

**News from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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**Human Services and counties coordinate cooling assistance for low-income households**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Record temperatures can be life threatening – especially to individuals with medical conditions who cannot go to cooled buildings and cannot afford air conditioning in their homes. In response to record high temperatures, the N.D. Department of Human Services is implementing a cooling assistance program with the help of county social service offices.

Eligible low-income individuals with a medical need will receive a voucher of up to \$300 for the purchase and installation of one window air conditioning unit per household or floor and window fans.

To participate, a household must include at least one individual with a verified medical need making them vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, and the household must also meet the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program's financial guidelines.

A three-person household earning up to \$34,459 per year may qualify if their assets – not counting their home and one car - meet the program requirements. To apply, individuals should contact their county social service office.

The emergency cooling assistance program will end August 31, 2007.

Program administrator Ron Knutson said, "States can implement emergency cooling assistance programs if they have unusually severe weather conditions such as we are experiencing, and have funding available."

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is funded entirely by the federal government and typically helps North Dakota households pay for heating needs. This past heating season, the program served just over 15,000 households in the state.

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