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Federal Government Update - 1.30.26 [1]

January 30, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

Government Funding Update
The U.S. Senate and White House announced a deal [3] to fund federal agencies including the Departments of Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), War (DoW), Transportation (DoT) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through Sept. 30, 2026, while also extending funding for the Department of Homeland Security until Feb. 13. The Senate passed the amended legislation with a vote of 71-29 [4] on Friday evening.

The House previously approved new funding for these federal agencies, including DHS, for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2026. However, recent events in Minnesota led Senate Democrats to call for new reforms for ICE and CBP agents within the DHS bill. Since the Senate is amending the legislation, the House must re-pass the bill, which will not happen until next week. *Politico* [5] reports the House plans to vote Monday evening.

With government funding set to expire at midnight Jan. 30, a partial government shutdown is imminent. Unlike last year's historic 43-day shutdown, this shutdown will only impact some agency operations. Agencies already funded for the remainder of FY 2026, including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy and Interior as well as independent agencies like NASA and NSF, will not be impacted by the shutdown. Agency operations at ED and HHS will be impacted; however, if the shutdown is short, we do not anticipate immediate impacts to CU's campuses.

For more information, read CU's summary of the appropriations package here [6]. CU Leadership and Federal Relations will monitor the shutdown and its potential impact on our campuses and local communities.

ED Posts NPRM on Graduate Program Loan Limits
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) posted a notice [7] of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) regarding student loan limits for graduate and professional students on Jan. 30. The NPRM is the result of negotiated rulemaking by the Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Committee and implements student loan changes required by H.R. 1, the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*.

The proposed rule would eliminate Grad PLUS loans, cap Parent PLUS loans, create a new Repayment Assistance Plan and restrict lifetime borrowing to $100,000 for graduate students and $200,000 for professional students. The RISE Committee designated 11 programs as "professional" degrees, including Medicine (MD and DO), Pharmacy (PharmD), Dentistry

(DDS or DMD), Optometry (OD) and Law (LLB or JD).

Public comments are due March 2. CU Federal Relations will work with each campus on potential comments to the NPRM.

ED Announces Negotiated Rulemaking for Accreditation

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [8] on Jan. 26 the formation of the Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization (AIM) negotiated rulemaking committee, which is tasked with reforming and strengthening the higher education accreditation system, as outlined in Executive Order 14279, *Reforming Accreditation to Strengthen Higher Education* [9]. Nominations for negotiators can be submitted through Feb. 26. The AIM committee will convene for two sessions in April and May 2026. After AIM completes its work, proposed rules will be posted for public comment.

OMB to Review Federal Funding in 14 States

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sent a memo to federal agencies late last week directing the agencies to compile data on federal funding sent to fourteen states, including Colorado. The agencies were directed to send the data by Jan. 28, regarding grants, loans and other federal funds provided to states, local governments, higher education institutions and nonprofits within the states, reports [10] the *Denver Post.*

NSF Issues NCAR Dear Colleague Letter

The National Science Foundation (NSF) issued a dear colleague letter [11] on Jan. 23 inviting public input on how to restructure critical weather science infrastructure at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). The request seeks input on NCAR's space weather activities, weather modeling and atmospheric observing capabilities and NCAR's Mesa Laboratory [12], located in Boulder, CO. Input will be used to help inform NSF's future decisions about NCAR, a Federally Funded Research and Development Center, established in 1960. Comments are due March 13.

White House Issues EO to Address Substance Use Disorder

The White House issued an executive order (EO) entitled *Addressing Addiction through the Great American Recovery Initiative,* [13] on Jan. 29. The EO establishes a national response to "the disease of addiction" across government, healthcare, faith communities and the private sector. The order directs federal agencies to establish grants for community and research organizations to support addiction recovery, with a focus on prevention, treatment and long-term resilience. Here is a fact sheet [14] released with the order.

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 [15] for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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