

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

BISMARCK, N.D. – With temperatures on the rise, the N.D. Department of Human Services and the N.D. Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Service remind North Dakotans that emergency cooling assistance is available for individuals with certain medical conditions who qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

“Summertime brings hot temperatures and high humidity and these conditions can create a life threatening situation for some people with certain medical conditions,” said Carol Cartledge, Economic Assistance Policy Division director. “North Dakota’s cooling assistance program can help prevent heat-related illnesses for qualifying individuals.”

Cartledge said program funds can be used to purchase and install an air conditioning unit, repair an air conditioning unit, or to purchase oscillating or window fans for qualifying households. Work must be completed by a Community Action agency located in the state’s eight largest cities.

Individuals should contact their county social service office to apply for the program. Contact information is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/).

To qualify, current energy assistance clients 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. They must provide that information to the county social service office.

People who are not currently energy assistance program clients may also qualify if they have a documented medical need and meet financial criteria. A three-person household earning up to \$41,633 per year may qualify if their assets meet program limits. For information on qualifying incomes, visit [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html).

The two North Dakota state agencies have historically worked together in partnership with county social service offices to address the heating and cooling needs of low-income individuals.

LIHEAP is a federally-funded program that primarily helps qualifying households pay for heating needs. This past heating season, the program served around 13,500 households in the state. Last summer, 137 households participated in the cooling assistance program.

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