

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**

## **600 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 13, 2012**

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### **Cooling Assistance is Available to Low-Income Individuals with Medical Needs**

BISMARCK, ND – Extremely hot temperatures can be life threatening to individuals with medical conditions. The N.D. Department of Human Services and the N.D. Department of Commerce's Division of Community Services remind North Dakotans that emergency cooling assistance is available for low-income individuals with certain medical conditions who qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). People should contact their county social service office.

"Record-breaking temperatures coupled with high humidity can be life threatening to people with certain medical conditions," said Carol Cartledge, Economic Assistance Policy Division director. "North Dakota has implemented an emergency cooling assistance program for the past five years to help prevent heat-related illnesses in vulnerable low-income individuals."

The Department of Human Services has set aside \$57,000 in federal LIHEAP funds for the emergency cooling assistance program and has contracted with the Commerce Department. Funds can be used to pay Community Action agencies to install a window air conditioner, repair air conditioning units, or to purchase oscillating or window fans for qualifying households.

People who qualified for LIHEAP this past heating season need a signed statement from a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or public health nurse verifying their medical condition and the need for a cooled living space to qualify for the emergency cooling assistance. They must provide that information to one of the eight Community Action agencies located in the state's largest cities. Contact information is online at [www.capnd.org/contact/](http://www.capnd.org/contact/).

People who are not currently LIHEAP clients may also qualify if they have a documented medical need and meet financial criteria. To apply, individuals should first contact their county social service office to see if they meet financial guidelines. Contact information is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/). If they do qualify, they will be referred to a Community Action agency in their region.

A three-person household earning up to \$37,385 per year may qualify if their assets meet program limits. Information on qualifying income limits is online 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).

The two North Dakota agencies have historically worked together in partnership with county social service offices and Community Action agencies to address the heating and cooling needs of low-income individuals. The most recent collaboration includes a disaster furnace replacement program for low-income Ward County homeowners affected by last summer's flooding.

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that primarily helps qualifying households pay for heating needs. This past heating season, the program served nearly 16,000 households in the state.

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