

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Reminder: Cooling assistance is now available for low-income seniors and individuals with medical needs

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services and the North Dakota Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Service would like to remind North Dakotans that cooling assistance is available for seniors and people with certain medical conditions who qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

“The summer months can bring extreme heat and humidity that can create challenges for seniors and people with health issues,” said Carol Cartledge, director of the Department of Human Services’ Economic Assistance Division. “The cooling assistance program provides help to eligible low-income households and our most vulnerable citizens to help prevent heat-related illnesses.”

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

To qualify, current energy assistance clients under 60 years of age need a signed statement from a physician, physician 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 a county social service office. Clients age 60 and over are not required to get documentation of a medical need.

People who are not currently energy assistance program clients may also qualify. A three-person household earning up to \$44,665 per year may qualify if their assets meet program limits. For information on qualifying incomes, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/energyassist.html.

Individuals should contact their county social service office to apply for the program before September 29, 2017. Contact information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/.

The Department of Human Services and the North Dakota Department of Commerce work 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 meet the cost of home heating. This past heating season, the program served about 12,100 households statewide. Last summer, 186 households participated in the cooling assistance program.

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