

To: Research Intern  
From: Town Manager  
Date: 10/18/17  
RE: Assisting the Poor

The town has struggled this year to assist families that are unable to pay for food, housing, heating fuel, transportation and other household expenses. The select board is looking to us to recommend strategies for assisting families and individuals while not bankrupting the town or creating other unintended problems.

Please look at the most recent census data and help us understand what we can about the demographic patterns of poverty. These are some questions worth pursuing.

Please limit your report to no more than two pages in memorandum format.

#### Questions

- 1) How many poor individuals, households and/or families live in our town?
- 2) What proportion of the population is poor?
- 3) What kinds of households are more likely to be poor?
  - a) Are they single parent, female headed?
  - b) Are there children or young children?
  - c) Are there elderly households among the poor?
- 4) Can we make any determination about housing, transportation or access to healthy, affordable food for these families living in poverty from the data?
- 5) Based on what you have learned about poverty in our town, what programs might the town consider adopting to provide assistance?

#### Information Sources

- 1) Secondary Sources:
  - a) Quick link to recent census data: [www.hcpcme.org/pubadmin/census.html](http://www.hcpcme.org/pubadmin/census.html)
  - b) More detailed census inquiries: [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)
  - c) Margaret Chase Smith Study on Poverty in Maine ([2010 report](#) pages 38-39) <https://mcspolicycenter.umaine.edu/research-programs-public-service-2/poverty-in-maine>
- 2) Primary sources - data collection:
  - a) Contact the town office staff for their input
  - b) Programs to assist people include:
    - i) Washington Hancock Community Agency ([www.whcacap.org](http://www.whcacap.org))
    - ii) Maine Department of Health and Human Services [www.maine.gov/dhhs](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs)
    - iii) Maine State Housing Authority [www.mainehousing.org](http://www.mainehousing.org)

Thank you!