

Federal Government Update - 11.21.25 ^[1]

November 21, 2025 by [Riley Black](#) ^[2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

Department of Education Sheds Offices and Operations

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) [announced](#) ^[3] on Nov. 18 six new agreements with four federal agencies to move statutorily required federal education programs out of ED and across the government. The Departments of Labor (DOL), Interior (DOI), Health and Human Services (HHS) and State will each take over education offices and operations under the plan. Secretary McMahon has asked Congress to make the new changes permanent, [reports](#) ^[4] *The Hill*. Absent congressional approval, the federal administration cannot fully shutter ED and a new administration could opt to void the agreements and move the initiatives back to ED.

Under the new agreements, Native American education programs will move to DOI, Fulbright-Hays and international education programs will move to State and K-12 and postsecondary education programs will move to DOL. Accreditation of foreign medical schools and childcare support for parents enrolled in college (CCAMPIS) will shift to HHS. ED program staff are expected to transfer to the new agencies along with their portfolios.

DOL will administer grant funds and provide technical assistance for postsecondary education programs including TRIO, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN), the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and more, according to a [fact sheet](#) ^[5]. Secondary education programs, including the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), will also move to DOL.

ED did not announce plans to move the Office for Civil Rights, which enforces federal civil rights laws, or the Office of Federal Student Aid, which administers the FAFSA and federal student aid programs such as the Pell Grant and Direct Loans, to other agencies, [reports](#) ^[6] NASFAA. The federal administration has, however, considered offloading additional offices and operations, including shifting the \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio to the Small Business Administration, [reports](#) ^[7] *Forbes*.

ED acknowledges that the multi-agency handoff is complicated and will take time, [reports](#) ^[8] *Government Executive*. At the same time, the Department [said](#) ^[5], “States and grantees should not expect to experience programmatic disruptions due to the partnership.”

Following a March [executive order](#) ^[9] directing the closure of ED, the administration has defunded federal education programs, implemented mass layoffs that have reduced staff by

50 percent, and now transferred federally mandated operations and programs to other federal agencies.

CU Leadership and the Office of Government Relations are actively assessing both the near- and long-term impacts of these changes to CU's campuses.

DOW Announces Research Tech Priorities

The Department of War (DOW) announced ^[10] on Nov. 17 six critical technology areas (CTAs) in research and engineering to address pressing challenges on the modern battlefield. The six CTAs are: Applied Artificial Intelligence (AAI), Biomanufacturing (BIO), Contested Logistics Technologies (LOG), Quantum and Battlefield Information Dominance (Q-BID), Scaled Directed Energy (SCADE), and Scaled Hypersonics (SHY). The DOW said these technology areas will "empower the warfighter to overcome adversarial threats and maintain operational dominance in any theater."

DHS, USCIS Issue NPRM on Public Charge Rule

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a notice of proposed rulemaking ^[11] (NPRM) on Nov. 17, which rescinds the 2022 final rule ^[12], "Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility." The 2022 rule clarifies the criteria DHS uses determine whether a noncitizen can be admitted to the U.S. and whether a noncitizen who is legally in the country can change their immigration status to become a permanent resident.

The NPRM says the 2022 rule has limited "DHS officers' ability to make public charge inadmissibility determinants that are consistent with Congress's express national policy and welfare and immigration." The NPRM does not offer a formal replacement to the rule, but it does signal the administration's intent to revise the definition of "public charge." Without an amended definition, USCIS officers will have broad discretion to determine whether an individual is likely to become a "public charge."

The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments at the federal level. We are working closely with the President and Chancellors, as well as the Colorado congressional delegation, to champion CU priorities. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please visit the CU System Federal Updates and Actions page ^[13] for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

Please note that we will not be sending an email update on Nov. 28 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

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Federal Updates ^[14]

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[4] <https://thehill.com/homenews/education/5615474-mcmahon-trump-education-department/>

[5] <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fact-sheet-department-of-education-ed-and-department-of-labor-dol-postsecondary-education-partnership-112464.pdf>

[6] [https://www.nasfaa.org/news-](https://www.nasfaa.org/news-item/37687/White_House_Continues_Effort_to_Dismantle_ED_With_New_Agency_Partnerships)

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[7] <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamminsky/2025/11/18/education-department-announces-new-breakup-heres-what-it-means-for-student-loans/> [8] [https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/11/trump-admin-](https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/11/trump-admin-acknowledges-difficulties-transferring-education-programs-other-agencies-internal-documents-show/409686/)

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[10] <https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4333074/under-secretary-of-war-for-research-and-engineering-emil-michael-announces-six/>

[11] [https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/19/2025-20278/public-charge-ground-of-inadmissibility?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=grr&utm_content=&utm_22fa-4935-8120-4b97a30441df&sfmc_activityid=2b9848df-d87c-412d-bb30-](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/19/2025-20278/public-charge-ground-of-inadmissibility?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=grr&utm_content=&utm_22fa-4935-8120-4b97a30441df&sfmc_activityid=2b9848df-d87c-412d-bb30-1d57720aa437&utm_medium=email)

[1d57720aa437&utm_medium=email](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/19/2025-20278/public-charge-ground-of-inadmissibility?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=grr&utm_content=&utm_22fa-4935-8120-4b97a30441df&sfmc_activityid=2b9848df-d87c-412d-bb30-1d57720aa437&utm_medium=email) [12]

[https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/09/2022-18867/public-charge-ground-of-](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/09/2022-18867/public-charge-ground-of-inadmissibility)

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