



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cooling Assistance Applications Now Being Accepted

RICHMOND, Va. (July 9, 2013) – With Virginia’s severe summer heat and humidity, staying cool is not a luxury, but rather a health and safety issue. The Commonwealth’s 120 [local departments of social services](#) are accepting Cooling Assistance applications now through August 15, as part of the Virginia Department of Social Services’ (VDSS) Energy Assistance Program.

“Our goal is to help eligible low-income families and our most vulnerable citizens throughout Virginia, who simply cannot afford to pay their electric bill or perhaps repair an air conditioner,” said VDSS Commissioner Margaret Schultze. “In the extreme heat of the summer months, indoor temperatures can quickly reach the same levels as outdoors, leading to life-threatening conditions.”

Cooling Assistance is available to households with a child under 6-years-old, a person with a disability, or an adult age 60 or older living in the home who meet the program’s income and eligibility requirements. To qualify for Cooling Assistance this year, the maximum gross monthly income (before taxes) for a one-person household is **\$1,245** and **\$2,552** for a household of four.

Types of available cooling assistance include:

- Payment of electric bills to operate cooling equipment;
- Payment of security deposits for electricity to operate cooling equipment;
- Repair of a central air conditioning system or heat pump;
- Purchase of a whole-house fan, including ceiling or attic fans; and
- Purchase and installation of a window unit air conditioner for households without a working one.

Those deemed eligible may qualify for more than one type of assistance. The Energy Assistance Program is funded by the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program block grant; the amount Virginia receives to disburse to recipients varies from year-to-year depending on the appropriation made by Congress. Assistance is available until funds are depleted.

Families and individuals must apply at their local department of social services or online via [CommonHelp](#) by August 15.

The Cooling Assistance component served more than 80,000 Virginia households last year. To learn more, visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/ea/cooling/index.cgi>, call 2-1-1 VIRGINIA or visit www.211virginia.org.

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