Meals on Wheels, while Kathy helps out at the SHINE program, providing confidential information about Medicare and related health insurance options.

Meet Frank

It's a cold morning at the Danvers office of Elder Services. Ice coats the marsh across from the basement loading dock where Frank Conway is already working at 7:30 a.m. He serves as a Meals on Wheels volunteer, five days each week. For about two hours, he assists with loading the meals, and, in a pinch, works as a driver.

Frank recognized an acute need and wanted to help. His wife and daughter are nurses, in an ER and COVID ward, respectively.

"I wanted to help out during the pandemic," he says. "I started out about a year ago; I knew COVID was hitting seniors especially hard."

The affable Danvers resident, with his Patriots cap and Red Sox hoodie, jokes with the driver from TRIO, the food vendor, who sports a Yankees cap. Today is a relatively "light" day at the Danvers site, with 259 meals, but sometimes the number tops 400. Conway and the team check the day's boxes to confirm the menu choices and then help transfer them from the dock to await delivery.

Conway spent 34 years at Raytheon, where he was director of finance. His Elder Services offer was timely because, while demand for meals has remained steady, many volunteers, seniors themselves, became reluctant to work. Conway



is a veteran of public service, having volunteered with the Boys Club Keystone program, calling on patients at Mass General, and coaching girls' basketball (he is the father of four girls).

But he finds his Meals on Wheels duties particularly rewarding, "It's just great to help people when it's so needed."

Meet Kathy

Kathy Healy, of Haverhill, has been a volunteer with the Serving the Health Care Needs of Everyone (SHINE) program for more than eight years.

The retired nurse practitioner typically works several hours a month helping clients tackle sometimes complex issues arising from age categories, financial changes, disabilities, and more.

She describes her SHINE service as being highly rewarding, "I like helping out when so many people are struggling and don't know where to turn. I'm very happy to have made someone's life better."

Her advice saved one consumer more than \$1,000 on medical expenses and she stopped another from paying \$1,200 for a prescription supplement when he was eligible for similar benefits at no cost.

"I volunteer so that people can make the most of their resources—so they don't have to choose between buying food or buying medicine, she says.

Volunteers make our work possible. If you would like to volunteer, or learn more, contact our Volunteer Programs Department at 978-651-3128 or email VolunteerPrograms@esmv.org.



Legislative affairs and advocacy

We spent the past year reaching out to the state and federal legislators representing our 28 cities and towns, making sure they were updated on our services and COVID protocols.



ESMV-NS keeps our legislative stakeholders informed about our work at the local level and helps them address constituent concerns. For example, a state representative reached out to us because one of his constituents was in and out of the hospital and needed support services. We made sure that she received Meals on Wheels when at home, was initiated into our Home Care programs and kept a family contact in the loop about our services.

Our agency also worked with elected officials to advocate for issues, bills, and budget amendments that supported older people to stay in their communities. In Massachusetts' 2021 state budget, this advocacy helped protect many aging programs from any cuts and even brought new resources to many programs, such as 10 new elder supportive housing sites across the state. We also advocated with our federal lawmakers to ensure that the aging services network was supported through the numerous federal COVID-19 response bills.

We worked with elected officials to advocate for issues, bills, and budget amendments that support older people.



DONOR PROFILES

The generosity of our donors makes it possible to pay for extra food, an unexpected prescription, fuel to keep a home warm, repair a pair of broken dentures or give relief to an overwhelmed caregiver when no other resource is available.

We want to celebrate our many donors by highlighting some individuals who have a history of supporting our agency.

“I give so there will be someone there when people call,” George says. “The way there was for me.”

Meet George

Newburyport resident George Henderson, retired from his job as a furniture salesman, remembers the day that inspired him to become a regular donor - something he has done for the past 19 years. His mother, who had been hospitalized for more than a month with heart failure, was discharged one Friday afternoon with an oxygen tank, a special diet, and a list of prescriptions. Henderson didn't know what to do or where to turn for help, but a neighbor suggested he call us.

The agency provided his mother with home health aide services three times each week. Later, when his father broke his hip, Elder Services assisted the family again.

“I give so there will be someone there when people call,” Henderson says. “The way there was for me.”

Meet Leon & Barbara

For Lonnie Stowe of Westwood, donating to ESMV-NS is a family affair that goes back decades. Her late parents, Dr. Leon and Barbara Somers, both psychologists with a practice in Andover, became deeply involved in the agency's mission and served on our Board for many years.

In 1993, Leon Somers received our most prestigious honor, the Vision-Leadership-Service Award, for his work as Board President. Their children, Lonnie and her brother, Harry, followed in their parents' footsteps, becoming psychologists and aiding Elder Services. When Leon Somers died in 1993, his family established the Somers Scholarship Fund to provide our staff with education, training, and professional guidance.



“My mother was very good at recognizing needs, and Dad loved to facilitate change - that's what psychology is all about,” Stowe says. “They both observed that, as people were living longer, their demands for mental health services were expanding. We created the Somers Scholarship Fund as a meaningful way for Dad's legacy to go on, so that staff could continue their professional growth. Now, donating to the fund is definitely a tradition, part of our holiday giving.”

Donations are always appreciated. Online donations may be made at esmv.org/give or by mailing a check to ESMV-NS, Attn: Development Office, 280 Merrimack Street, Suite 400, Lawrence, MA 01843.

Simply stated, we can't possibly do this work without donors like you.

2020 LEADERSHIP

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Tammy O'Donnell
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Healthy Living
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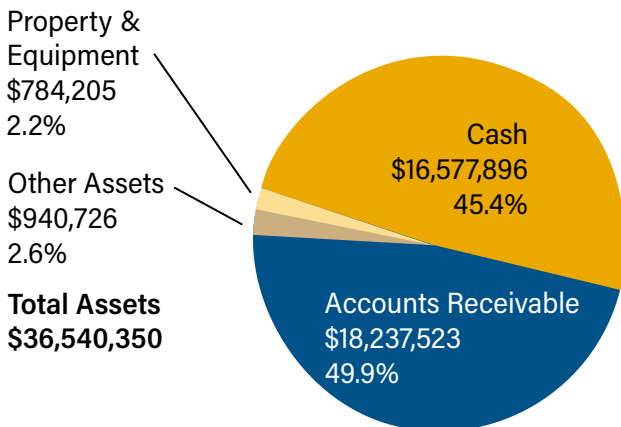
Christine Tardiff RN, MSN
Chief Operation Officer
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FY 2020 FINANCIALS

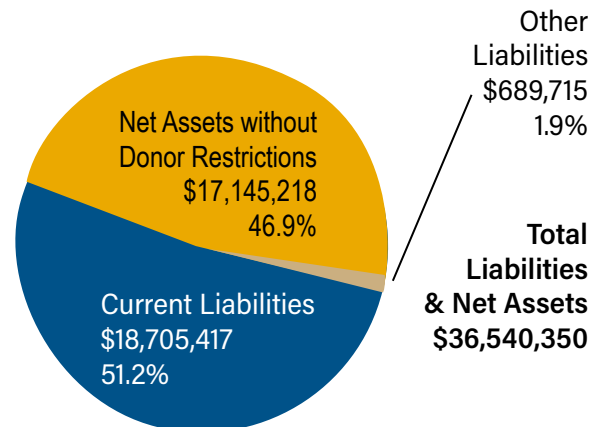
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley and North Shore is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We are committed to transparency and accountability in all our work.

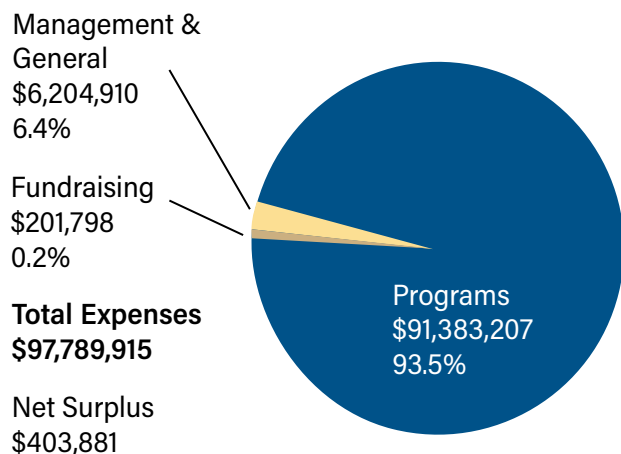
ASSETS



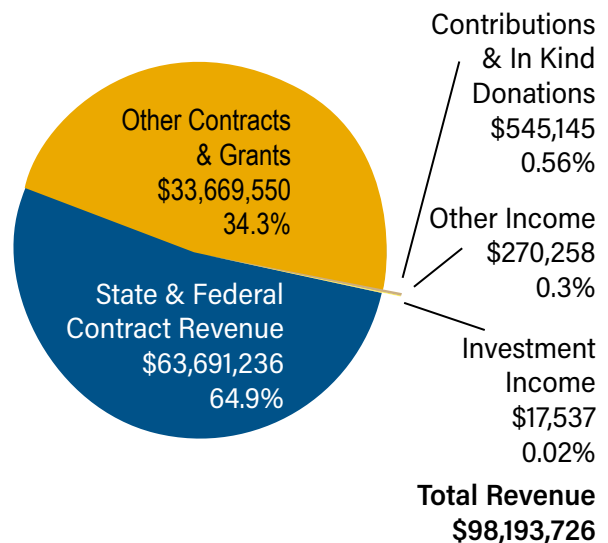
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS



EXPENSES



REVENUE



Source: FY20 Audited Financial Statements; excludes the Villa

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Thanks to the dedication of our hardworking staff, Elder Services once again received the Case Management for Long Term Services & Supports (CM-LTSS) Accreditation from National Committee for Quality Assurance for our Home Care Program.

"Our Quality Team worked to prepare for NCQA Accreditation over the last 24 months. Because of this enormous effort, we achieved a high score that equated to a three-year accreditation status," said our CEO Joan Hatem-Roy. "The accreditation process has provided our organization with a framework that guides our quality improvement efforts and allows us to provide the highest quality service to the consumers we serve."

Our state-funded Home Care program is one of the agency's largest programs and serves an average

of 4,300 consumers every month. This program supports older adults whose goal is to remain in a community setting, living as independently as possible.

Elder Services is one of a few organizations in Massachusetts that received this three-year accreditation. For consumers, the benefits of accreditation are a focus on person-centered services; reduction of errors and duplicated services; and improved communication and integration between individuals, caregivers, payers, and providers.

NCQA is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving healthcare quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of healthcare organizations. It also recognizes clinicians and practices in key areas of performance. NCQA's Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) is the most widely used performance measurement tool in healthcare.



Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.
Choices for a life-long journey



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800-892-0890 ▪ esmv.org

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