

Social Services

Education

Information

Accountability

February 2017

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 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 five hundred and seventy-seven (577) phone calls²; interviewed fifty-one (51) individuals for direct general assistance³, and provided food/non-food assistance to two hundred and one (201) 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.

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 Thirty-two (32) Windham; Nineteen (19) Gorham.

- a. In February, two hundred and seventeen (201) 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 law⁴. All decisions are rendered within twenty-four (24) hours as required by the state. In February four (4) 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 February, the Food Pantry received \$ 1,534.66 in donations and twenty-nine (29) community members volunteered sixty-one (61) 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 January 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 over two hundred and fifty (250) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

Highlights

- Windham Primary School held their 100 Days Food Drive and donated 1,624 food and personal items to the Food Pantry. Each grade, Kindergarten through Grade 3, had specific items to bring in providing a well-rounded donation. Thank you K – 3!!!
- Little Mart in Windham donated milk and orange juice for Food Pantry clients. Seniors were called to come in and enjoy this wonderful surprise.
- Smitty's Cinema held a food drive to benefit the Food Pantry. Joe and Jeannette Cummings offered to pick up the donated food – it filled their van! Thank you to all.
- The parent of a Windham Primary School second grader donated boxes of Tom's toothpaste and mouthwash for distributing through the Food Pantry. Eyes lit up when staff passed this out.
- Social Services staff attended the Wayside meeting for Cumberland County food pantries. Not only was the meeting informational but they came away with 60 pounds of Cuties and 100 pounds of white kidney beans. What a treat!
- At the Cumberland County Food Pantry meeting, it was announced that more grant money was available for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program allowing more people to participate. We are signing them up!!
- 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

- One hundred and fifty-one (151) households were served through the Food Pantry; six (6) were new clients.
- Twenty-nine (29) volunteers worked a total of sixty-one (61) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made two hundred and seventy-eight (278) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received seventeen (15) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served fifty (50) households.
- The Food Pantry received twenty-one (21) 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.
- Eleven (11) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents and businesses for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and ninety-nine (299) phone calls⁶.
- Fifty-one (51) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Thirty-two (32) Windham; nineteen (19) Gorham.
- In February four (4) Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; five (5) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
13 requests for housing assistance	2 were provided financial assistance for rent; all others were referred to Westbrook Housing Authority for Section 8 or Senior Housing.
10 requests for assistance with electrical bills	2 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
1 request for burial/cremation assistance	No financial assistance was provided.
8 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.

February Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 2/01/17 – 2/28/2017: | \$ 1,733.50 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 2/01/17 – 2/28/2017: | \$ 1,534.66 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 2/01/17 – 2/28/2017: | \$ 308.80 |

Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/16 – 2/28/2017: | \$ 7,583.15 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 7/01/16 – 2/28/2017: | \$24,723.94 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 7/01/16 – 2/28/2017: | \$ 4,786.06 |

⁶ The number also includes calls for Gorham.