

Social Services

Education

Information

Accountability

July 2014

Summary

It is the mission of Social Services to improve the quality of life for people in need¹ who reside in the Town of Windham, by:

- Promoting economic self-sufficiency, and
- Connecting people with those resources made available by the Town, the state and the federal government, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Each month, for the past year, the Social Services Department has provided a snapshot of where programs stand (volume, activity, and finances) at a particular point in time. This month, we will quantify the current status of the program using the following measures identified in the budget narrative.

1. People in need are counseled and provided information and referrals regarding local, regional, state and federal social service programs.

- a. In July, as in previous months we coordinated with government and community based agencies that offer resources to strengthen individuals and families and promote economic self-sufficiency, such as state disability advocates, Project Feed, USDA, DHHS Emergency Funds, and the Aspire Program. We also coordinated with other providers of social services, such as the Good Shepherd Mobile pantry, Opportunity Alliance, and Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
- b. Social Services made/received over five hundred and eighty (580) phone calls²; interviewed fifty-eight (58) individuals for direct general assistance³, and provided food/non-food assistance to one hundred and sixty-seven (167) households. Each individual was provided education and information regarding additional resources available to them and encouraged to investigate these programs, and in many cases received assistance from staff (phone calls, emails, etc.) to connect with these services.

¹ “People in need” are defined to include those people who qualify for financial or other assistance according to regulations issued by the Town, the state and the federal government. As authorized by the Town, Social Services may offer additional services to enhance the quality of life for children, families and seniors.

² This number includes calls from those seeking food/non-food, clothing, and/or financial assistance, out-reach to the community and calls made on behalf of clients seeking assistance.

³ Thirty-eight (38) Windham; eighteen (18) Gorham.

2. People in need that qualify for General Assistance under the Ordinance receive temporary assistance for basic needs.

- a. The Food Pantry is open from 8 – 4 Monday – Thursday (32 hrs./wk.) and the Closet is open Monday and Tuesday from 10 to 12 (4 hrs./wk.). In July, over two hundred (200) residents in need were assisted by the Food Pantry and/or the Clothes Closet.
- b. Vouchers are provided for housing, winter emergency fuel, or electrical assistance to those who qualify for it, under applicable law⁴. All decisions are rendered within twenty-four (24) hours as required by the state. In July, four (4) Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance.
- c. Staff continued to reach out to members of the community, local businesses and NGO's that support with their time and their donations. In July, the Food Pantry received almost \$4500 in donations and fifteen (15) community members volunteered seventy (70) hours of their time.

3. The annual audit demonstrates compliance with state regulations.

- a. The last audit was conducted by DHHS in August of 2013 and noted 100% compliance
- b. We have not yet been notified of the next audit.

All of the programs located at the Family Resource Center, support the mission of Social Services and all of those that sought assistance in July received some type of assistance – food/non-food, educational/informational, or financial⁵.

As a result of these efforts, and the generosity of so many groups and individuals, assistance was provided to over two hundred (200) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

Progress

- Innovations Salon and Spa held a food drive to benefit the Food Pantry and donated several boxes of food.
- Donations from Frye Island have been making their way to the Food Pantry each week.
- We are part of a group of food pantries receiving fresh vegetable and fruit donations each week from Idexx – the blueberries provided a special treat for Food Pantry clients.
- The Community Garden has been especially generous with the Food Pantry – squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, etc.
- The Food Pantry continued its “Summer Break” program to assist families with children at home for the summer with extra food and snacks.
- The Food Pantry received several sizeable monetary donations this month from citizens, banks, and the Windham High School. (Thank you, all!)
- We continued our hugely popular “Summer Break” program with extras for children at home for the summer and continues to encourage all clients to come to the Food Pantry

⁴ The Ordinance adopted by Council governs qualification.

⁵ To ensure public accountability, the General Assistance Ordinance was objectively, consistently and uniformly applied.

each week, in addition to their monthly visits for fresh fruit, vegetables (Thank you, Windham Community Garden!), bread, and pastries.

Statistics

- The Food Pantry received/made three hundred and twenty-three (323) phone calls.
- One hundred and sixty-seven (167) households were served through the Food Pantry; eleven (11) of which were new clients.
- Fifteen (15) volunteers worked a total of seventy (70) in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty (20) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served forty-one (41) households.
- The Food Pantry received thirty-two (32) donations (multiple boxes/bags of canned and packaged food from residents and local businesses; fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, and bread) from Hannaford and bi-weekly and donated bread from The Bakery Outlet.
- Twelve (12) thank you notes were sent to residents and businesses for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and sixty (260) phone calls. (This number also includes calls for Gorham.)
- Fifty-six (56) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Thirty-eight (38) Windham; eighteen (18) Gorham.
- Direct general assistance was provided to four (4) Windham residents.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
19 requests for rental assistance; 4 requests for shelter.	2 were provided financial assistance for rent; all others were referred to Westbrook Housing Authority for Section 8 or Senior Housing.
10 requests for assistance with electrical bills – all had received disconnect notices.	2 were provided financial assistance; all others were referred to DHHS and LIHEAP and were assisted in signing up for Efficiency Maine/Electricity Maine
2 requests for medical bills; 3 requests for tax abatement information.	0 were provided financial assistance; 2 were referred to Mercy Charity for medical financial assistance; all questions were answered regarding tax abatements

July Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/14 – 7/31/14: | \$ 937.00 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 7/01/14 – 7/31/14: | \$ 4,458.64 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 7/01/14 – 7/31/14: | \$ 326.88 |