

N O R T H A M P T O N
Senior Services

67 Conz Street
Northampton, MA 01060
Director: Marie Westburg
Assistant Director:



Sept 19th, 2018

Hello City Council Members,

I respectfully request that \$3600 from the Gift Fund be allocated for a Financial Aid Fund at the Senior Center. This fund will help us to ensure that participants who currently are unable to attend fee based programs have the option to do so. As a starting point the qualifying criteria will mirror income guidelines for SNAP.

Applicants who qualify will be able to use this funding for health and wellness programs such as a fitness center membership, fitness classes, cooking classes, the Red Bag Senior Farm Share, and other similar programs. Additionally, those seniors who meet the income guidelines and are homebound and isolated, may also apply for funding to participate in our new local trips program. This program prioritizes non-driving seniors in need of socialization in excursions with peers for food and activities in the valley.

Financial aid awards will be distributed through credit towards program fees and will not be carried over month to month or year to year. Applicants will be required to reapply annually. Applicants will be asked on the application if they would like to be screened, and assisted in applying for other community, state and federal income based programs, but this will not be required. Our hope is that we will connect low income patrons with more services while also making our current programs and services more accessible.

With the \$3600 we will begin by offering 20 people with up to \$15 a month to use towards designated programs. A total maximum of \$180 per year, per applicant.

As the financial aid fund grows, through fundraising efforts and grants, we hope to expand the kinds of programming for which these funds can be used, as well as offer a sliding scale for those who are on fixed incomes that may be just over the SNAP income guidelines.

Thank you for your consideration and support in our efforts to serve the seniors of Northampton!

Sincerely,

Marie Westburg