

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 E Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505-0250

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Reminder: Disaster furnace replacement program is still available for low-income Ward County homeowners

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services is reminding qualifying low-income Ward County homeowners that help is still available to replace flood-damaged furnaces and insulation through a disaster recovery program. The program began in November 2011 and involves the Community Action Partnership – Minot Region, Ward County Social Services, and the department.

“It can be difficult to gauge a community’s recovery needs following a disaster,” said Carol Cartledge, director of Economic Assistance Policy for the North Dakota Department of Human Services. “We created this program to help qualifying low-income homeowners, and there are resources still available to help.”

Seventeen low-income households who were affected by flooding have received energy efficient forced air furnaces and insulation. The department committed funding for the disaster recovery program from its regular federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

To qualify for the disaster furnace replacement program, a Ward County homeowner must first 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.

A chart listing qualifying income levels is on the department’s website at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/liheap-income-eligibility-limits.pdf.

The department is contracting with the Community Action Partnership – Minot Region to manage the furnace installation work. Damaged homes need to have electricity, a new gas meter, and be gutted and sanitized before installation can begin.

“To date, this program has mainly helped seniors who have strong roots and a commitment to rebuilding in the Minot area,” said Community Action Executive Director Willy Soderholm. “Our focus will remain on helping qualifying Ward County homeowners who plan on moving back into their homes.”

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This past year, people applying for LIHEAP or Community Action's weatherization services received information about the disaster furnace replacement program. In addition, Community Action officials mailed program information directly to flood-impacted homeowners who had previously participated in the programs. Project Renew outreach workers also received information to make referrals to the program.

People can still 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 and can be completed and returned to the county office.

Officials are unsure of how many additional households may choose to participate in the furnace replacement program. As of May 2012, 654 Ward County households qualified for LIHEAP, which is about a 40 percent decrease in program participation from the 2011 heating season.

For information contact the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Economic Assistance Policy Division at 1-800-755-2716 or ND Relay TTY 1-800-366-6888.

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