



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cooling Assistance Applications Now Being Accepted

RICHMOND, Va. (June 23, 2015) – Summer is just beginning, and so are record breaking temperatures. For many, staying cool from the sweltering heat is a necessary health and safety precaution. The Commonwealth's 120 [local departments of social services](#) are accepting Cooling Assistance applications now through August 17, as part of the Virginia Department of Social Services' (VDSS) Energy Assistance Program.

“During the summer, indoor temperatures can quickly reach the same levels as outdoors, leading to life-threatening conditions,” said VDSS Commissioner Margaret Schultze. “Our goal is to ensure that eligible, low-income families can obtain the necessary assistance to stay cool and safe this summer.”

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 **\$1,276** and **\$2,628** 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 17.

The Cooling Assistance component served more than 68,000 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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The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) www.dss.virginia.gov Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with Federal and State law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."