



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

January 20th, 2026

The Honorable Jeff Hurd
1641 Longworth House Office
Washington, DC 20515
Email: betsy.bair@mail.house.gov

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC 20510
Email: hilary_henry@bennet.senate.gov

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
Hart Senate Building, Suite SH-316
120 Constitution Ave, NE
Washington, DC 20510
Email: janeth_stancle@hickenlooper.senate.gov

RE: Human Services Funding

Dear Representative Hurd, Senator Bennet and Senator Hickenlooper,

On behalf of Pitkin County, we are writing to convey the urgent and growing local impacts of the recent federal funding freeze affecting core human services programs that support children, families, older adults, and vulnerable residents. In a high-cost, rural community like ours, these federally supported programs are not supplemental—they are foundational to community stability, workforce participation, and public safety.

The funding freeze, coupled with continued uncertainty regarding its scope and duration, is creating immediate operational challenges for counties. Local governments are being forced to make staffing, eligibility, and service-delivery decisions without reliable information about future federal support. This uncertainty undermines effective planning, delays service access, and heightens the risk of disruption for residents who rely on these programs to meet their most basic needs.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP / CCDF-Funded)

The Child Care Assistance Program is the largest direct-service funding stream affected in Pitkin County. Year-to-date, the County has issued \$346,980 in child care assistance, with an average monthly issuance of \$31,544. Thirty-five families currently rely on this support, alongside 23 local child care providers. These funds directly enable parents to work and employers to retain staff. Any interruption in CCCAP funding has immediate ripple effects across families, businesses, and the local economy—concerns that have already been highlighted in recent coverage by *The Aspen Times*.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF / Colorado Works)

Pitkin County has received 29 TANF applications year-to-date. TANF funding is essential not only for direct assistance but also for the administrative capacity that ensures timely eligibility determinations and access to services. TANF supports child care for working parents, parents in job training, and foster children involved in child welfare. Continued uncertainty limits the County's ability to plan for increased demand and respond effectively as family circumstances change.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG-Supported Services)

SSBG funding supports critical services for older adults and vulnerable residents, including:

- **Adult Needs Determination (AND):**
Year-to-date benefits total \$5,992 for two individuals. Each individual faces a loss of \$248 per month, or \$496 combined.
- **Old Age Pension (OAP A & B):**
Year-to-date benefits total \$40,333 for 10 individuals, with an average potential loss of \$250.60 per person per month.
- **Child Welfare:**
Five staff positions supporting Child Welfare Block and Core Services are funded through federal allocations:
 - Staffing and Block: \$729,476
 - Core Services: \$48,263
- **Adult Protection:**
One full-time staff position and \$2,000 in direct client benefits comprise the \$54,784 annual allocation.

For older adults, families in crisis, and individuals with limited resources, even short-term disruptions—or the inability to provide clear guidance about benefit continuity—can result in housing instability, food insecurity, and increased risk to personal safety. In a region with exceptionally high living costs, these consequences are magnified.

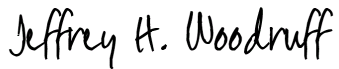
Federal human services funding does not operate in isolation in Pitkin County. It underpins the systems that allow residents to work, age in place, care for children, and remain safe during periods of economic instability. Prolonged funding freezes shift risk downward to counties that lack the capacity to absorb federal gaps and ultimately place community wellbeing at risk.

While the overall scope of these programs may appear limited when viewed in isolation, the real-world impact on individual households is profound and, in many cases, nearly insurmountable. For families and older adults living on fixed or low incomes, the loss of even a few hundred dollars per month can determine whether they are able to remain housed, maintain employment, or meet basic needs. At the same time, it is not realistic for Pitkin County to backfill these losses locally. County budgets are already constrained, and replacing federal funding would require reductions to other essential services or unsustainable reallocations that cannot be maintained over time.

We respectfully and urgently request your advocacy with federal partners to restore funding stability and provide clear, timely guidance to local governments. Swift action is essential to prevent avoidable service disruptions and to protect the safety and stability of the communities you represent.

Pitkin County remains committed to responsible stewardship of public funds and to strong intergovernmental partnerships that ensure residents can access the support they need. We appreciate your leadership and continued attention to this critical issue.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued support of the communities you serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey H. Woodruff". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Jeffrey Woodruff,
Chair
Pitkin County Board of Commissioners