

Report of the Human Services Coordinator

The struggling economy continues to affect people nationwide. Fremont residents felt their share of these burdens with foreclosures and job losses. Health matters also play a big role in the financial well-being of the community. Welfare Administration is a delicate balance of immediate needs and expenses, versus income, all the while trying to help residents through a difficult time of trying to return to self-sufficiency. It can be a hard choice to decide what is absolutely necessary when faced with certain financial cutbacks from job loss or illness.

Local welfare administration is handled day to day by the Human Services Coordinator, through the Town's approved application process and Welfare Guidelines adopted by the Board of Selectmen. NH Statute covers much of the regulatory aspect of the application process.

Residents seeking assistance are guided through the application process, as well as provided resources to a number of outside agencies that serve NH; and Fremont in general. The Fuel Assistance and Electric Assistance Programs are administered by local Community Action Programs (CAP); and the one serving Fremont is the Rockingham County Community Action Program. They have an intake office in Raymond; and often work in conjunction with the NH Health and Human Services District Office in Portsmouth.

Unfortunately the federal government cuts to programs such as Fuel Assistance have hit many families hard. The amount of Fuel Assistance that came to NH was nearly 1/3 of what it was last year, making it even harder for families to make ends meet.

Although not all applicants are qualified for local assistance, we consistently look for alternative solutions when Fremont Assistance is not an option. Applicants are encouraged to work out solutions to their financial issues with direct negotiation with their utility or fuel vendor, or make payment plans with those and other vendors, or their landlord or mortgage company. The goal of local assistance is to be a short-term solution for an immediate need, and to return residents to self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Local assistance only considers household necessities such as housing, heat, electricity, food, and certain other items on a case-by-case basis. All household finances (expenses and income) are reviewed to make these determinations.

The largest resource available to Fremont residents in need is the Fremont Food Pantry. This is a non-profit organization established to provide food to those in need, and they provide an amazing quality and quantity of services to our residents. They provide food baskets for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter on an annual basis. In 2011 they continued the July 4th basket to help bridge the long gap between the Easter and Thanksgiving holidays. They also serve day to day food needs as requested.

The Giving Tree was undertaken by the People's United Methodist Church for the 2011 Holiday Season and again served many Fremont families. The Town is very lucky to have these organizations and the dedicated volunteers who staff them. Many of our residents are also

very generous with their support of these organizations, especially in these troubled economic times. They would not be able to do it without your help and financial support. Please watch for information on the Town's website beginning in November annually for these programs. There are early registration deadline to allow for proper planning and execution of these incredible programs.

The Town's website includes a list of social service agencies who serve Fremont, many on a sliding fee scale where financial hardship is documented, as well as has links to other resources, including medications, NH Healthy Kids, some Veteran services, housing, and transitional shelters. NH also has a referral resource available. Simply dial 2-1-1 within New Hampshire for information about additional resource organizations. You can also reference www.211nh.org. The number outside NH is toll free, at 1 866 444 4211 and the TYY line for the hearing-impaired is 603 634 3388.

RESOURCES

Food Stamps	800 821 0326
Fremont Food Pantry	603 895 1162
Fuel & Electric Assistance	800 639 3896 or 603 436 3896
NH Employment Security / Unemployment filing	888 510 7771
NH Healthy Kids	877 464 2447 or www.nhhealthykids.com
NH Housing Finance Authority	800 439 7247 or www.nhhfa.org
NH State Health Insurance Program (Medicare)	866 634 9412
Rockingham County Community Action	603 895 2303
W I C (Women, Infants & Children)	800 256 9880

Other resources are listed on our website at www.Fremont.nh.gov. Click on the Social Services link. The list of things you should know in conjunction with an application for local assistance is also located on the website.

The Town welcomed Danielle Forsythe in the spring as the new Coordinator. She was with us for several months before leaving to tend to health concerns in August. I returned to the positions and began searching for a new Coordinator. Danielle had been a good fit for the Town, and we wish her well in her recovery.

Just into the new year, the Selectmen appointed Dawn-Marie Jarrell as the Town's new Coordinator. We look forward to working with Dawn. Should you find that you need local assistance, you should leave a detailed message for Dawn at 895 3200 x 12. Local assistance applications are treated in confidence and are handled on an appointment basis once the initial form is completed.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson, Human Services Coordinator