

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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**Governor announces new program to help low-income Ward County homeowners replace flood-damaged furnaces**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor Jack Dalrymple announced a new disaster recovery program to replace flood-damaged furnaces of qualifying low-income Ward County homeowners. The effort involves the N.D. Department of Human Services, the Community Action Partnership of Minot, and Ward County Social Services.

“I have directed our Department of Human Services to commit up to \$5.6 million in federal funding to help meet the extraordinary needs in Ward County,” Dalrymple said. “Flood repair costs are a burden, especially for low-income residents and this program can provide some additional help.”

The department, a member of the N.D. Recovery Taskforce, is contracting with the Minot Region Community Action Partnership to manage the furnace installation work in qualifying households. To participate, Ward county homeowners must meet income and asset criteria. Their damaged home also has to be gutted, sanitized, and winterized or insulated to retain the heat.

“Our goal is to save basements by installing 90 percent efficient forced air furnaces to keep foundations heated over the winter,” said Community Action Executive Director Willy Soderholm.

**Who qualifies?**

“In general to qualify for the state Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a household can earn up to 60 percent of the state median income, which is about \$37,385 per year for a family of three,” said Carol Cartledge, director of Economic Assistance Policy for the N.D. Department of Human Services.

A chart listing the program’s qualifying income levels is on the department’s Web site at [www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/liheap-income-eligibility-limits.pdf](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/liheap-income-eligibility-limits.pdf).

Cartledge said people should apply at the Ward County Social Service office, 400 22nd Ave. N.W. in Minot during regular business hours. The LIHEAP application is also available online at [www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00529.pdf](http://www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00529.pdf) and can be completed and returned to the county office. The deadline to apply for heating assistance is May 31, 2012.

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**Furnace replacement process**

Soderholm stressed that Community Action Agency staff will meet with affected qualifying homeowners to determine whether their property is suitable.

“We have a checklist of tasks that homeowners need to complete first. For example, a home must be gutted and sanitized. It will also have to be winterized,” he said. “The house also has to have power where the furnace will be installed, and the gas meter must have been replaced.”

He said that if only the basement is to be heated, the floor over the basement needs to be insulated. If someone is going to work on their home during the winter months, the walls and attic would have to be insulated too.

Soderholm and Cartledge said the program may also be able to help supply some insulation materials if needed.

Program funds are available through the regular LIHEAP grant award and are typically used for weatherization. Dalrymple stressed that there will be no impact on the department’s ability to meet other regular heating assistance needs in the state.

The partnering agencies are unsure how many households may qualify for the furnace replacement help. However, last heating season 559 homeowners in Ward County qualified for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

The Department of Human Services will monitor the program with partnering organizations, and resources permitting, may return to participating homes and help with the financial cost of duct work as home repairs progress.

For information contact the department’s Economic Assistance Policy Division at 1-800-755-2716, or ND Relay TTY (for people with hearing impairments) 1-800-366-6888.

**Other Help Provided by Human Services**

The N.D. Department of Human Services has provided other support to flood affected residents. The agency issued nearly \$500,000 in Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to Ward County residents in July and is currently funding crisis outreach and support services that have served over 13,000 North Dakotans across the state to date. In addition, department employees at several of its regional human services centers have assisted clients with disabilities with evacuation, medication, and other needs and provided emotional support and local and state resource information to state residents who sought help at Disaster Recovery Centers and shelters this past year.

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