



To: Colorado Joint Budget Committee

CC: Michelle Barnes, Colorado Department of Human Services
Kim Bimestefer, Health Care Policy & Financing
Lisa Roy, Colorado Department of Early Childhood

Date: October 7, 2024

Counties are valuable administrators of state programs, due to our closeness to our community members and their needs. There is no better example of this than our county human services programming, in which we provide services and support to our neighbors in some of their most desperate times of need. We believe strongly that our county-administered, state-supervised system best serves our constituents. Furthermore, we deeply appreciate our partnership with your agencies (and many others) in the efficient and effective implementation of these programs.

We can relate to the tough financial outlook of the state's budget, however, these asks allow our state to protect and better serve vulnerable Coloradans.

As Commissioners, we support the priorities identified in the attached memo from the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA).

❖ **“County Administration” for public and medical assistance programs**

- Thank you for your significant investments in “County Administration” over the last two budget cycles!
- The recent comprehensive assessment and funding model established from SB22-235 results have illuminated a \$30M funding need
- To compliment this investment, an effective Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS) is essential to providing excellent customer service

❖ **Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)**

- We realize our communities thrive when families are able to access quality and affordable childcare; the CCAP program provides this to low-income, working families
- HB23-1233 and recent federal rulemaking will significantly affect the functions of these programs and very-well will result in serving fewer families
- To minimize this gap, Colorado will need a \$56M investment by the deadline in 2026

❖ **Adult Protection Services**

- We are acutely aware of the aging population in our communities, and like you want to see them thrive and remain in our communities.
- A recent workload study has highlighted outstanding resource needs in our communities to support this population, meanwhile without these resources more adults will require Adult Protection Services from our counties

- A \$2 million increased allocation will allow caseworkers to continue to respond in these cases

Our communities will be further benefitted by supports to the following:

- ❖ Close monitoring of the **Colorado Works/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) reserves** to ensure funding is available in the event of significant economic downturns
- ❖ Investment in **behavioral health services for children**, pursuant to the settlement agreement from G.A. et al v. Bimestefer
- ❖ Continue commitment to a phased approach to fund **child welfare**, based on the results of SB21-277
- ❖ Continued **County Tax Base Relief** so that our most economically disadvantaged counties are still able to meet the needs of their communities.

Lastly, we would welcome the opportunity to present to the Joint Budget Committee on the perspectives of counties in fulfilling these state programs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer O'Hearon
Rio Blanco County Commissioner
Health & Human Services Committee, Chair

Janet Rowland
Mesa County Commissioner
Health & Human Services Committee, Vice Chair