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For Immediate Release –
December 26, 2007

Thousands of New Mexico's Low-income Families to Receive Cash Assistance Increases Beginning January 1

SANTA FE – Governor Richardson is delivering on his promise to boost cash assistance by 15 percent for low-income families who rely on a handful of programs offered by the state. Beginning in January, New Mexico families receiving benefits from New Mexico Works-Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Education Works, Refugee Resettlement, or General Assistance cash assistance will receive a 15 percent increase in their monthly benefits.

This is the first increase in 12 years for these programs. “Increasing costs of basic necessities, such as gas, food and clothing is making it difficult for people to make ends meet, especially New Mexico’s lower-income families” said Governor Richardson. “This is a long over due cost of living adjustment.”

New Mexico Works-TANF and Education Works programs offer assistance to mostly single parent low-income families through cash assistance, child care, health care and work readiness training in exchange for clients performing work or work-related activities. The average monthly case benefit for an adult and two children will now be \$447 per month, instead of \$389.

“New Mexico Works-TANF participants with school-aged children will receive an additional \$100 per child in January to help pay for winter clothes,” said Pamela Hyde, Secretary for the Human Services Department. “School clothing allowances for TANF participants are awarded in August, but this winter the department is able to provide families an additional clothing allowance.”

In all 13,765 families participate in the New Mexico Works-TANF. Over 300 families participate in Education Works, a state-funded program for low-income participants seeking a college education.

General Assistance is a state-funded program that helps mostly single adults who have work-related disabilities and who have applied for and are waiting for social

security disability benefits. There are nearly 1,900 families participating in General Assistance, they will see a monthly benefit increase from \$231 to \$266.

Families who earn less than 85 percent of poverty, \$14,592 per year for a single parent with two children, qualify for New Mexico Works-TANF or Education Works cash assistance.

New Mexico is able to fund these increases in part through the use of carryover federal TANF block grant funds. The carryover funds are unspent federal dollars that can be used solely for providing cash assistance to eligible low-income families.

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