

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**September 2016**

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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 September, 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 seven hundred (700) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed sixty-two (62) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to three hundred and forty (340) 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 September, two hundred and ninety-nine (299) residents in need were assisted by the Food Pantry and/or the Clothes Closet.

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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> Forty-one (41) Windham; Twenty-one (21) Gorham.

- 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 September, 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 September, the Food Pantry received \$ 931.24 in donations and forty-one (41) community members volunteered one seventy-nine (79) 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 September 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 (300) 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 the Community Garden. In September, we received tomatoes, cucumbers, and zucchini. Fresh salad for our clients!
- Local farmers are also continue to share their harvest: cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, carrots green beans.
- Chicken farmers are donating organic eggs! These are a special treat for Food Pantry clients.
- The Windham Police Department donated fresh deer meat to Wayside Food Pantry; and in turn, Wayside donated a portion of the fresh venison to the Windham Food Pantry.
- The Clothes Closet has benefited from the end of the season at Frye Island homes – multiple boxes and bags of clean, and often new, clothing and bedding were donated.
- The Windham Correction Center donated twenty-four (24) cartons of summer squash, thirteen (13) cartons of onions, four (4) cartons of tomatoes, as well as multiple heads of cabbage and thirty (30) watermelons.
- 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 twenty-one (221) households were served through the Food Pantry; six (6) were new clients.
- Forty-one (41) volunteers worked a total of seventy-nine (79) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made four hundred and three (403) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty-seven (27) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served seventy-eight (78) households.
- The Food Pantry received fifty-one (51) 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.
- Fourteen (14) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents and businesses for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and ninety-seven (297) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Sixty-two (62) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Forty-one (41) Windham; twenty-one (21) Gorham.
- In September, one (1) Windham resident qualified for direct general assistance; five (5) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
30 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

## September Expenses/Donations

- |                                       |                    |           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 9/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$ 363.00 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 9/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$ 675.00 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 9/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$ 931.24 |

## Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$ 423.00   |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 7/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$ 3,293.06 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 7/01/16 – 9/30/16: | \$1,826.50  |

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