

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**August 2016**

## 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 August, 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 almost nine hundred (900) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed forty-three (43) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to two hundred and eighty-three (283) 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> Twenty-nine (29) Windham; Fourteen (14) Gorham.

- a. In August, three hundred and thirty (330) 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 law<sup>4</sup>. All decisions are rendered within twenty-four (24) hours as required by the state. In August, one Windham 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 August, the Food Pantry received \$ 1,623.06 in donations and forty-seven (47) community members volunteered one hundred and eleven (111) 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) the 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 August 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 and fifty (350) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

## Highlights

- The Food Pantry continues to get fresh produce from Fresh Star Farm weekly. In August we received lettuce, kale, onions, radishes, carrots, beets, turnips, green beans, bell peppers and snap peas. A continued treat for our clients!
- Local farmers are also sharing their harvest: cucumbers, zucchini, summer squash, tomatoes, green peppers, garlic, eggplant, and green beans, to name a few.
- The Back to School Backpack Program provided seventeen (17) students grades K – 8 with backpacks filled with school supplies – notebooks, paper, pencils, crayons, glue sticks, and many more items. Both the backpacks and the supplies came from community donations. It means so much to those in need. Thank you!
- The Maine Department of Agriculture shared with us cases of cranberry juice concentrate, walnut pieces, and jars of peanut butter.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables from Hannaford continue to be especially plentiful and well appreciated by Food Pantry clients.
- 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

- Two hundred and eight-three (283) households were served through the Food Pantry; seven (7) were new clients. The increase was largely due to the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Forty-seven (47) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and eleven (111) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made five hundred and two (502) phone calls. The increase was due to the Social Services Assistant calling clients to come in for fresh veggies.
- The Clothes Closet received seventeen (17) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served eighty-seven (87) households.
- The Food Pantry received sixty-eight (68) 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.
- Seventeen (17) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents and businesses for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made three hundred and ninety-two (392) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Forty-three (43) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Twenty-nine (29) Windham; fourteen (14) Gorham.
- In August, one (1) Windham resident qualified for direct general assistance; eight (8) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
24 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.
2 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.
3 requests for assistance with electrical bills	1 was 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

### August Expenses/Donations

- Direct general assistance provided: 8/01/16 – 8/31/16: \$ 60.00
- Food Pantry monetary donations: 8/01/16 – 8/31/16: \$ 1,623.06
- Food Pantry expenses: 8/01/16 – 8/31/16: \$1,083.07

### Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

- Direct general assistance provided: 7/01/16 – 8/31/17: \$ 60.00
- Food Pantry monetary donations: 7/01/16 – 8/31/17: \$ 2,618.06
- Food Pantry expenses: 7/01/16 – 8/31/17: \$1,083.07

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