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For Immediate Release

New Mexico Human Services Department Serves Record Number of Households through Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Applications Now Being Accepted for 2011 LIHEAP Season

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Human Services Department served a record number of households through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) during the 2010 Federal Fiscal Year with 80,013 families receiving a once-a-year benefit, which averaged \$194 per household.

“We know many families struggled with paying their bills this past year and we are pleased that the LIHEAP program was there to help ease the burden with their energy costs,” said Katie Falls, Human Services Department Secretary. “As we approach the next LIHEAP season we encourage families to apply early and get current with their bills to avoid any disconnections during the winter months.”

Each year beginning November 15 through March 15 a moratorium on utility disconnections for low-income households who meet the qualifications of LIHEAP is in effect. The moratorium is designed to keep low-income New Mexico households from getting their utilities turned off during the coldest months of the year. The moratorium does require that the household’s heating bill from the previous season be current on November 15 in order to receive the protection.

Households qualifying for LIHEAP must be at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. For example, a household of three with monthly income of \$2,289 could qualify for a LIHEAP benefit (see guide below). The benefit can be used to help pay gas, electric, or bulk fuels, such as propane, firewood or wood pellet bills.

<i>Family Size</i>	<i>LIHEAP Maximum Monthly Income</i>
1	\$1,355
2	\$1,823
3	\$2,289
4	\$2,757
5	\$3,225
6	\$3,692
7	\$4,160
8	\$4,628

Households applying for LIHEAP should bring the following documents to one of the Department's 35 Income Support offices:

- Application Form** - completed and signed including Social Security Numbers for all members applying for assistance
- Heating/Cooling Costs**
 - Proof that you have a heating/cooling cost, including your account number
 - Only give proof of your highest energy cost in the last 12 months if your bill was more than \$177
 - Crisis LIHEAP – the Department can help you faster if you have:
 - disconnected utility service;
 - disconnect notice; or
 - almost out of wood, propane or other bulk fuels
 - Give us a copy of your disconnect notice

Give proof of the following when you are not getting other benefits from the Department or your income has changed.

- Identity** – for the adult applying for assistance
- Non-Citizen Immigrant Status**– for all household members applying for assistance
- Disability** – only give proof if you are not getting disability income
- Proof of Income** – Proof of income is required **from the most recent 30 days**. The ISD office will inform you if other income verification methods may be available to you.

For more information on LIHEAP, please visit your local Income Support Division office, call 1-800-283-4465, or visit the department's LIHEAP website at <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/isd/liheap.html>.

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