

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**August 2017**

## 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 seven hundred and seventeen (717) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed sixty-six (66) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to four hundred (400) 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 August, four hundred and eighty-eight (488) households 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-five (25) 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 August, no 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 August, the Food Pantry received \$ 3,140.32 in donations and forty-eight (48) community members volunteered one hundred and eighteen (118) 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 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 five hundred (500) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

## Highlights

- Windham gardeners brought in fresh veggies to the pantry: cucumbers, swiss chard, green peppers, zucchini, summer squash and blackberries to name a few. What a delight!
- The Backpack program went well this year with great donations, especially from Mertie Porter, George Ricker and Nancy Salway supplying backpacks and lots of school supplies. We had a fewer children needing the backpacks as last year but there were many smiles when each child came to get their very own backpack.
- World Class Taekwondo at the Windham Mall ran a food drive and donated four (4) hampers full of food to the Food Pantry. What a treat!
- Mr. Andrews delivered banana boxes full of white plums and peaches from his own trees to the Food Pantry. What a wonderful surprise for Food Pantry clients!
- Wayside Food Pantry received a gift of tomatoes and strawberries and put the word out that they were there for anyone that wanted to come and get them. The Social Services Assistant loves to rescue food and came back with 120 boxes of strawberries and 16 trays of vine ripe tomatoes. Good job!!
- A huge thank you to Matt Kluchnik and Jacob Piechowski for helping to organize the back room during their summer break. We couldn't do it without them!!
- Hannaford has continued to add cartons of eggs to their donation. Clients are thrilled!
- 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

- Four hundred (400) households were served through the Food Pantry; fourteen (14) were new clients.
- Forty-eight (48) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and eighteen (118) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made four hundred and twenty-six (426) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty-seven (27) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served eight-eight (88) households.
- The Food Pantry received fifty-six (56) donations from residents and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Fifteen (15) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and ninety-one (291) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Sixty-six (66) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Forty-one (41) Windham; twenty-five (25) Gorham.
- In August, no Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; three (3) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
22 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.
9 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.
8 requests for food/non-food assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry.
1 request for medicine assistance	Referred to Mercy Hospital
1 request for bus passes	Bus passes (32) were issued through CBDG grant

## August Expenses/Donations

- |                                       |                      |             |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 8/01/17 – 8/31/2017: | \$ 0.00     |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 8/01/17 – 8/31/2017: | \$ 3,140.32 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 8/01/17 – 8/31/2017: | \$ 460.56   |

## Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 7/01/17 – 6/30/2018: | \$ 795.00   |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 7/01/17 – 6/30/2018: | \$ 4,132.82 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 7/01/17 – 6/30/2018: | \$ 460.56   |

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