

Boulder County Human Services

2025 IMPACT AND THE CHALLENGES AHEAD



Human Services



Boulder County Human Services serves more than 110,000 people each year — about one in three residents county-wide. We connect people to food, health care, housing, child care, and other supports they need to live safe and full lives.

Our goal is simple: help people meet today's needs while building hope for tomorrow.

Many residents rely on more than one program at a time. When one type of help goes away, the need for other services grows. At the same time, counties across Colorado face tight budgets that make it difficult or impossible to fill those gaps.

The upcoming years will be defined by a challenging fiscal landscape. It is critical that leaders across the state come together and create thoughtful solutions to ensure the continued delivery of these services.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP helps qualifying individuals and families buy food. While the program won't cover all food needs, it can help with grocery costs each month. In 2025, we provided more than **\$44 million in food assistance** to more than **27,000 people**.

SNAP is directly affected by H.R. 1, the federal budget reconciliation bill that makes massive changes to social safety net services. What's at risk:

- According to the State of Colorado, **more than 2,800 adults** living in Boulder County will be newly considered Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). They will be required to work or volunteer 80 hours per month or lose their access to the program.



Employment First

Employment First helps people who receive SNAP build job skills and find work. The program supports adults who want a job or job training through work activities and one-on-one support. By helping people prepare for and keep a job, Employment First supports long-term financial stability.

In 2025, the program served **174 people** and provided more than **\$77,000** in supportive services, such as help with transportation and work-related costs. About **52% of participants found a job** through the program.

Changes under H.R. 1 have increased the number of people who must meet SNAP work requirements. While Employment First is voluntary, it is one of the main ways people can meet the SNAP work requirement.

As a result, referrals to Employment First have grown and are expected to keep rising. In January 2026, the team received 244 referrals, **more than double** the 79 referrals received in January 2025. Current staffing and funding are not enough to meet this increased demand.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF, known locally as Colorado Works, helps families with children who need financial support. The program provides monthly cash assistance to help pay for basic needs like food, housing, and clothing.

In 2025, our TANF program distributed **\$2,898,461 to 2,266 individuals**. TANF provides a vital lifeline to families with very low income. Any cuts in funding threaten to upend the economic security of participants.



In January 2026, the State of Colorado received three federal notices about a pause in funding for TANF, CCAP, and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). SSBG helps pay for child welfare and adult protection services.

At this time, benefits and services have not changed. However, these notices raise concerns by promoting inaccurate claims about fraud, which could put these important programs at risk.

Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Boulder County's CCAP helps families with low incomes pay for child care for children from birth through age 12. If a family qualifies, CCAP pays part of the child care cost. Families pay the rest based on their income and family size.

In 2025, Boulder County paid **\$9,158,311 to 204 child care providers** and served **1,242 children**. Since 2024, Boulder County has been under an enrollment freeze, along with about one-third of counties in Colorado.

The freeze happened after federal rules required higher payment rates for child care providers, without adding more funding. While this helped raise wages for child care workers, it also meant the same funding could serve fewer families.

In 2025, **554 children** were added to the CCAP waitlist. By the end of the year, the waitlist had **913 children** in Boulder County who needed CCAP but could not receive services.

This lack of child care makes it harder for parents to work or attend school. It also affects child care providers, who may have open seats but cannot serve families using CCAP. The longer enrollment freezes continue, the more strain they place on families, providers, and the local economy.

Family and Children Services

In 2025, our Family and Children Services Division received **5,447 child welfare referrals** involving **8,152 children**. It also completed **1,504 child welfare assessments** for **2,024 children**.

Research shows that keeping children safely with their families whenever possible is better for children. Boulder County has made improvements in keeping children safely in their homes. Last year, **50% of children with open cases spent time in their own homes**.

Boulder County also places children with relatives whenever it is safe to do so. As of December 2025, **59% of children in out-of-home care were placed with kin**, compared to a state average of about 40%. We expect this number to continue growing as we prioritize kinship placements.

Prevention services are another key part of Boulder County's child welfare approach. In 2025, our county supported **101 prevention cases** to help families address needs early and prevent abuse or neglect. We also work closely with **three Family Resource Centers** to connect families to community supports. In 2025, **75 families** who did not need a child welfare investigation were referred to services through these centers.

State funding for family and children services hasn't kept pace with rising costs and growing needs. Colorado passed new laws for child protection but didn't provide enough federal and state funding to support them. **Without more funding, services and staff will be cut.**

Health Care Assistance Programs

We help people get health care through Health First Colorado (Medicaid), Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+), and Cover All Coloradans.

In Boulder County, **more than 45,000 people (~14% of the population) relied on Medicaid** for basic health care. Of that number, more than **17,000 people qualified for Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act expansion**. Additionally, we saw an average of **3,054 children and pregnant women** enrolled in CHP+ every month.

H.R. 1 is expected to cause at least 200,000 Coloradans to lose coverage, mostly among people covered through Medicaid expansion. More people will move on and off Medicaid, increasing workload for county human services departments.

Boulder County also runs a Health Coverage Enrollment Center, which helps people navigate health insurance. In 2025, the center helped **335 people** enroll in coverage. We saw people's **premiums increase 50-100% or more**, adding hundreds of dollars to their healthcare costs.



45,000
PEOPLE RELIED
ON **MEDICAID**

Other Programs Provided by Human Services

This document does not list every program Boulder County Human Services runs. It only covers federally funded programs facing threats in 2026.

We also administer:

Adult Financial Programs

Provide basic income and emergency help to older adults and people with disabilities. This includes Aid to the Needy Disabled, Burial Assistance, and the Old Age Pension.

Adult Protection Services

Helps protect at-risk adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Staff also connect people to safety, services, and ongoing support.

Child Support Services

Helps parents get and manage child support payments for their children.

Personal Finance Program

Offers free coaching to help people manage money, build credit, and reach goals.

Contact

Susan Caskey

scaskey@bouldercounty.gov
Boulder County Human Services Director

Summer Laws

slaws@bouldercounty.gov
Boulder County Policy Advisor



Human Services



Boulder County Board of Commissioners



Claire Levy
Commissioner



Marta Loachamin
Commissioner



Ashley Stolzmann
Commissioner