

# Social Services

*Education*

*Information*

*Accountability*

**February 2020**

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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 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 six hundred and forty-five (645) phone calls<sup>2</sup>; interviewed eighty-three (83) individuals for direct general assistance<sup>3</sup>, and provided food/non-food assistance to three hundred and fifty-five (355) 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 February three hundred and fifty-five (355) 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> Fifty-seven (57) Windham; twenty-six (26) 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 February, two (2) 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 \$ 1,640.50 in donations and fifty-five (55) community members volunteered on hundred and fifteen (115) hours of their time.

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

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

## Highlights

- The Pajama Program donated eighty-eight (88) pairs of pajamas (sizes 6 months to 14) and sixty-one (61) picture and chapter books. The mission of the “Pajama Program” is to “help provide the tools caregivers need to enable the children to have Good Nights so they can thrive.”
- Goodwill of Windham held a food drive and brought in large boxes of food to the Food Pantry. Anyone that brought in a non-perishable food item received a percentage off on their purchase in the store. Thanks, Goodwill.
- The Building and Grounds crew picked up a “Spirit of Giving” pallet from Shaw's. It included soups, pastas, vegetables, sauces, peanut butter, etc. What a treat!
- The Primary School did it once again! During their Annual 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School they brought to the Food Pantry 2341 food and personal items!!! The Kindergarten brought in boxed foods such as granola bars, cereal and crackers. It was the first grade's job to bring personal items such as shampoo, toothpaste, soaps, detergents and lotions. The second grade supplied canned foods and pet foods and treats. The third grade brought in rice, pasta, peanut butter and jelly. They all did a fabulous job!
- Volunteers, Ann Atherton, Cheryl Wisslet and Bob Morin did a great job putting away the Primary School's food drive. Many thanks!
- 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 sixty (260) households were served through the Food Pantry; ten (10) were new clients.
- Fifty-five (55) volunteers worked a total of one hundred and fifteen (115) hours in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.
- The Food Pantry received/made three hundred and seventy-nine (379) phone calls.
- The Clothes Closet received eighteen (18) donations (multiple boxes/bags) of clothing and linens and served ninety-five (95) households.
- The Food Pantry received twenty-eight (28) donations from residents 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 for their donations.
- General Assistance received/made two hundred and sixty-six (266) phone calls<sup>6</sup>.
- Eighty-three (83) individuals were interviewed for direct general assistance: Fifty-seven (57) Windham; twenty-six (26) Gorham.
- In February two (2) Windham residents qualified for direct general assistance; and four (4) Gorham residents qualified for direct general assistance.

Type of Assistance Requested	Assistance Provided
10 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.
13 requests for assistance with gas/electrical/water and home repair 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.
22 requests for emergency winter fuel	1 was provided financial assistance; both were referred to LIHEAP and NHN
12 requests for food/non-food/clothing assistance	All were serviced through the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet.

## February Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 02/01/20 – 02/29/20: | \$ 1,427.90 |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 02/01/20 – 02/29/20: | \$ 1,640.50 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 02/01/20 – 02/29/20: | \$ 937.89   |

## Fiscal Year-to-Date Expenses/Donations

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Direct general assistance provided: | 07/01/19 – 02/29/20: | \$ 7,451.26  |
| ▪ Food Pantry monetary donations:     | 07/01/19 – 02/29/20: | \$ 25,279.34 |
| ▪ Food Pantry expenses:               | 07/01/19 – 02/29/20: | \$ 3,990.92  |

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