

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Federal disaster help doesn't affect public assistance benefits

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services wants public assistance clients to know that federal disaster-related help won't affect income-based public assistance benefits. These benefits include supplemental nutrition assistance (formerly called Food Stamps), heating assistance, Medicaid, child care assistance, or other public assistance programs administered by the department.

“People who receive FEMA individual assistance to help them recover from a disaster don't need to worry about their benefits being reduced or ending,” said Carol Cartledge, the Department of Human Services' public assistance program director.

FEMA individual assistance grants typically help pay for temporary housing and other needs. The grants, Cartledge said, are not counted as income for public assistance programs.

“The goal is to help people recover from a disaster, and if that extra help affected public assistance programs for low-income persons, it would not support their recovery,” Cartledge said.

Public assistance programs administered by the North Dakota Department of Human Services and county social service offices assist qualifying low-income individuals. About half of them are children. The remainder includes people who are elderly or who have disabilities, along with single parents residing in households that do not receive child support.

People can apply for public assistance programs at their county social service office. Information is available on-line at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp.

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