

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

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

BISMARCK, ND – 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).

“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. “States can implement emergency cooling assistance programs to help prevent heat-related illnesses in vulnerable low-income individuals.”

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 one of the eight community action agencies located in the state’s largest cities. Contact information is online at <http://www.capnd.org/contact/>.

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 \$36,843 per year may qualify if their assets meet program limits.

To apply, individuals should first contact their county social service office to see if they meet financial guidelines. If they do, they will be referred to a community action agency in their region.

For information on qualifying income limits, go online to <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/fy-2011-liheap-income-eligibility-limits.pdf>

The two N.D. 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.

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

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