



For immediate release
September 7, 2007

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Governor Richardson Announces a 15 Percent Increase in Assistance to State's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

*Cost of Living Increase to "Standard of Need" Will Benefit Thousands of
Low-Income New Mexicans*

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today announced the first increase to the State's "standard of need" in 12 years. The "standard of need" is a formula the state designed to determine how much money a family "needs" each month to pay for household necessities.

"While the costs of food, gas, clothing and other necessities have been rising each year, the State's standard of need has not kept up with inflation," said Governor Richardson. "This cost-of-living increase will help 13,600 New Mexico families, including nearly 21,000 children, who are struggling to make ends meet each month and rely on state programs."

The monies for the increase are available due to TANF carryover funds of approximately \$40 million dollars in the next state budget year. The carryover funds are unspent federal dollars, which can be used solely for cash assistance for needy families.

"For example a family of three eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Families (TANF) program, called New Mexico Works, receives a maximum of \$389 per month, the same amount as in 1995," said Pamela Hyde, Human Services Department (HSD) Secretary. "The 15 percent increase will raise the current amount for a family of three by \$58 dollars for a total of \$447 per month."

A public hearing on this change has been scheduled for Monday, October 15, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in the Income Support Division's Director's Conference room, 2009 S. Pacheco in Santa Fe. The increased "standard of need" is scheduled to begin in early 2008.