

Welfare Department

The City of Berlin Welfare Department under RSA 165 is charged with the responsibility of assisting those who are poor and unable to support themselves. This responsibility must also be balanced out by a fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers. In order to fairly meet the responsibilities placed upon the department there are written guidelines which explain in detail the laws that govern local assistance, what types of assistance are offered, what is needed in order to apply for and keep qualifying for assistance. The formula used to determine how much assistance, if any, can be offered is basic needs minus income/assets. If basic needs are more than income/assets then assistance can be offered for the difference. Assistance is issued in voucher form. No cash is given to clients. Vendors, in most cases, bill the city for payment. In fiscal year 2007-2008 a total of 111 unduplicated cases were assisted with 202 people benefiting from the assistance. A total of \$50,131.85 was paid out in general assistance for these families. The breakdown of assistance was:

Type of Assistance	# of Families	# Vouchers	Total
Rent/mortgage	49	162	\$18,101.66
Electricity	42	162	\$ 4,570.16
Personal/household need; Diapers, Food	83	338	\$ 4,816.35
Bus Ticket	5	5	\$ 209.19
Cremation	2	2	\$ 1,500.00
Oil, Kerosene	9	10	\$ 2,354.90
Phone for Medical Reasons	1	2	\$ 35.86
Medication	24	106	\$14,076.42
Shelter due to Homelessness	8	14	\$ 854.00
Property tax to prevent tax deed	1	1	\$ 3,613.31
Totals	224	802	\$50,131.85

If clients are physically and psychologically able to work they will be scheduled to work on the work program in exchange for the assistance they were issued. They are also required to do a weekly job search. A total of 2,279.35 hours of assistance were worked off on the work program at a reimbursement rate of \$7.00 per hour for every hour worked for a total of \$15,955.45. Another \$21,631.03 was reimbursed through various cash sources (\$1,130.68 from client reimbursement, \$959.78 through Medicaid Reimbursement, \$17,600.09 through the State of New Hampshire under RSA 165:20C or through the State Finance office for those who were accepted on SSI and who had signed an Interim Assistance form.) If someone owns their own property and receives assistance, a lien is placed on the property until such time as the amount of assistance is repaid, collecting interest at 6% after one year.

Those who receive assistance are required by the Administrator to follow through with application to any program that may provide either long term assistance or temporary relief. If a recipient fails to follow through with a requirement such as work program hours, job search or applying for assistance elsewhere, a sanction can be issued. A sanction prevents the recipient from receiving or even applying for assistance until they have complied with the requirements.

If someone requests assistance with rent and the landlord owes any back taxes, sewer or water bills to the city the Welfare Department is allowed to apply the rent to those back bills instead of issuing a check to the landlord (RSA 165:4-a). In FY 2007-2008 \$2,740.32 was paid to the city on these back bills owed rather than being paid directly to the landlord. In addition to the 111 unduplicated cases assisted another 139

unduplicated cases were spoken with; of these 32 were interviewed but not assisted for various reasons and the other 55 failed to return for the appointment that would have determined whether or not they qualified for assistance. The term unduplicated is used because many people are assisted more than once or come in to ask about assistance more than once in a fiscal year. These individuals are counted only once in the figures to give a more accurate picture of those assisted.

The Welfare Department works closely with Federal, State and non-profit agencies to help serve those in need in our community and we thank all of those people whose efforts are united with ours to serve that need. The following are some of the resources that exist for those in need in our community or the Welfare Department can be contacted at 752-2120 Monday-Friday 8:30a.m.-12noon, 1:00p.m.-4:00 p.m. for referrals to resources:

Assistance Resources

Agency	Address	Telephone	Hours	Services
CAP Fuel Assistance	55 Maynesboro Street	752-3248	8-12; 1-4	Assistance with fuel, weatherization and electric discount program. Food pantry is also available
NH Division of Adult & Elderly Services	231 Main Street	752-7800	8-3:00	For HHS clientele; possible source of one time oil assistance
NH Division of Family Assistance	231 Main Street	752-7800	8-3:00	For FAP or TANF clientele; possible source of emergency assistance with oil, electric, back rent to prevent eviction. Source for food stamp application and Medicaid application.
www.citizensenergy.com	Internet Access is available at the Berlin Public Library			Possible source for 100 gallons of oil if eligibility is met.
City Welfare – Berlin	168 Main Street	752-2120	8-12; 1-4	Assistance with basic needs such as heat, electricity.
WIC	54 Willow Street	752-4678		Help with formula or other nutritious food while pregnant, post partum and until age 5
Coos County Family Health	133 Pleasant Street	752-2040		Medication bridges available for help with free or reduced cost medications for those with no insurance or low income. By appt.
Salvation Army	15 Cole Street	752-1644		Food pantry and Friendly Kitchen; winter coat program; Christmas Program for children, thrift store
Ecumenical Food Pantry	612 Hillsboro Street	752-4844	W&F 2:30-4	
Service Link		1-866-634-9412		Referrals for elderly & disabled clientele to other agencies for possible assistance.