Prepared by the North Dakota Legislative Council staff for the Budget Section
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FEDERAL BLOCK GRANTS - LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

The Legislative Council staff contacted state agencies receiving federal funds to determine which agencies receive block grants that require legislative hearings. The results of the survey revealed that only one block grant requires a public hearing to be held by the Legislative Assembly--the community services block grant.

The community services block grant is administered by the Department of Commerce Division of Community Services and can be used to:

- Provide services and activities that impact the causes of poverty.
- Provide assistance to low-income individuals to secure and retain meaningful employment; attain an adequate education; make better use of available income; obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment; obtain emergency assistance to meet individual and family needs, including health services, nutritious food, housing, and employment-related assistance; remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency; achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community; and make more effective use of other related programs.
- Provide for the emergency provision of supplies and services, food, and related services to counteract starvation and malnutrition among the poor.
- Coordinate and establish links between governmental and other social services programs for effective delivery of services to low-income individuals.

The Department of Commerce anticipates receiving approximately $7 million of federal funds through the community services block grant program during the 2009-11 biennium, approximately $768,000 more than the amount estimated to be received during the current biennium.

A summary of the proposed use and distribution plan for the block grant will be provided by the Department of Commerce prior to the agency's appropriation hearing during the 2009 legislative session. The required public hearing will be held as part of the appropriations hearing for the Department of Commerce during the 2009 legislative session.