

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**February 2018**

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## Summary

It is the mission of Social Services to improve the quality of life for people in need<sup>1</sup> 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 February, 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 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 which administers LIHEAP; RTP Bus Service, Salvation Army and Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
- b. Social Services made/received six hundred and eighty (685) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed one hundred and sixty-five (165) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to one hundred and sixty-four (164) 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.

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<sup>1</sup> “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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> One hundred and fourteen (114) Windham; Fifty-one (51) Gorham.

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

- a. In February, two hundred and nine (209) households 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 law<sup>4</sup>. All decisions are rendered within twenty-four (24) hours as required by the state. In February, one (1) resident 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 February, the Food Pantry received \$ 1,075 in donations and forty-three (43) community members volunteered ninety-one (91) hours of their time.

**3. The annual audit demonstrates compliance with state regulations.**

- a. An annual audit was conducted in February of 2018 by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Field Examiner, Gerry Biron, and he 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 February received some type of assistance – food/non-food, educational/informational, or financial<sup>5</sup>.

As a result of these efforts, and the generosity of so many groups and individuals, assistance was provided to over three hundred (300) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

## Highlights

- The Windham Primary School had a food drive with their 100<sup>th</sup> Day Celebration. They delivered one thousand one hundred and twenty-seven (1127) food and non-food items and our dedicated volunteers did a great job shelving the items. Thanks to all!
- The contract for the shared 14 Passenger Mini-Bus was awarded to O'Connor Motors. We expect delivery sometime in August 2018.
- The Clothes Closet has gained another volunteer. Suzanne Legere helped Pat Vigue with sorting and displaying clothing while Sylvia Johnson recovers from surgery.
- The Windham Rotary continues to donate books for children. We encourage all children to select a book or coloring book when they frequent the Food Pantry.
- Building and Grounds personnel have installed a huge bulletin board at the Food Pantry. The staff have enjoyed decorating the board and displaying colorful "thank you" notes to the many residents and businesses that donate to the Food Pantry.
- 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.

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<sup>4</sup> The Ordinance adopted by Council governs qualification.

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

## Statistics

- One hundred and sixty-four (164) households were served through the Food Pantry; four (4) were new clients.
- Forty-three (43) volunteers worked a total of ninety-one (91) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made two hundred and seventy-six (276) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received eighteen (18) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served forty-five (45) households.
- The Food Pantry received twenty-eight (28) donations from residents and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Twelve (12) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made four hundred and nine (409) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- One hundred and sixty-five (165) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: One hundred and fourteen (114) Windham; fifty-one (51) Gorham.
- In February, one (1) Windham resident qualified for direct general assistance; five (5) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
25 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.
20 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.
15 requests for food/non-food assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry.
54 requests for emergency winter fuel	1 was 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.
NOTE: The number of requests is higher than this time last year due to the extreme weather conditions.	

## February Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 2/01/18 – 2/28/2018: | \$ 1,527.12 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 2/01/18 – 2/28/2018: | \$ 1,075.00 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 2/01/18 – 2/28/2018: | \$ 0.00     |

## Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/17 – 2/28/2018: | \$11,875.42 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 7/01/17 – 2/28/2018: | \$19,577.86 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 7/01/17 – 2/28/2018: | \$ 1,793.69 |

<sup>6</sup> The number also includes calls for Gorham.