

Summary of Legislation

2025



Human Services, Children, and Domestic Matters

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The Colorado General Assembly passed a number of bills related to human services and families. Many of these laws were recommendations from interim committees and task forces. Others made changes to Colorado's child welfare system, introduced guardrails around access to certain online material, and more.

Interim Committees, Commissions, and Task Force Recommendations

Every year after session ends, interim committees, commissions, and task forces produce a number of bill ideas, but only a select few make it through the entire legislative process. During the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers worked with these interim committees, commissions, and task forces from the 2024 interim to pass four bills related to child support, Indian child welfare, mandatory reporting, and runaway youth prevention.

Child Support Recommendations

[House Bill 25-1159](#) implements the Child Support Commission's recommendations by:

- updating the child support guidelines schedule;

- updating the monthly incomes eligible for a reduced low-income adjustment;
- replacing the current parenting time credit with a formula that provides parents credit for all overnights spent with that parent;
- requiring courts to enter child support orders for every dissolution of marriage proceeding; and
- making other changes that clarify requirements for independent contractor reporting, extraordinary medical expenses for children, and factors considered for retroactive child support and income tax dependency.

Colorado Indian Child Welfare Act

[House Bill 25-1204](#), a bill request from the American Indian Affairs Interim Study Committee, places the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 into state statute as the "Colorado Indian Child Welfare Act," which provides the minimum federal standards and protections for the removal and placement of Indian children in homes. Additionally, the bill outlines court procedures for determining a child's tribal membership, ensuring tribal participation in proceedings, and prioritizing placement preferences with family and tribe members.

The bill requires active efforts in verifying a child's tribal status, requires providing notice to parents and tribes, and provides

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guidelines for emergency hearings involving Indian children. It also recognizes tribal jurisdiction over cases involving Indian children, ensures court-appointed counsel for indigent families, and allows the state to enter into and revise agreements with tribes regarding child welfare cases.

Mandatory Reporter Recommendations

The Mandatory Reporter Task Force was created during the 2022 legislative session by [House Bill 22-1240](#) to analyze best practices and recommend changes to training requirements and reporting procedures for people required by law to report child abuse or neglect. [House Bill 25-1188](#) implements some of the task force's latest recommendations. The bill specifies that child abuse or neglect must not be based on a parent's or child's indigence, unavailability of accessible services, unhoused status, or disability. It also modifies requirements for mandatory reporters, including:

- requiring reports to be submitted as soon as possible and within 24 hours;
- not requiring reports when information is received outside of a person's professional capacity or when they are connected to an attorney representing the party involved in a child abuse or neglect case;
- removing victim advocates from the list of mandatory reporters;
- prohibiting reports based solely on a family's race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or disability; and

- prohibiting delegation of reporting to someone without firsthand knowledge of the suspected child abuse or neglect.

Runaway Youth Prevention Recommendations

The Timothy Montoya Task Force to Prevent Children from Running Away from Out-of-Home Placement was formed by [House Bill 22-1375](#). The task force is responsible for analyzing the reasons children and youth run away from out-of-home placements, developing a response for when children or youth run away, and recommending measures to prevent children and youth from running away in the first place. [Senate Bill 25-151](#) codifies the task force's recommendations by requiring the Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman to create a runaway risk assessment tool, plan a statewide data platform for collecting data on children or youth who run away from facilities, and conduct a survey of the infrastructure needs of the state's residential child care facilities. Additionally, each facility must create a policy that outlines how they will respond to a child or youth who threatens or attempts to run away from care, and must notify certain related individuals within four hours after discovering a missing child or youth.

Changes to the Child Welfare System

The General Assembly made a variety of other changes to Colorado's child welfare system, including the creation of a pilot program for youth in foster care, requiring

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the creation of placement transition plans for all children in an out-of-home placement, improving security for psychiatric residential treatment facilities, directing county departments to pursue survivor benefits for foster youth, and allocating resources to increase the number of detention beds in the Division of Youth Services (DYS).

Foster Care

[House Bill 25-1097](#) requires county caseworkers to develop placement transition plans for children moving between different out-of-home placements or back to their home. Each plan must include information on the logistics, communication frameworks, and timelines for child placements. The plans must be developed in a meeting with all parties to the case.

[House Bill 25-1172](#) allows a state-owned psychiatric residential treatment facility to put up a secure perimeter fence without being classified as a detention facility, or considered a type of restraint for youth in the facility. The Department of Human Services CDHS, in consultation with the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) and the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) must adopt rules to ensure compliance with federal law.

Department of Youth Services

[House Bill 25-1271](#) creates new provisions for the management and use of federal survivor benefits for children and youth in foster care by county and state departments of human services. A county department of

human services must continually determine whether children and youth in foster care may be eligible for federal survivor benefits. If eligibility is identified, the county department must apply for those benefits on behalf of the child. If no payee or fiduciary is available, the county must assume the role but cannot use any of the federal benefits to pay for supports to the foster child. When a child leaves foster care, any remaining money in the account must be released to the youth. CDHS must develop regulations and guidance for counties regarding the bill's provisions, including benefit eligibility screening, representative payee selection, appeals of denied benefits, and account management.

[House Bill 25-1146](#) increases the number of "emergency detention beds" available under the statewide juvenile detention bed cap from 22 to 39, and allows more flexibility on when the beds may be used. It also requires the CDHS to publish a monthly report on the number of youths in detention and who are awaiting mitigating services. Additionally, the bill establishes a pilot program at one detention and one commitment facility, requiring DYS staff supervising youth to wear body-worn cameras during interactions. The bill also creates the Deflection and Community Investment Grant Program to provide competitive grants for three years to implement a mixed-delivery system of trauma-informed health and development deflection programs for youth.

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Protections for Children and Youth Online

Two lost bills attempted to establish online protections for Colorado minors.

[House Bill 25-1287](#) would have required social media companies to determine if users are minors, and offer those users tools to protect their health and safety, such as disabling personalized recommendations, setting time limits for daily usage or scheduling breaks, and reporting problems or unwanted contact. Social media companies would also have been required to offer supervisory tools to parents, such as managing certain account settings, viewing usage metrics, restricting purchases, or deleting the minor's personal data collected by the social media platform. Social media companies would have been required to take measures to increase minor users' privacy and ensure that privacy protections are enabled by default for minors' accounts. Finally, the bill stated that the use of a design or algorithm to increase or sustain a minor's engagement with the social media platform would constitute a heightened risk of harm under the Colorado Privacy Act.

Additionally, if passed, [Senate Bill 25-201](#) would have required websites with sexually explicit content to verify the age of users before allowing access to their materials. The bill also required an independent auditor review websites' age verification procedures annually.