

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**November 2017**

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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 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 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 eight hundred (800) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed ninety-four (94) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to four hundred and six (406) 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.**

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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> Fifty-four (54) Windham; Forty (40) Gorham.

- a. In November, five hundred and twenty-five (525) 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 November, three (3) 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 \$ 3,136.01 in donations and fifty-six (56) community members volunteered one hundred and forty-seven (147) hours of their time.

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

- a. An annual audit was conducted in January of 2017 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 November 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 five hundred (500) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

## **Highlights**

- Windham Parks and Recreation and Social Services began preparing an RFP for the new shared 14 Passenger Van.
- It was month of multiple food donations. Our Lady of Perpetual Help delivered 25 Thanksgiving Baskets with all the trimmings; the Better Homes and Gardens Masiello Group delivered 16 turkeys and 3 hams for Thanksgiving Baskets; Westbrook Regional High School delivered 17 Thanksgiving Baskets; the Morrison Center in Bridgton delivered 2 Thanksgiving Baskets; Madeline Demmons delivered 2 Thanksgiving Baskets; Windham Parks and Recreation delivered canned food from a food drive; and the Knights of Columbus Council 10020 delivered turkeys, chicken roasters, ham and can goods. Many thanks to all!
- Shaw's Supermarket donated 12 Thanksgiving boxes which included fully cooked turkeys, stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes, and cranberry sauce. A nice surprise!
- Steve Gagnon with the Knights of Columbus in Westbrook brought in 47 coats from the Coat for Kids Program. Thank you, Steve!
- The Mason Lodge donated \$750.00 to help with Thanksgiving and Christmas Baskets.
- The Food Pantry provided 104 Thanksgiving Dinners to Windham residents.

<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.

- 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.

## Statistics

- Four hundred and six (406) households were served through the Food Pantry; nine (9) were new clients.
- Fifty-six (56) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made four hundred and ninety-seven (497) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty-four (24) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served one hundred and nineteen (119) households.
- The Food Pantry received sixty-two (62) donations from residents and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Sixteen (16) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made three hundred and three (303) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Ninety-four (94) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Fifty-four (54) Windham; forty (40) Gorham.
- In November, three (3) Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; eight (8) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
12 requests for housing assistance	1 was provided financial assistance for rent; all others were referred to Westbrook Housing Authority for Section 8 or Senior Housing.
11 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.
12 requests for food/non-food assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry.
19 requests for emergency winter fuel	2 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.
NOTE: The number of requests is higher than this time last year due to the extreme weather conditions.	

## November Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 11/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 716.80   |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 11/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 3,136.01 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 11/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 318.88   |

## Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 5,470.80 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 7/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 8,898.79 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 7/01/17 – 11/30/2017: | \$ 1,110.5  |

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