

# **Impact of Federal Funding Freezes on Social Work Practice and Higher Education**

## **Social Policy Sp25**

### **I. Introduction**

The recent federal funding freeze implemented by the Trump administration has raised significant concerns across various sectors, including social work practice and higher education. These freezes directly affect social services, healthcare, child welfare, homelessness programs, and educational institutions. This report examines the consequences of these funding freezes and presents reputable sources discussing their impacts.

### **II. Impact on Social Work Practice**

#### **1. Challenges for Child Care Services**

- Child care programs, including the Child Care Development Block Grant, are facing disruptions due to the funding freeze.
- Immigration restrictions and mandates for federal employees to return to office settings are expected to exacerbate the child care crisis, particularly impacting working women.
- The lack of federal support could reduce access to child care services and negatively impact workforce productivity.
- Source: Barron's <https://www.barrons.com/articles/trump-deportations-return-to-work-child-care-caf5af59>

#### **2. Homelessness Non-Profit Organizations Facing Financial Strain**

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant pause has left non-profits uncertain about reimbursements and funding stability.
- Organizations assisting homeless populations may have to reduce services or shut down programs due to lack of financial support.
- Source: The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/28/atlanta-homelessness-trump-federal-funding>

#### **3. Medicaid and Head Start Program Disruptions**

- The freeze initially locked Medicaid and early childhood education providers out of funding platforms, delaying payments and payroll.
- The White House later clarified that these programs were not supposed to be impacted, but the temporary halt created operational issues.
- Source: AP News <https://apnews.com/article/4fe440e35df70c7ede8ce8e0409cb581>

#### **4. General Confusion Surrounding Federal Grant Freezes**

- While essential programs such as Social Security and welfare were not included in the freeze, confusion regarding its scope led to disruptions across multiple federally funded programs.

- Many state attorneys general have planned to challenge the freeze in court, arguing that it exceeds executive authority.
- Source: Time <https://time.com/7210734/trump-funding-freeze-medicaid>

## **5. Uncertainty for Social Work Services and Non-Profits**

- The funding pause has disrupted financial planning for organizations reliant on federal grants.
- Higher education institutions and non-profits serving marginalized communities are at risk of losing funding for critical initiatives.
- Source: AP News <https://apnews.com/article/trump-federal-grants-pause-freeze-e5f512ae6f1212f621d5fa9bbec95e08>

## **III. Impact on Higher Education and Students**

### **1. Disruptions in Research Funding**

- Grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) have been paused, delaying critical research projects.
- Many universities rely on these grants for scientific innovation and faculty research.
- Source: Politico <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/01/28/funding-freeze-education-programs-chaos-00201111>

### **2. Impact on Student Support Services**

- While federal financial aid programs like Pell Grants remain unaffected, other discretionary grants supporting student services have been paused.
- Programs such as childcare for student-parents could face funding shortages, making it harder for some students to continue their education.
- Source: Politico <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/01/28/funding-freeze-education-programs-chaos-00201111>

### **3. Financial Uncertainty for Universities**

- Higher education institutions are struggling to plan budgets and maintain faculty and staff payrolls due to uncertainty surrounding federal grant funding.
- Institutions dependent on federal funds for research and development must seek alternative funding sources to sustain projects.
- Source: Politico <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/01/28/funding-freeze-education-programs-chaos-00201111>

### **4. Legal and Policy Challenges**

- A federal judge has temporarily blocked the funding freeze, but the uncertainty surrounding its implementation continues to create administrative challenges for universities.
- Institutions must remain vigilant and advocate for continued federal support.

- Source: The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jan/28/trump-pauses-grants-loans>

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The federal funding freeze imposed by the Trump administration has created immediate and long-term challenges for social work practitioners, non-profit organizations, and higher education institutions. The impact spans across essential social programs, research funding, and student support services. Advocacy and policy engagement will be crucial in ensuring that these critical resources remain available. Social workers and educators must stay informed about legal developments and funding alternatives to navigate these uncertainties effectively.