

Human Services Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2023

In-person meeting at Westport Town Hall; called to order at 1:08 pm

Human Services Commission members in attendance: Abby Gordon-Tolan, Teri Klein, Yvonne Senturia, Beth Bass, Lee Bollert and Diane Johnson

Staff members: Elaine Daignault, Director of Human services; Wendy Petty, Westport Center for Senior Services Director, Kevin Godburn, Youth Services Program Director; Sibel Yorulmaz, DHS Finance Manager; Kristen Witt, Social Worker/Clinical Supervisor

Guests: Claudia Coplen, Commission on Senior Services; Harris Faulk, RTM H & HS Committee; Karen Klein, resident

Welcome & Introductions:

Elaine Daignault began meeting asking each member to introduce themselves and give a bit of background as to what brought them to the Human Services Commission.

- Elaine Daignault, a lifelong resident of Westport, has been involved with the Westport Department of Human Services for 23 + years and served as the director for 7 years. Elaine will provide an overview on the Department of Human Services; see notes below and a copy of the PowerPoint.
- Lee Bollert - a 27-year resident of Westport who is a current member of the Human Services Commission and has served on the boards of Homes with Hope, A Better Chance, Positive Directions, and is a member of the Westport Prevention Committee
- Beth Bass – a longtime Westport resident who joined the Human Services Commission approximately six years ago, has held a number of PTA positions, is a sports enthusiast and enjoys rowing.
- Yvonne Senturia – a Westport resident for 27 years who joined the Human Services Commission after the Baron's South Senior Living project was abandoned in 2015. Yvonne is a current board member for A Better Chance, Westport's League of Women Voters, the Sunrise Rotary and Under One Roof, a Norwalk organization which provides supportive services for seniors and preschool children.
- Diane Johnson – a 29-year resident of Westport and new member of the Human Services Commission. Diane is a current member of Westport's Commission on People with Disabilities and helps run Our Vision, a local Special Olympics team and a former board member for A Better Chance and Remarkable Theater, a longtime tutor in Bridgeport & former member of the Bridgeport's RYASAP Juvenile Review Board.
- Teri Klein – a long time Westport resident who is a current member of the Westport Commission for Senior Services a new member of the Westport Human Services Commission. Teri had a career working for the CT State Department of Health Services and subsequently ran the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).
- Abby Gordon-Tolan – a Westport resident for 11 years who is new member of the Human Services Commission. Abby is a current board member of A Better Chance in charge of scholar selection and a board member of the Democratic Party Women of Westport. Abby is also Co-chair of Westport's Special Ed PTA and has two sons in high school.

Elaine Daignault invited attendees to introduce themselves.

In attendance:

- Wendy Petty - Westport Center for Senior Services Director
- Karen Klein – resident and former BOE member
- Claudia Coplen – Commission on Senior Services
- Harris Falk - RTM District 1 member who sits on the RTM Health and Human Services Committee
- Kristen Witt - Westport Human Services LCSW/ Municipal Agent for Seniors

- Sibel Yorulmaz - Human Services Finance Manager
- Kevin Godburn - Youth Services Program Director

Human Services Overview - Power Point Presentation by Elaine Daignault

Discussion ensued during and after overview of Human Services organization and supports.

Elaine explained the process for individuals and families to qualify for financial assistance using the state's calculation and criteria whereby Human Services verifies income from tax returns and verifies other information. Elaine noted only Westport residents can receive financial assistance, although during the pandemic items from the food pantry were made available to anyone requesting support.

Additionally, Elaine shared it was previously determined that support services would be available to any family enrolled in Westport Public Services, therefore eligible Open Choice families and ABC students may also receive support services and financial assistance if eligible.

Diane Johnson noted the Human Services financial criteria process assists many organizations in town by determining eligibility for scholarships. Organizations petitioned for scholarship simply refer families to the Dept of Human Services to determine eligibility and in many cases, other support services are made available to the families, often support which the families did not realize was available.

Kevin Godburn explained Westport's Diversion program to support truancy and discipline issues. The diversion program requires a lot of time and effort, but Human Services receives no state funding for this work. Kevin shared that at-risk children fall into three categories: Low risk students are referred to Westport's Juvenile Review Board (JRB) for diversion program services, Mid-risk students are assigned a probation officer, and High risk students are referred to the juvenile court system.

Westport's JRB diversion program began in 2016 and at that time, referred students to the Norwalk JRB until 2018 when Westport created its own JRB program.

Next Steps for Human Services Commission

Discussion ensued as to ideas for the scope of this commission. Acknowledged there are many issues facing the town currently, which affect underserved population, including increasing affordable housing, transportation challenges, teen issues, and minimizing barriers for disabled to name a few issues. Agreed the commission wants to respond and lend support to community issues as they arise, so members are open to meeting whenever necessary.

Lee Bollert noted the town takes great pride in the breadth of support provided by Human Services yet the town doesn't fund the operations significantly and the department relies on financial donations and fundraising efforts. Noted that providing support continues to be political and this is a challenge we could help improve. Lee noted "Many people don't want to fund support until they need it".

Yvonne suggested we poll members to set a good time to meet. Teri suggested we set quarterly meetings with additional meetings scheduled, as needed. Lee suggests we each set a monthly meeting in our calendars, so we can be available more often when issues arise to which we want to lend support.

Elaine reminded there is a Town tutorial offered to all employees and members of commissions on Freedom of Information (FOI) training next Thursday March 30th during the day and in the evening. Members should have received an email with details.

Meeting adjourned at 2:11

The mission of Westport's Department of Human Services is to promote independence, personal development, and an enhanced quality of life that values the diversity of all Westport residents ---

All ages

All stages

All socio-economic statuses



Department of Human Services



Department of Human Services

Serving individuals of ALL ages

ADVOCACY, INFORMATION, APPLICATION ASSISTANCE, PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

Social Services

- ✓ Short-Term Counseling
- ✓ Financial Assistance
- ✓ Food & Housing Insecurity
- ✓ Needs Assessments
- ✓ Family Support Programs
- ✓ Municipal Agents for People with Disabilities
- ✓ Veteran's Services Contact
- ✓ Application assistance for State and Federal programs
- ✓ Emergency Management

Youth Services

- ✓ Toquet Hall Teen Center
- ✓ Student Outreach Counselor Program
- ✓ Westport Together Alliance
- ✓ Positive Youth Development
 - ✓ Mentor Programs
 - ✓ Community Service & Leadership
 - ✓ Juvenile Justice – Westport JRB
 - ✓ Substance Abuse Prevention and Education

Senior Services

- ✓ Westport Center for Senior Activities (WCSA)
- ✓ Senior Nutrition Program
- ✓ Municipal Agent for the Elderly – Advocate for seniors
- ✓ Tax & Rent Relief Programs for Seniors & People with Disabilities



WESTPORT™

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Social Services – Town Hall (Room 200)

Working with people

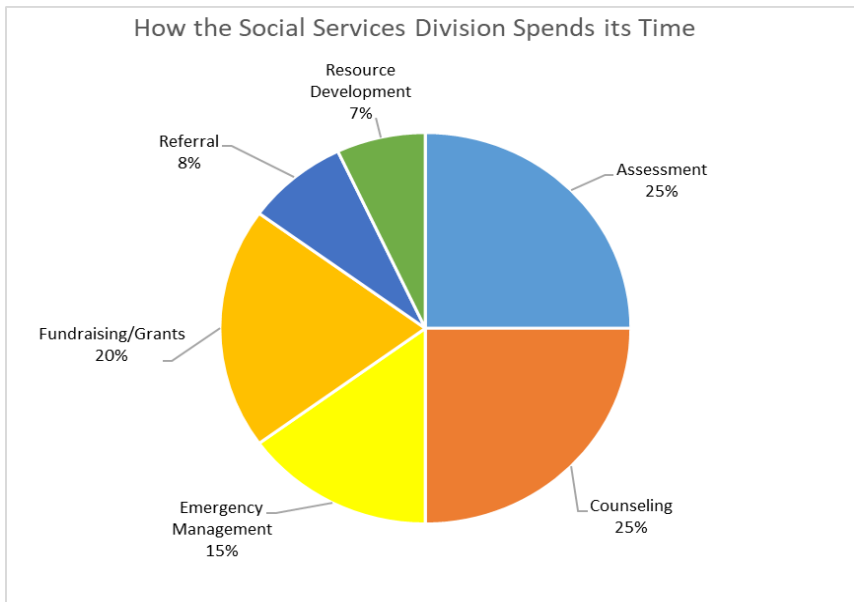
- Office & home visits
- Community Outreach
- Resource Development & Collaboration
- Fundraising/Financial Assistance
- Education, prevention & intervention
- Municipal Agent for People with Disabilities
- Family Programs



Social Services – Town Hall (Room 200)



Building a supportive network of public & private resources to promote Health, Safety, & Independence for all individuals.

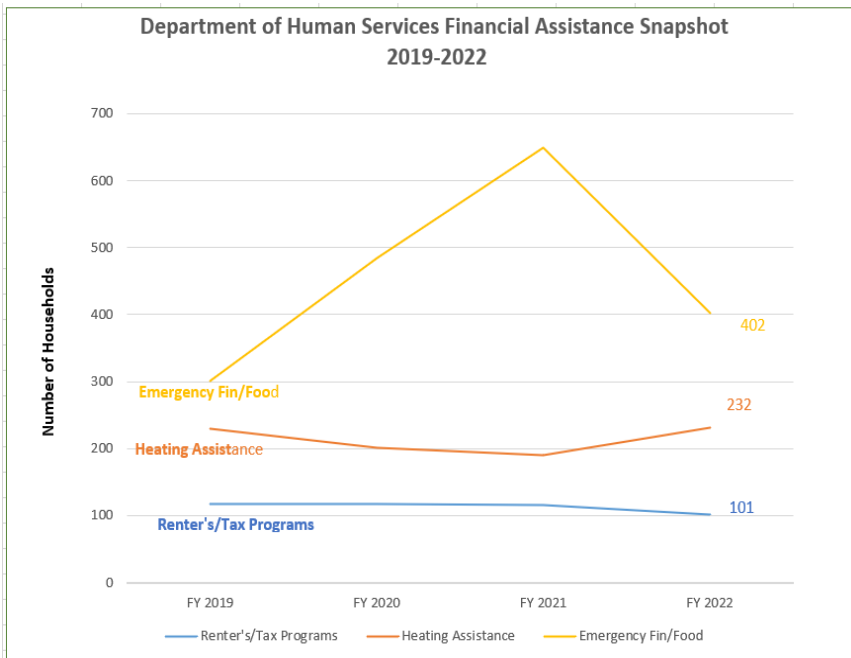




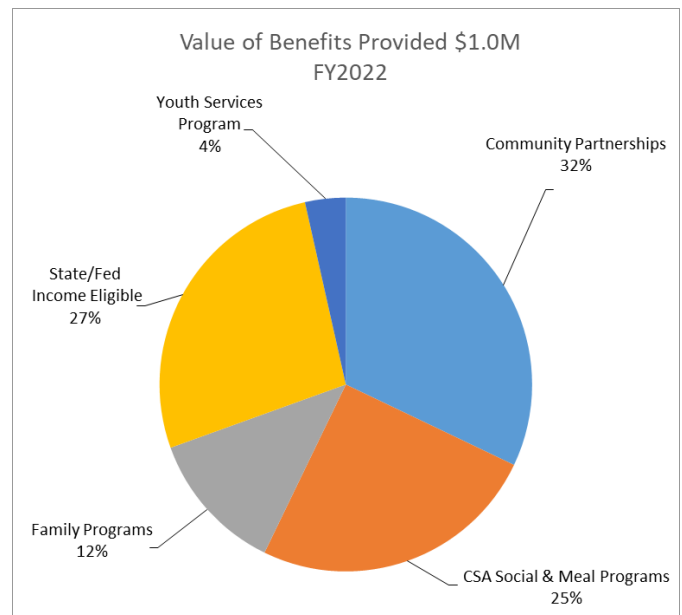
WESTPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Social Services Financial Assistance



3/28/2023



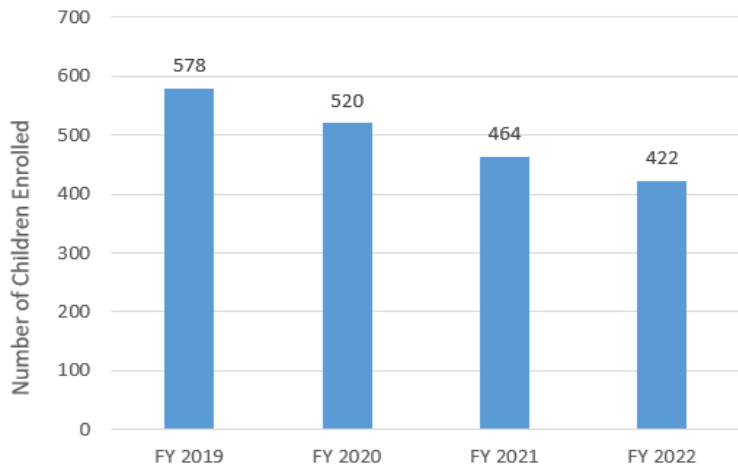


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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Social Services Family Program Assistance and Client Contacts:

Family Program Assistance



Client Contacts



3/28/2023



Financial Assistance Income Eligibility Guidelines FY 22-23

Fuel assistance Income Guidelines 2022-2023	
CEAP- under 60 (150% FPL)	
Family size	Annual Income
1	\$ 20,385
2	\$ 27,465
3	\$ 34,545
4	\$ 41,625
5	\$ 48,705
6	\$ 55,785
7	\$ 62,865
8	\$ 69,945

CEAP-60+/Disabled(200% FPL)	
1	\$ 27,180
2	\$ 36,620
3	\$ 46,060
4	\$ 55,500
5	\$ 64,940
6	\$ 74,380
7	\$ 83,820
8	\$ 93,260

CHAP (60% SMI)	
1	\$ 39,761
2	\$ 51,996
3	\$ 64,230
4	\$ 76,465
5	\$ 88,699
6	\$ 100,933
7	\$ 103,227
8	\$ 105,521

WESTPORT WARM UP	
1	\$ 65,350
2	\$ 74,686
3	\$ 84,021
4	\$ 93,357
5	\$ 102,693
6	\$ 112,028
7	\$ 121,364
8	\$ 130,700

Acronyms:

CEAP – CT Energy Assistance Program

CHAP – Community Housing Assistance Program

FPL – Federal Poverty Level

SMI – State Median Income

Westport Warm Up – Area Median Income

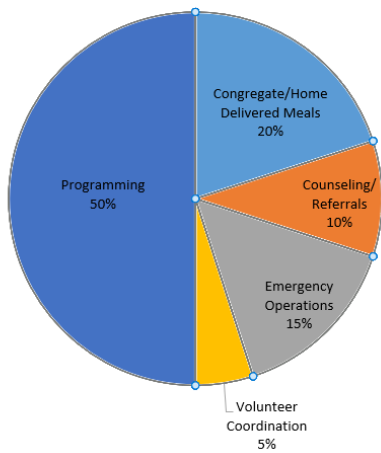


Senior Services

WESTPORT CENTER FOR SENIOR ACTIVITIES

--Serving seniors ages 60 through 101--

How the Senior Services Division Spends its Time



- Educational, Cultural, Social, Recreational, Nutrition, Health & Wellness Programs
- Home Delivered Meals
- Congregate Lunch Program

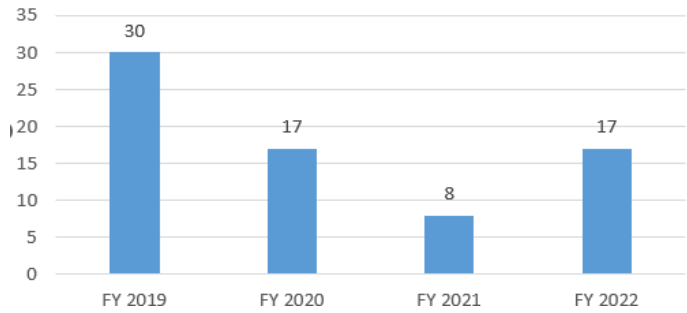


Westport Center for Senior Activities

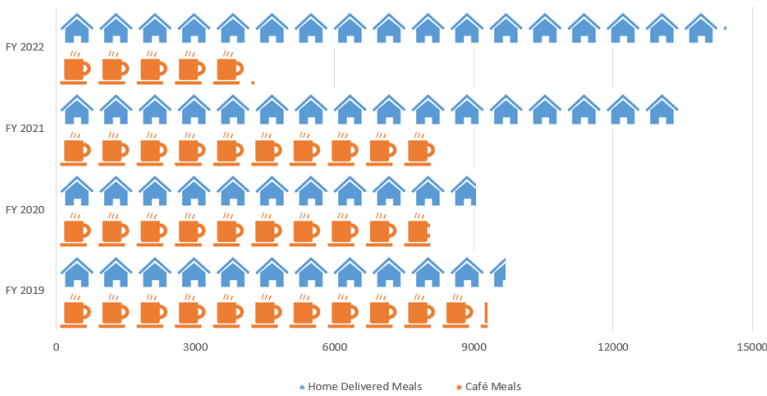


(WCSA)

Average Number of Live Classes per Day



Senior Nutrition Program Meals Served



FY2022: HDM enrollments included 87 clients (all time high). Please note the Cafe was closed for several months in the fiscal period of 21-22.

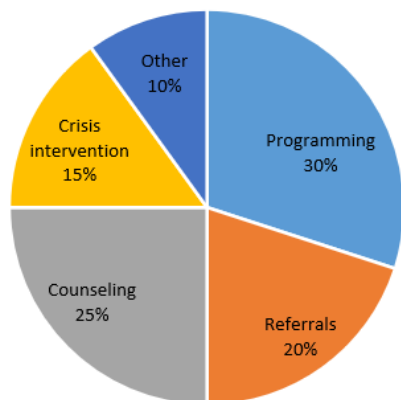




WESTPORT
Together
For Youth & Families

Youth Services - YSB

How the Youth Services Division Spends its Time



TOQUET HALL TEEN CENTER

- Social, Recreational, Educational, Cultural, Health & Wellness Programs
- Leadership Development

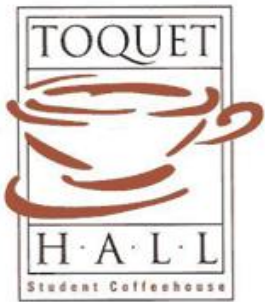
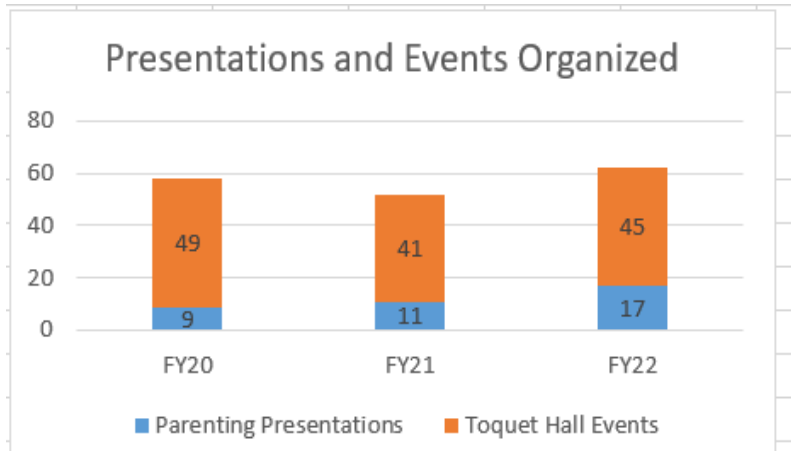
POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Westport Together Community Alliance
- Student Outreach Counselor Program
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Education, Prevention and Intervention Services
- Westport Juvenile Review Board/Truancy
- Community Service Corps
- Mentor Program
- Community Resource Directory

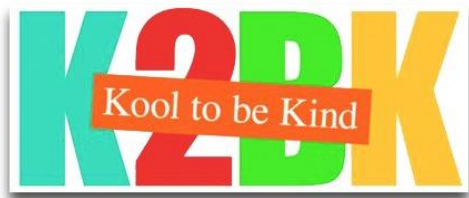
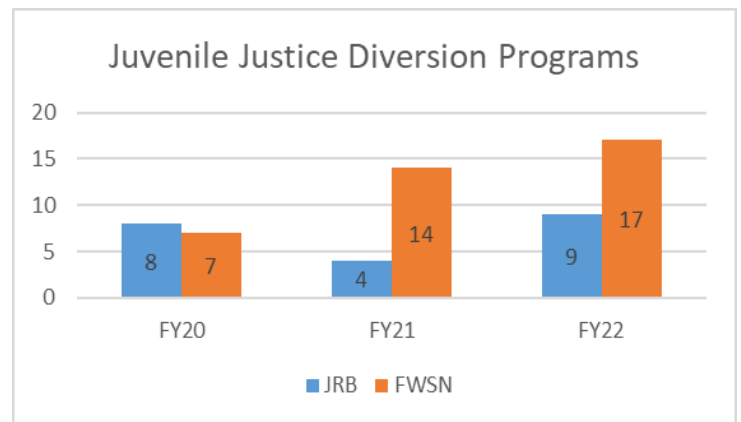




WESTPORT
Together
For Youth & Families



3/28/2023



Toquet Hall

Toquet Hall is Westport's Teen Center. Was established in 1998, and still thriving; providing the youth of Westport a safe place to hangout and express themselves.

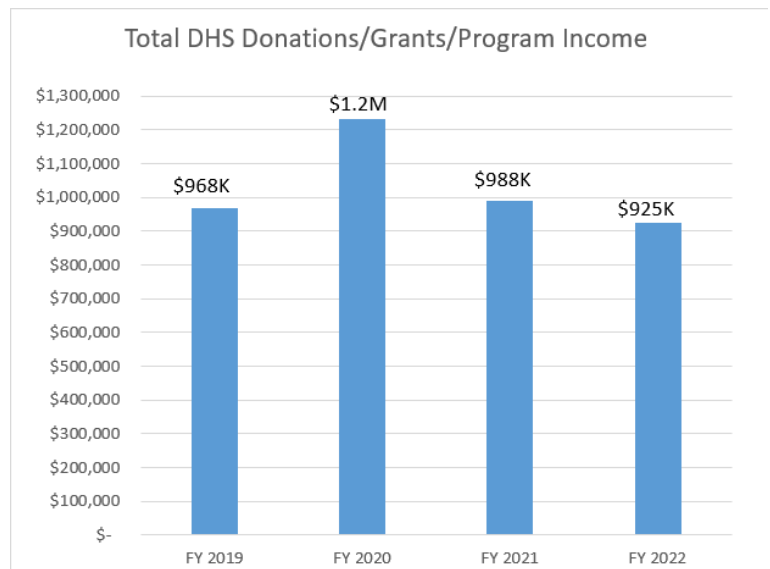
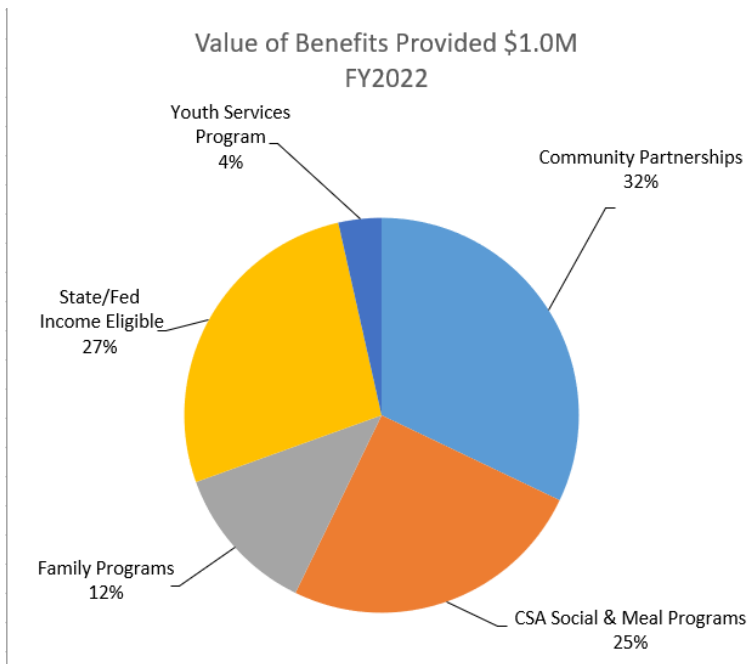
Follow us @toquethall on Instagram, OR visit toquethall.org for updates on events.

Contact: 203-341-1155



HUMAN SERVICES

Donations, Grants, Gifts in Kind





WESTPORT™

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FY22/23 Goals:

Enhanced Assessment, Data Collection & Program Administration
Refined Emergency Management Protocols
New initiatives: WCPD
 Employment is for Everyone
 CLUB203
Small Cities Grants
Funded Affordable Housing Administrator
Westport Prevention Coalition
 QPR & Narcan Training
ARPA Funds
Post-COVID rebound

FY24 Goals:

Enhance routine & emergency operations
Pursue funding opportunities to meet increased demand for short-term counseling, financial assistance, food and housing resources
 Small Cities
 SWCAA
Staff Development
Community Collaboration
 Westport Together
Advocate and Participate in enhanced services – transportation, housing, state & federal programs, mental health, etc



WESTPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FY2024 BUDGET			
	2023 Revised Budget	Dollar change	Proposed FY2024
YOUTH Services	358,815	21,305	380,120
SOCIAL Services	532,821	28,960	561,781
SENIOR Services	609,922	11,158	621,080
	1,501,559	61,423	1,562,982

3/28/2023

DHS WESTPORT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Registries for Vulnerable Residents
Lead Shelter Operations
Crisis Counseling and Support



Department of Human Services
Town of Westport

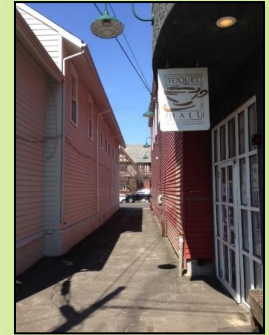
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WCSA
21 Imperial
Avenue
203-341-5099



Social
Services/Room 200
110 Myrtle Avenue
203-341-1050



Toquet Hall
58 Post Road
East
203-341-1155

PROUD ALLIANCE MEMBER OF





Four DHS Commissions:

Westport Youth Commission
Human Services Commission
Commission for Senior Services
Commission on People with Disabilities

Selectman-appointed Commissions serve as community advocates: helping to foster and promote community dialogue, enhance understanding of social issues, and provide supportive guidance to the department.

3/28/2023





Department of Human Services:

Social Services:



Elaine Daignault, MA, NCC
Director



Sibel Yorulmaz,
Finance Manager



Kristen Witt, LCSW
*Social Worker,
Municipal Agent for
the Elderly &
Veterans*



Kaila Morgan, MSW
Social Worker



Annette D'Augelli,
*Case Manager & Family
Programs*



**Margaret
Pinheiro**
Admin. Assistant

Westport Center for Senior Activities:



Wendy Petty,
Director, WCSA



**Holly Betts, MPS,
RD**
*Assist. Director,
WCSA*



Jason Wilson,
*Program Specialist,
WCSA*



Paulina Pryzbyz,
*DTR
Nutrition Program,
WCSA*



Denise Puskas
Admin. Assistant, WCSA



Felicia Smith,
Admin. Assistant, WCSA

Youth Services/Toquet Hall:



**Kevin
Godburn, YS**
Program Director



Kelsey Dynia,
*YS Program
Assistant*

Department of Human Services FY 2022-23

