Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

CU Federal Relations Monthly Update - 3.30.26 [1]

March 30, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

FY26 Appropriations Update

Federal funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lapsed on Feb. 14. The Senate approved a funding package on Mar. 27 to fund all of DHS, except for ICE. This package would fund the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Coast Guard for fiscal year 2026.

The House opted not to vote on the Senate-passed bill, instead voting on a short-term funding bill to fund all of DHS. The Senate and House have now adjourned for a two-week recess, likely extending the partial shutdown into April. President Trump has signed an executive order directing DHS to pay TSA workers. More can be read in *NBC News* [3].

All other federal agencies are funded through Sept. 30, 2026.

FY27 Appropriations Update

Congress has begun work on the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) appropriation process. The University of Colorado and our campuses are actively advocating for funding for programs which help us support our students, from financial aid dollars to research funding dollars. We have advocated through signing on in support of FY27 funding priorities, Capitol Hill meetings and Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs).

Colorado House Delegation Members Carry CPF Funding Requests for CU Campuses
During the FY27 process, Colorado's House delegation submitted Community Project Funding requests to fund projects at all four CU campuses. The projects have been submitted to the House Appropriations committee, which will announce the projects that will be included in the bills later this summer. CU was honored to have the support of community partners who supported these requests, including Colorado Space Coalition, Colorado Springs EDC, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Denver Metro EDC, Northglenn High School, AFCEA Rocky Mountain Chapter, and other industry partners.

Recent CU FY27 Advocacy Letters
CU Boulder and CU Denver on Mar. 26 signed onto multi-organization letters to House [4] and Senate [5] congressional appropriations leaders urging support for Environmental Protection Agency Science and Technology (EPA S&T) in FY27. The letters advocate for at least $876 million for EPA S&T, of which $40 million is requested for the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Program.

CU Boulder and CU Denver signed onto a Mar. 16 multi-organizational letter [6] to congressional appropriations leaders urging support for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in FY27. The letter advocates for $1.283 billion for NIST's core laboratory research programs and at least $200 million for NIST's Construction and Maintenance Facilities account.

CU Anschutz and CU Boulder signed onto a Mar. 13 multi-organization letter [7] to congressional appropriations leaders urging support for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) in FY27. The letter advocates for at least $1.7 billion to be provided in the FY27 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill and highlights the innovative health research conducted by ARPA-H-supported projects.

Colorado Delegation Signs DCLs Supporting Research, Higher Education

One mechanism for members of Congress to show their support for funding programs during the appropriations process is signing onto Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs). During March, the CU Federal Relations team has been advocating for House delegation member offices to sign onto DCLs in support of FY27 funding for: Campus Based Aid, Pell Grant, TRIO Programs, CCAMPIS, Title VI & Fulbright Hays, PSSG, NSF, NOAA OAR, Joint Fire Science, CDMRPs, NIOSH, ICRCs, Assistive Technology Act, and other CU priorities.

CU Boulder, Partner Universities Offer NCAR Proposal

The National Science Foundation (NSF) put out a call for public comment regarding NCAR restructuring and proposals for new public or private ownership. CU Boulder responded with a proposal to collaborate with the University of Oklahoma and the University of Wyoming to run NCAR in the case of a planned NSF restructuring plan. The proposal would keep NCAR at the Mesa Laboratory in Boulder. NCAR is currently managed by the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR [8]), a nonprofit consortium of 129 universities that includes CU Boulder. More can be read in the *Daily Camera* [9].

CU Campuses Comment on ED RISE Rule

CU Anschutz [10], Boulder [11], Colorado Springs, [12] and Denver [13] submitted responses to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on Mar. 2. The NPRM proposed two graduate student loan programs that take effect on Jul. 1, 2026 and defined which programs provide a graduate or professional degree – with higher loan limits available to the latter. CU campuses discussed the proposed implementation timeline for the regulations and highlighted the limited number of programs defined as professional.

Recent Capitol Hill Visits

Waleed Abdalati, Executive Director of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES [14]) at CU Boulder, met with staff from the offices of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation committee; the House Commerce, Justice, and Science committee; Sen. Hickenlooper; and Rep. Neguse and Crank on Mar. 26.

Amir Behzadan, fellow in the Institute of Behavioral Science's Natural Hazards Center [15] at

CU Boulder, met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Rep. Neguse on Mar. 24 as part of the Coalition of Social Science Associations' (COSSA [16]) advocacy day. This visit was supported by CU Boulder's RIO Advocacy Grant program [17], which provides funding for faculty to participate in virtual or in-person advocacy events.

Ashley Brooks Russell, Director of the Injury and Violence Prevention Center (IVPC [18]) at CU Anschutz, met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette and Neguse on Mar. 23.

CU Denver TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) & McNair Scholars [19] TRIO Director Rafael Orozco and Isabella Luna, TRIO Program Specialist, met with staff from the offices of Sen. Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette and Pettersen on Mar. 11 as part of the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)'s 2026 Policy Seminar [20].

Shelley Knuth, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Research Computing at CU Boulder, met with staff from the offices of Sen. Hickenlooper and Reps. Neguse and Pettersen on Mar. 10.

Manuel Serapio, Director of the Institute for International Business [21] at CU Denver; Danielle Rocheleau Salas, Executive Director of the Center for Asian Studies (CAS) [22] at CU Boulder; and Rachel Rinaldo, Faculty Director of CAS met virtually with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette, Evans, and Neguse on Mar. 9-10 and Mar. 23, regarding Title VI and Fulbright-Hays.

Massimo Ruzzene, Senior Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at CU Boulder, met with staff from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. Neguse, Crank, and Crow on Mar. 3-4.

Colorado Connected News

ICYMI: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi got her start in public service through interning on Capitol Hill for then-Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (who represented Colorado's 1st Congressional District, 1973-1997). Read the full story by the *New York Times* here [23].

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