

Colorado: The Local Impact of Federal Cuts

A reporter's field guide to the Trump administration's cuts to the federal workforce, federal funding and federal infrastructure that touch Colorado communities.

How To Use This Brief

This brief covers cuts made by the Trump administration through executive action since Jan. 20, 2025, including grant terminations, contract cancellations, Office of Management and Budget and Department of Government Efficiency-driven freezes, agency reorganizations, reductions in force and rule recessions that slashed funding flows. This brief excludes provisions that took effect through the congressional voting and budgetary process. It focuses primarily on cuts that have had the greatest impact on Colorado communities and received less local media coverage in Colorado's media markets.

Each sector entry below includes (1) what happened and the executive action behind it, (2) Colorado-specific impact, identifying affected institutions, (3) story angles that support human-impact ledes and (4) sourcing pointers.

***Note:** This guide is a compilation of publicly available reporting and primary source documents and does not reflect original data collection or research conducted by the Partnership for Public Service. Numbers and named institutions are drawn from cited reporting and primary documents available as of July 2026. Reporters should be diligent about verifying any funding restorations triggered by ongoing litigation, as the lawsuit landscape changes frequently.

Colorado at a Glance

- [\\$13.1 million in canceled local food purchasing funding](#) for Colorado through the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement and the Local Food for Schools & Child Care Agreement Program.
- [Over \\$25 million in canceled digital broadband expansion funding](#) for the Digital Equity Act under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- [\\$4.2 million in canceled Unemployment Insurance Equity Grant](#) to implement modernization, bolster integrity and address disparities in unemployment insurance processes.
- [\\$3 million in canceled Social Security Research and Demonstration grants](#) for research projects to measure the efficacy of both alternative-work rehabilitation methods for beneficiaries and the conditions applicable for beneficiaries.

Local Food Purchasing: Serving Communities in Need

The What

On March 7, 2025, the [USDA canceled over \\$1 billion](#) in funding for both the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) and the Local Food for Schools & Child Care Agreement Program (LFSCC), programs that were established under the Biden administration to build more resilient local food chains across the country.

[LFPA](#) funding provided support for local food banks to procure produce from local farmers, while the [LFSCC](#) provided funding for schools to purchase produce from local farmers and to secure access to nutritious foods for children. A [USDA spokesperson](#) justified this cancellation by citing a misalignment of goals between these programs and the USDA.

Impact on Colorado

Colorado lost a total of [\\$13.1 million](#) in LFPA and LFSCC funding, including [\\$5.9 million](#) for school districts and [\\$1.7 million](#) for childcare centers.

Nourish Colorado, a local nonprofit, estimates that [fewer than 20](#) of Colorado's 179 school districts will keep buying local food, with small- and medium-sized school districts, particularly those in rural areas, disproportionately affected. Districts that drop local sourcing will [shift back](#) to national distributors, with potential negative downstream effects on the local economy and farmers who benefited from the program.

Story Angles

Story Angle 1

Interview local farmers in [El Paso, Arapahoe or Adams](#) County who participated in the programs. Ask how the loss of revenue affected their work and well-being. Contextualize what the impact of this loss of funding means for surrounding communities and their economy.

Story Angle 2

Interview a local pediatrician about the importance of access to nutritious food, emphasizing the role of reliably provided school meals in underserved communities. Tie this to the loss of higher-nutrition foods that were available because of this funding.

Story Angle 3

Interview spokespeople from Hunger Free Colorado about the importance of federal funding to support vulnerable communities across Colorado.

Expanding Broadband Access: The Digital Equity Act and Underserved Communities

The What

On March 9, 2025, the Department of Commerce implemented a sweeping [cancellation of Digital Equity Act grants](#), which were funded as a part of the [\\$1.2 trillion](#) in federal investment toward nationwide infrastructure development supported under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Digital Equity Grants totaled \$2.75 billion to address digital disparities across the country, [including in parts of Colorado](#).

With President Donald Trump calling the grants “illegal” and “racist,” his administration ended the funding. As of April 22, 2026, Colorado’s Broadband Office announced a [\\$27.4 million grant](#) program to further expand broadband access across the state; however, some communities [may still struggle](#) to receive equitable access due to [funding disruptions](#).

Story Angles

Story Angle 1

Interview residents of either [San Luis Valley or Southwest Colorado](#) about their lack of access to broadband, highlighting the importance of access to digital resources in rural communities that are farther from easily accessible public services like healthcare.

Story Angle 2

Locate public schools in San Luis Valley or Southwest Colorado and interview school officials that experienced virtual learning during COVID-19, emphasizing broadband disparities. Follow up with the schools’ current status—that is, whether they have received funding for broadband or not.

Story Angle 3

Speak to small business owners in San Luis Valley or Southwest Colorado about challenges they’ve faced growing their businesses without proper access to digital advertising.

Story Angle 4

Speak to healthcare professionals about their challenges providing care to residents in rural communities in southern Colorado, especially those without access to reliable transportation.

Addressing Access: Unemployment Insurance Modernization

The What

In May 2025, the Department of Labor cancelled an estimated remaining [\\$400 million](#) intended for unemployment modernization as a part of the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act. The funding was initially intended to support states' modernization of unemployment systems after unemployment insurance struggled to combat unemployment [due to the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Across the state, Colorado unemployment modernization projects [lost \\$4.2 million](#), forcing projects to stall or halt completely. The projects funded by the grants were intended to improve efficiency of unemployment systems and expand accessibility to underserved communities. In recent years, Colorado's unemployment systems have been highly scrutinized for [inaccurate data](#) and [delayed responsiveness](#) to applicants [due to outdated systems](#). With the implementation of various modernization efforts, this funding provided a unique opportunity for the state to address these issues.

Story Angles

Story Angle 1

Interview government officials within Denver's [Colorado Department of Labor and Employment](#) about the status of unemployment modernization projects, potentially pulling out economic impacts of stalled or stopped projects.

Story Angle 2

Speak to local officials in San Miguel County, Pitkin County, Costilla County and others with the [highest unemployment rates](#) in the state. Discuss the importance of unemployment insurance, emphasizing the need for updated standards and systems.

Story Angle 3

Speak to unemployed residents in south-central Colorado about their experience with requesting and receiving unemployment benefits, emphasizing the need for modernization that was being implemented.

Ongoing Research: Advancing Social Security Efficacy

The What

Ongoing research projects to improve the management, administration and effectiveness of Social Security Administration programs lost funding as part of the agency's widespread reorganization.

Colorado lost nearly [\\$3 million](#) in funding for this research after the state’s Social Security Research and Demonstration grants were cut. Similar grants across the country were cut for reasons related to “addressing DEI” and “fraudulent and wasteful” activities, according to the [Social Security Administration](#). Without this research funding, the needs of vulnerable populations may go unnoticed, and they may lack adequate support to access critical benefits, as a result.

Story Angles

Story Angle 1

Interview administrators at the Social Security Administration’s Denver Regional Office about how this funding loss has affected service delivery, emphasizing the importance of ongoing modernization efforts. Follow through on leads that reveal disparities in access to Social Security.

Story Angle 2

Interview Social Security administrators at the same office about the importance of having up-to-date qualification standards and what disparities arise because of outdated data.

Story Angle 3

Denver has the [highest number](#) of Supplemental Security Income recipients, with roughly 77% of qualifying as blind or disabled as of December 2024. Interview a spokesperson from the [National Federation of the Blind in Colorado](#), [Arc of Colorado](#) or other disability advocacy organizations about the importance of receiving Social Security benefits for these communities.