

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services

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

BISMARCK, N.D. – Now that summer is officially here, 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).

"High temperatures combined with high humidity can be life threatening to people with some 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 the program can pay for a window air conditioner unit and professional installation. 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/.

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 \$39,461 per year may qualify if their assets meet program limits. For information on qualifying incomes, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/liheap-income-eligibility-limits.pdf.

The two N.D. 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 just over 13,700 households in the state. Last summer, 163 households participated in the cooling assistance program.

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