

Social Services

Education

Information

Accountability

November 2015

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 the current status of the program will be assessed 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 November, 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, Salvation Army and Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
- b. Social Services made/received over eight hundred (800) phone calls²; interviewed twenty-five (25) individuals for direct general assistance³, and provided food/non-food assistance to two hundred and sixty-six (266) 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.

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

- a. In November, three hundred and ninety-one (391) residents in need were assisted by the Food Pantry and/or the Clothes Closet.

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 Twenty (20) Windham; Five (5) Gorham.

- 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 November, no 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 November, the Food Pantry received \$ 5,978.27 in donations and sixty-five (65) community members volunteered one hundred and twenty-five and one-half (125.5) hours of their time.

3. The annual audit demonstrates compliance with state regulations.

- a. A special audit was conducted in July of 2015 by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) then then newly appointed General Assistance Manager and noted 100% compliance in all areas.

All of the programs located at the Family Resource Center, support the mission of Social Services and all of those that sought assistance in October 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 almost (300) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

Highlights

- Helping Hands boxes are taking over the Food Pantry! In November four hundred and five (405) of these boxes were donated by Windham shoppers. Wow!
- The Lake Region Chamber of Commerce presented the Food Pantry with a check for \$3,440.77 which represented the pantry's portion of the proceeds from the coin drive and the Lakes Region Octoberfest.
- The Windham Knights of Columbus #10020 delivered one hundred and thirty (130) turkeys and a check of \$1250.00 to purchase the fixings for the Thanksgiving Baskets.
- Windham Weaponry and Superior Embroidery of Windham delivered a combined total of sixty (60) pies to help fill Thanksgiving Baskets.
- Food drives abound! The Windham Fraternal Order of Eagles donated multiple boxes of food and a check for \$1,414.50; the Park and Recreation Department's Annual Tree Lighting brought in almost one-hundred (100) food items for the pantry; and Our Lady of Perpetual Help /Social Justice Committee donated items for 20 Thanksgiving Baskets!
- Barbara Muir to the rescue...just as the Pantry was running low of pet food; she arrived with over three hundred and twenty-seven (327) pounds of pet food. Tails are wagging!
- All clients were encouraged and reminded to come to the Food Pantry each week, in addition to their monthly visits for fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and pastries.

⁴ The Ordinance adopted by Council governs qualification.

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

Statistics

- Two hundred and five (205) households were served through the Food Pantry; twenty (20) were new clients.
- Sixty-one (61) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and twenty five and one-half (125.5) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made five hundred and twelve (512) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received thirty-five (35) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served one hundred and seventeen (117) households.
- The Food Pantry received fifty-seven (57) donations (multiple boxes/bags of canned and packaged food from residents and local businesses; and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread) bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Twenty-three (23) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents and businesses for their donations.
- The Food Pantry provided one hundred and thirty-two families with Thanksgiving Baskets and coordinated with eleven individuals that wanted to adopt families for the holiday.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and ninety-three (293) phone calls⁶. Twenty-five (25) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Twenty (20) Windham; five (5) Gorham.
- In November no Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; five (5) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
4 requests for housing assistance	0 were provided financial assistance for rent; all others were referred to Westbrook Housing Authority for Section 8 or Senior Housing.
11 requests for emergency winter fuel	0 were provided financial assistance; all others were referred to DHHS, LIHEAP, NHN, the Salvation Army as well as being assisted in signing up for Efficiency Maine/Electricity Maine.
5 requests for assistance with electrical bills	0 were provided financial assistance; all were referred to DHHS, LIHEAP, the Salvation Army as well as being assisted in signing up for Efficiency Maine/Electricity Maine

November Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 11/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 0.00 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 11/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 5,978.27 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 11/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 0.00 |

Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 2,658.31 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 7/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 9,559.05 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 7/01/15 – 11/30/15: | \$ 2,808.92 |

⁶ The number also includes calls for Gorham.