

City of Stamford Social Services

FY 2019-2020 BOR Fiscal Committee Budget Presentation





Introduction

Mission: To provide Stamford's citizens with information about, and to assist their access to programs and/or resources that meet their basic human needs and protect their basic human and legal rights.

Programs	Services Provided
Critical & Mandated	
Evictions and Eviction Storage	Work with: constables; sheriffs; personnel of our social service agency partners (Silver Source, Inspirica, Person to Person, Family Centers, etc.); affected families and individuals in processing between 150 and 175 evictions each year, including, where necessary, storing possessions as required pursuant to C.G.S. § 47a-42. (Mandated Services Coordinator responsibility)



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Critical & Mandated	
Relocation Act Compliance	<p>As per requirements set forth at C.G.S. § 8- 266 et seq., provide relocation benefits to 30-35 households/yr. Provide 1:1 individualized assistance to these, as well as to other households who are not eligible for mandated benefits. Provide information and assistance, as needed, to property owners in connection with their responsibilities under Connecticut’s relocation statute. (Mandated Services Coordinator responsibility)</p>
Rent Rebate	<p>As per requirements set forth at C.G.S. § 12–170, process over 1650 Rent Rebate applications each year. These require 1:1 staff assistance. (Outreach Coordinator responsibility/mandated function)</p>
Fair Rent	<p>Receive, investigate and conciliate complaints as per C.G.S. § 7-148 and City of Stamford Code § 6-11. Conciliation resolves disputes prior to complaints being filed in many instances and prior to the administrative hearing stage in most. (Social Services Director responsibility)</p>



Programs	Services Provided
Critical & Mandated	
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	<p>Coordinate Stamford's ADA responsibilities as per Title II of the ADA; 28 C.F.R. pt. 35 § 35.107(a) (2005). Provide answers or direction in response to dozens of questions from, or pertaining to disability rights or available services. This year: resolved 4 employee "accommodation" requests via legally mandated "interactive process." Serve on Stamford's A4A committee. Oversight of Municipal Self Assessment and Transition Plan. Policy input. (Social Services Director responsibility)</p>
Below Market Rate Housing Program (BMR)	<p>Act as Stamford's Affordable Housing Manager (AHM) with respect to "inclusionary zoning regulations" promulgated by the City's Zoning Board "to promote the private development of housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income." Responded to 100-300 miscellaneous questions about the program; oversaw 2 BMR resales; Responsible for program oversight, efforts to ensure compliance, remedy violations, communicate with tenants, owners, zoning staff and zoning board members. (Director responsibility)</p>



Programs	Services Provided
Basic Services Quality of Life Programs	
Landlord – Tenant	<p>Responded to 500 - 600 inquiries about issues affecting: landlord tenant relationships; fair housing; affordability; summary process; public housing; senior housing; unrecovered security deposits, etc. (Shared responsibility: Social Services Director/ Mandated Services Coordinator)</p> <p>Provided guidance, advice or assistance to over 150 households in connection with prospective or existing residence in designated “affordable” housing units, including senior housing. Regularly briefed and responded to questions from landlords and tenants with respect to obligations and responsibilities under Connecticut’s landlord tenant law - C.G.S. § 47a-1 et seq. (Shared responsibility: Social Services Director / Mandated Services Coordinator)</p>
Insurance Enrollment Assistance	<p>Assisted between 1,500 and 1,600 people in completing applications for health insurance, to prevent loss of coverage and/or to appeal denials of coverage for – individuals adults, families, children, senior citizens – through Access Health Connecticut, Medicare, Medicaid or Connecticut’s HUSKY (CHIP) program. (Outreach Coordinator responsibility)</p>



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Basic Services Quality of Life Programs	
Transportation	<p>Our recent surveys indicated Stamford's low income seniors require financial assistance with transportation costs. Municipal FY 18/19 funding (a required match for state funding of Stamford's Share the Fare program) was allocated, pro rata to local non-profits to subsidize individual fares on public buses (Connecticut Transit) and paratransit (Easy Access).</p>
Work with Community Partners	<p>Stamford Community Development Program Community Social Service Agencies (Inspirica; Boys and Girls Club; Person to Person; Shelter for the Homeless; Family Centers; Building1Community; etc.) Community Care Team Charter Oak Communities Senior Housing Providers Administer Community Music Grant process Administer Neighborhood Grant process</p>



Department Management

Key Program/Department Challenges

We need to transition two employees from seasonal to permanent status. While it is tempting to deny a request for additional labor costs, having staff longevity and experience with mandated programs and services provides invaluable support to our demonstrated ability to offer high quality assistance to all comers.

Budget Scenarios

We are already at bare bones with virtually no ability to exercise further control over any budget line item. A significant budget reduction would necessitate a reduction in staff and a corresponding terminations of non-mandated functions.



This is what is coming

Major changes planned for the department

Seeking opportunities to piggy back on current programs to obtain more “bang for the buck.” For example, during rent rebate sessions we are going to seek permissions and contact information to enable senior outreach during emergencies. Although we already try to impart information about other available and income targeted resources during application assistance sessions, this year we will try to formalize and quantify those efforts. Seeking data on predicted demographics to use in planning for needs of future Stamford seniors.