MDHS Receives $24 Million from CARES Act for Rent/Mortgage Assistance and LIHEAP

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Many Mississippi families who were already struggling to make ends meet before the pandemic have been adversely impacted as businesses have closed, laid off workers or reduced the number of their employees in response to economic shifts brought on by the pandemic. Many are wondering how they will pay their rent and utility bills. Thanks to two grants, help is available to these families.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) has received more than $24 million dollars in CARES Act funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to assist Mississippi's most vulnerable during the ongoing pandemic.

The Office of Community Services within the Administration for Children and Families awarded the funding in two separate grants, one being a $9,200,678 grant for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which can be used to help pay home energy costs such as electric and gas bills. Households may also apply for regular LIHEAP funds to purchase or repair air conditioners, heaters and fans.

MDHS has also received over $15 million in Community Services Block Grant CARES Act funding to assist households with rent, mortgage, employment, and educational expenses.

"The goal of MDHS is to serve as many non-traditional clients as possible, who are mainly the households that have been directly or directly impacted due to COVID-19," said Tina Ruffin, Director of the MDHS Division of Community Services. "These funds will allow us to make sure our most vulnerable clients receive help when they need it."

Individuals may contact their local community action agency (CAA) or human resource agency (HRA) to apply for both types of assistance. A list of these agencies is posted on the MDHS website at https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/community-services/. Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. CAAs/HRAs are encouraged to work with other state and local agencies to provide maximum coordination of services for households through referrals.

Individuals who have never received services may submit a Pre Application through the Common Web Portal. This site is available nationwide, but services and funds are for residents of Mississippi only.

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