

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck N.D. 58505**

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Contacts: LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892 or Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933

## **Heating Assistance is Available for Qualifying Low-Income North Dakotans**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The recent cold temperatures may have left some low-income North Dakotans with home heating costs that are higher than their budget can handle. The North Dakota Department of Human Services reminds low-income individuals and families and seniors on limited fixed incomes that help is available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

The federally-funded program helps qualifying households pay a portion of their home heating costs, whether its natural gas, electricity, propane, coal, fuel oil, wood or kerosene.

The program also focuses on improving home heating efficiency and reducing energy use by offering furnace and chimney inspections and cleanings, furnace repair and replacement, and weatherization services like home insulation, weather stripping around doors and windows, and other energy-saving improvements to help lower heating costs.

Assistance is based on the number of people living in the home and their combined income, assets, type of fuel, and other factors to ensure help goes to those most in need. To qualify, a household can earn up to 60 percent of the state median income, which equals about \$44,665 (adjusted gross income) per year for a family of three.

Individuals can apply online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html) or by completing an online application at [www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00529.pdf](http://www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn00529.pdf) and returning it to their county social services office along with documentation that verifies household income and assets. Anyone who needs help completing and submitting an application can contact Community Options at 800-823-2417 ext. 158. The deadline to apply for heating assistance is May 31, 2017.

Both homeowners and renters living in a permanent housing structure can apply for LIHEAP and weatherization services.

Last year, the program paid an average of \$651 in heating energy costs for 12,265 North Dakota households. The program directly pays fuel vendors, such as utility and fuel oil companies, on behalf of qualifying households. Nearly two-thirds of the participating households include people who are elderly, have disabilities, or include children age five and younger.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services contracts with the North Dakota Department of Commerce for weatherization services. The direct work is often carried out by Community Action agencies in the state.

For more information on LIHEAP, visit [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html).

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