

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**March 2019**

---

## 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 March, 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 twenty-six (726) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed seventy-seven (77) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to three hundred and twenty-two (322) 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 March, three hundred and twenty-two (322) households in need were assisted by the Food Pantry and/or the Clothes Closet.

---

<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-eight (58) Windham; nineteen (19) 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 March six (6) 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 March, the Food Pantry received \$ 2,791.35 in donations and forty-six (46) community members volunteered on hundred and four (104) hours of their time.

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

- a. An annual audit was conducted in in March 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 March 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 almost four hundred (400) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

## **Highlights**

- Senior Monday was moved to Wednesday due to a winter storm event. Social Services staff provided plenty of extras including both food and non-food items.
- Volunteers, Jeannette and Joe Cummings, spent several days defrosting/cleaning the refrigerators and freezers in the Food Pantry. A huge thank you to both of them!
- Staff attended a General Assistance training in Westbrook that focused on statute changes.
- Social Services staff had fun decorating the Food Pantry for St. Patrick's Day. They also put an emphasis on eating healthy and green. ☺
- Volunteers continue to help to sort through and reorganize the can goods.
- Two regular volunteers are continuing making phone calls to clients to come in and pick up some "extras" each month.
- Volunteers helped to rearrange the freezers making it easier to find the different types of meat and frozen food. What a difference it made!
- 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.

<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 nineteen (219) households were served through the Food Pantry; seven (7) were new clients.
- Forty-six (46) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and four (104) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made three hundred and thirty-four (334) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty-three (23) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served one hundred and three (103) households.
- The Food Pantry received thirty-seven (37) donations from residents and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Five (5) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made three hundred and ninety-two (392) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Seventy-seven (77) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Fifty-eight (58) Windham; nineteen (19) Gorham.
- In March, six (6) Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; and no Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
9 requests for housing assistance	5 were provided financial assistance for rent; all others were referred to Westbrook Housing Authority for Section 8 or Senior Housing.
15 requests for assistance with gas/electrical/home repair 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.
8 requests for food/non-food/clothing assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
26 requests for emergency winter fuel	0 were provided financial assistance; all were referred to DHHS, LIHEAP, NHN, the Salvation Army as well as being assisted in signing up for Efficiency Maine/Electricity Maine.

### March Expenses/Donations

- |                                     |                        |             |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Direct general assistance provided: | 03/01/19 – 03/31/2019: | \$ 2,533.00 |
| Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 03/01/19 – 03/31/2019: | \$ 2,791.35 |
| Food Pantry expenses:               | 03/01/19 – 03/31/2019: | \$ 197.51   |

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

- |                                     |                       |               |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Direct general assistance provided: | 07/01/18 – 6/30/2019: | \$ 12,349.84* |
| Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 07/01/18 – 6/30/2019: | \$ 21,564.64  |
| Food Pantry expenses:               | 07/01/18 – 6/30/2019: | \$ 60,226.49  |

\*GA expenses –

January – Reported: \$2595 – (\$600 of this was voided in February, so actual in January was \$1,995)

February – Reported: 571.84 – (Actual in February was \$1,171.84)

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