

## Mistretta, Susan

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**From:** Betsey Andrews Parker <bandrewsparker@straftfordcap.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 17, 2020 6:22 PM  
**To:** City Council - All  
**Cc:** Sarah Varney  
**Subject:** Help for Dover Residents

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Dear Dover City Council,

I know this time of year is very busy for you but I wanted to make sure you were aware of several programs available at Community Action Partnership of Strafford County (CAPSC) that may be helpful to your constituents, especially as the weather gets colder and days shorter.

### **HOUSING RELIEF:**

As you know, Governor Sununu's office created the NH Housing Relief Program which opened on July 1<sup>st</sup> to assist any New Hampshire resident having trouble paying their rent, mortgage or other housing expenses, due to COVID-19. This program is open to ALL NH residents with no income limitations. Residents can access the application at [www.capnh.org](http://www.capnh.org), find CAPSC's link and apply. If someone does not have access to the web (the application also works on smart phones and tablets), they can request a paper application or an application over the phone by contacting our COVID Response Team at [COVID19@straftfordcap.org](mailto:COVID19@straftfordcap.org) or (603) 435-2448.

Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, our agency has helped over 130 households in Strafford County with over \$413,000 in housing assistance. We strongly encourage anyone with a COVID-related income loss who is at risk of housing instability, to contact our office before it is too late.

### **FUEL ASSISTANCE:**

Our Fuel Assistance program is open, but our process looks a little different this year due to COVID. We will now be moving most of our program applications from paper to electronic forms using the DocuSign program. The early application window is NOW OPEN for people over 60, those with children under six, or those who are disabled.

To access our online forms, clients take the following steps:

- Visit our website at [www.straffordcap.org](http://www.straffordcap.org).
- On the home page, click on the link for fuel assistance to request an application.
- Once a request is received, clients will be sent a secure link with their application and document upload.

This process allows clients and staff to enroll participants while limiting exposure to COVID-19 for high risk groups. Clients may still schedule an appointment which we will conduct on the phone, via Zoom or Google Teams. For fuel emergencies, CAPSC will schedule an in-person appointment, with PPE for both clients and staff to wear. Please contact Fuel & Electric Assistance Manager, Heidi Clough at [hclough@straftfordcap.org](mailto:hclough@straftfordcap.org) or 435-2500 ext. 8152 with any questions.

### **NUTRITION:**

CAPSC's nutrition program was incredibly busy beginning in March as schools closed and the Governor's stay-at-home order was implemented. With the switch to remote learning, CAPSC partnered with five school districts to use our Summer Meals program model to ensure meals continued to be delivered to families with

children learning remotely. Our program began seven weeks earlier than usual and ended two weeks later with the change in district schedules this summer. Now that school is back in session, CAPSC will be augmenting the school lunch programs in the county with a dinner and snack program starting October 5<sup>th</sup> at Amazon Park (Rochester), First Church Congregational (Rochester) and North Dover/Strafford Farms parking lot. We are finalizing the menu and times but these will be available in the late afternoon/early evening for families to pick up. We are working on additional sites in other communities but these are the state approved sites at this time.

*Please note: this program is only available until December 31<sup>st</sup> or when the money runs out, whichever one comes sooner. We hope to have this program in place until December but we have been advised by the NH Department of Education that we must end when the program funding is gone.*

### **SENIOR TRANSPORTATION:**

The suspension of our senior shopping bus and pivot to emergency deliveries was one of the hardest decisions we had to make. For many, the bus was not only the way to purchase food and other necessities, but it is what helped them remain independent and aging in place, as well as a social time for seniors that would have otherwise been alone all day. We are happy to announce that we will be resuming our senior transportation services in October, in a brand new bus we received, thanks to NH DOT. Our bus puts on over 10,000 miles a year with riders from all over the area. We will be revising our bus routes to ensure we have the best coverage as well as implementing strict hand sanitizing and mask requirements for riders and drivers. CAPSC is also working with COAST to clean and sterilize the bus for rider safety.

We continue to offer Weatherization, Housing Support, Head Start, Home Visiting, two Food Pantries and Homeless Outreach services, in addition to the programs outlined above. We know residents who were able to get by over the summer are now impacted by the challenges of remote learning and/or continued loss of income due to COVID. We do not want these residents to be left in the cold. If any of your constituents has a concern, chances are we have a program that can help or we can connect them with the right person in a partner agency or municipality.

I deeply appreciate your support of Community Action, our team, our programs and the people we serve. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the programs and the impact we make in Strafford County.

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