



CWLA and AAICAMA Policy Update

Presented by Kati Mapa, CWLA, Director of Public Policy

Facilitated by Sharon McCartney, AAICAMA Director



October 2025 Policy Update: October 15, 2025

Time: 12:00 PM Eastern

Link to October 2025 *Policy Update* presentation slides [here](#).

1. Federal Government Shutdown

At 12:01am on October 1st, 2025, the federal government shut down because Congress did not pass a funding bill. The last shutdown that resulted in furloughs was in 2019.

Federal agencies released shutdown plans:

- [Department of Health and Human Services](#),
- [Department of Education](#),
- [Department of Agriculture](#),
- [Department of Justice](#)

Why did the shutdown happen?

House Republicans passed a “clean” Continuing Resolution (CR) to continue funding the government at level funding. In the House, only a 51% majority is needed (218 votes), which results in party-line votes, no minority party involvement needed to pass bills. Democrats are insisting on a bipartisan negotiation and put forward their own CR bill that includes:

- Extension of the ACA Enhanced Premium Tax Credits
- Rollback of Medicaid Cuts in HR1, the reconciliation bill
- Safeguard language to prevent rescissions or withholding of federal funds by the Administration

Both bills have been brought up for votes in the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) has held eight votes on both bills. They are currently at a standstill, with neither bill receiving the 60 votes needed to overcome the filibuster and end debate.

In the House, Speaker Johnson (R-LA) has extended the House recess that started the third week of September, and stated that he will not bring the House back to Washington, DC until the shutdown ends.

What happens to programs?

Mandatory programs. Large mandatory spending programs like Medicaid, Medicare, Title IV-E and part of Title IV-B, and Social Security will continue to operate because their funding is not dependent on the appropriations bills. However, these programs will have very limited federal staff, because agency personnel are paid through appropriated funds.

Mandatory programs with lapsed authorization. Programs like TANF and SNAP won't receive new federal funds until the government reopens because their operations need to be extended via an appropriations bill or a CR. States can potentially use their Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funding to keep TANF running in the meantime.

Discretionary programs. CAPTA and CBCAP, part of Title IV-B, and many education and mental and behavioral health programs won't receive more funding until the shutdown ends because their funds are dependent on annual appropriations.

Meanwhile: The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has begun reductions in force (RIFs) across agencies, firing staff.

- NYT tracking RIFs [here](#).
- HHS laid off 1,200 employees, many at the CDC
- Department of Education fired offices that oversee IDEA, special education
- Treasury fired 1400+ staff, including many IRS agents
- Housing and Urban Development fired nearly 450 employees

In order to end the shutdown, both the House and Senate need to pass identical bills, which the President needs to sign. One of the parties needs to “blink” first and agree to some or all of the demands of the other party. Likely, it will be a directive of the President that brings the leaders to the negotiating table to iron out a new CR that extends the funding deadline by a few weeks or months.

2. On the Hill

HHS/ACF: Assistant Secretary Adams Confirmed

On October 7th, the Senate voted to confirm more than 100 nominees to Administrative positions, fast-tracking the confirmation process using the “nuclear option” to move nominees in large blocks.

Dr. [Alex Adams](#) was among this group and is now the Assistant Secretary for the Administration on Children and Families. He formerly led Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare and oversaw child welfare reforms that provided additional support to older youth, kinship and foster caregivers, and the child welfare workforce. He will take up his post at ACF during the shutdown, likely limiting his onboarding process.

SNAP Back Act Introduced

On October 7th, Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) introduced HR 5718, the [SNAP Back Act](#), which would reinstate the SNAP work reporting exemptions for:

- Youth exiting foster care to independence,
- Individuals experiencing homelessness,
- Veterans

These exemptions were first introduced in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 as part of the bipartisan negotiations to raise the debt limit. They were eliminated in H.R. 1, the budget reconciliation bill in order to save money through expanding work requirements.

3. The Administration

Unaccompanied Children Threatened

On October 3rd, news broke that ICE planned an [operation](#) targeting unaccompanied children, sending letters to UCs ages 14 and older (although some sources said 10 and older) encouraging them to self-deport to their countries of origin, threatening to arrest parents who live in the United States, and threatening them with indefinite detention upon their 18th birthday if they had not yet left.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) confirmed the operation, though they denied it being coercive to children, claiming that they are merely presenting these teens with an “option.”

Parts of this effort have been challenged in court, and a federal court awarded a [preliminary injunction](#) against detention for 18 year olds, which is not supposed to happen. Even once a child ages out of the UC program, they are supposed to be placed in the least restrictive setting while they go through due process.

USDA Issues SNAP Guidance

On October 3rd, the USDA issued guidance on some of the changes to SNAP from HR. They issued a deadline of November 1st to implement new work requirement expansion, including parents of children 14 and older, caregivers and youth exiting foster care, unhoused individuals, and veterans.

USDA also announced 30 days until the termination of some existing waivers approved under the previous administration. More information here:

- [ABAWD](#)
- [ABAWD Exceptions](#)
- [Landing page for all FNS Documents](#)