

Social Services

Education

Information

Accountability

January 2020

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 January, 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 six hundred and seventy (670) phone calls²; interviewed one hundred and sixteen (116) individuals for direct general assistance³, and provided food/non-food assistance to three hundred and twenty-one (321) households. Everyone 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 January three hundred and twenty-one (321) households in need were assisted by the Food Pantry and/or the Clothes Closet.

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 Seventy-six (76) Windham; forty (40) Gorham.

- 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 January, one (1) 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 January, the Food Pantry received \$ 6,595.34 in donations and fifty-five (55) community members volunteered on hundred and forty-seven (147) hours of their time.

3. The annual audit demonstrates compliance with state regulations.

- a. An annual audit was conducted in in March of 2019 by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Field Examiner, Gerry Biron, and he noted 100% compliance in all areas.

All 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 almost four hundred (400) eligible individuals and their families while working to help them to achieve improved self-sufficiency.

Highlights

- Volunteers and staff joined forces for a major clean up of the food pantry following the holiday events. Special thanks to Judy MacDonald, Bob Morin, Bruce Gove, John Legere, Jacob Kieslowski, and Carol and Leo Daniel. Their time and efforts made a real difference.
- The Windham Community continues to demonstrate its generosity even after the holidays. Food and clothing continue to be donated to benefit Food Pantry and Clothes Closet clients. All is very welcome and appreciated!
- Thank you notes from children and parents of children adopted for Christmas have been trickling in. Staff send these on to the adoptive individuals and/or organizations.
- Social Services staff attended the quarterly meeting of the Good Shepherd held at the Wayside Food Pantry. Updates were provided on the TEFAP, CSFP and other programs.
- Although vegetables were in short supply in January, the Social Services Assistant managed to bring in clients for bread and pastry each week and supplemented with canned veggies as needed.
- The General Assistance Administrator has been extremely busy with requests for fuel assistance through Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Senior Program assistance for Parks and Recreation programs. He is always happy to help!
- 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

- Two hundred and forty-eight (248) households were served through the Food Pantry; nine (9) were new clients.
- Fifty-five (55) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made three hundred and seventeen (317) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received twenty-nine (29) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served seventy-three (73) households.
- The Food Pantry received thirty-one (31) donations from residents and fresh fruit, vegetables, baked goods, meat, and bread bi-weekly from Hannaford in Windham.
- Twenty-six (26) thank you notes and/or receipts were sent to residents for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and ninety-eight (298) phone calls⁶.
- One hundred and sixteen (116) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Seventy-six (76) Windham; forty (40) Gorham.
- In January one (1) Windham resident qualified for direct general assistance; and eight (8) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
15 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.
15 requests for assistance with gas/electrical/water and 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.
29 requests for emergency winter fuel	0 were provided financial assistance; both were referred to LIHEAP and NHN
16 requests for food/non-food/clothing assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.

January Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 01/01/20 – 01/31/20: | \$ 31.26 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 01/01/20 – 01/31/20: | \$ 6595.34 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 01/01/20 – 01/31/20: | \$ 326.57 |

Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 07/01/19 – 01/31/20: | \$ 6023.36 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations: | 07/01/19 – 01/31/20: | \$ 23,638.84 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses: | 07/01/19 – 01/31/20: | \$ 3,158.33 |

⁶ The number also includes calls for Gorham.