



DHS

**Mesa County Department
of Human Services**

Safety • Stability • Meaningful Employment

2025 Annual Report



Letter from the Director



Mesa County Department of Human Services (MCDHS) is committed to the success of our community. We're focused on what matters to our community: **stability, meaningful employment, and safety** for you and your family.

Our goal is simple: to achieve the best for our community. That means making sure adults and children are safe, helping our clients become independent, and actively supporting our local economy and businesses.

Our team operates with a strong work ethic, sound fiscal stewardship, and efficiency. Comprised of 310 dedicated professionals across five divisions and 44 operational teams, we are able to serve 36% of the Mesa County population. We uphold the highest level of accountability through rigorous reviews, reporting, and quality assurance practices at the Federal, State, and local levels. We are proud of the essential role we play within the community.

Our annual report illustrates the many ways MCDHS serves you.

Jill Calvert, Executive Director

Meet the Executive Leadership Team



Barbara Golden

Executive Deputy Director



Joe Kellerby

Child Welfare & Adult Protection Director



Melissa Schierland

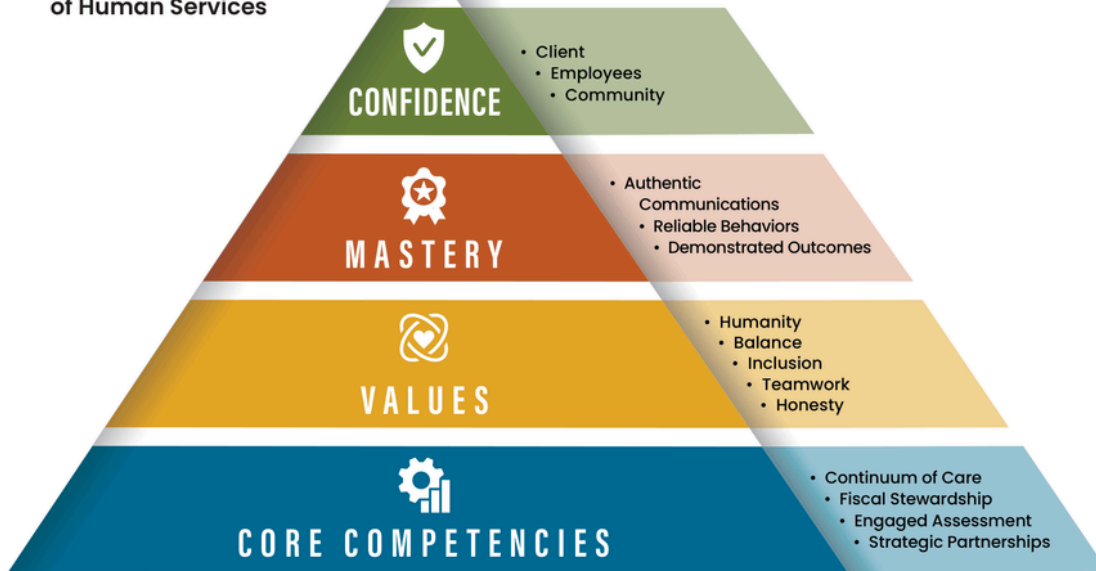
Economic Assistance Director



Heather Nara

Workforce Center Director

Organizational Foundation



MISSION

Help individuals & families achieve
Safety, Stability & Meaningful Employment

At Mesa County Department of Human Services (MCDHS), our work is grounded in a clear organizational foundation that guides how we serve our community from the inside out.

We begin with confidence and building trust among our clients, employees and the broader community. This trust is strengthened through mastery, demonstrated in our commitment to authentic communication, reliable behaviors and demonstrated outcomes.

These practices are rooted in our core values: humanity, honesty, balance, inclusion, and teamwork. These values shape how we interact with one another and those we serve.

Supporting this foundation are our core competencies, including a strong continuum of care, fiscal stewardship, engaged assessment and strategic partnerships. These ensure that our services are coordinated, effective and responsive to community needs.

All of this work drives our mission: to help individuals and families achieve safety, stability and meaningful employment.

Community Impact

Stability

36.3% of Mesa County residents served by MCDHS

\$502M in food and Medical benefits were paid annually for Mesa County residents

\$14.4M collected in child support and paid to custodial caregivers, supporting basic needs and family stability, and reducing public assistance reliance

\$2.3M in federal & state revenue went to senior services

\$7M in one time or new monthly benefits to veterans and their families

Meaningful Employment

\$785k invested to support local employers, helping businesses meet workforce needs and strengthen the local economy

\$11,492 is the median annual wage increase for participants in our Workforce Center programs

51 individuals graduated from the Workforce Center's GED program

Safety

2,382 Adult Protective Services referrals

4,559 Child Protection referrals



Stability

Economic Assistance programs provide food and medical support. Each year, MCDHS brings in over half a billion dollars in state and federal funding, with most of that staying in Mesa County to boost our local economy.

42k Individuals receiving one or more public benefits, with 60% of those employed

\$455.6 million in Health First Colorado expenditures injected into local economy

\$47 million in food/cash benefits injected in our economy **82** MCDHS employees

Veterans Service Officers provide support to Veterans and their families through exploring VA benefits, disability ratings, pension, and survivor benefits.

\$7 million in one time or monthly benefits to local Veterans

4,266 Veterans served **2** MCDHS employees

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) builds and supports a healthy and thriving senior community such as senior centers, in-home meals, advocacy-Ombudsman, and legal services. Our AAA program services the Northwest Region, which includes Mesa, Garfield, Rio Blanco and Moffat counties.

\$2.3 million in services brought to regional counties **6,005** individuals served

3.5 MCDHS employees

Child Support Services includes parents and caregivers who need assistance establishing, enforcing, or modifying support orders. Services include establishing paternity, calculating and enforcing support payments, locating noncustodial parents, modifying orders as circumstances change, and providing guidance to ensure children receive financial support for their well-being.

\$14.4 million in child support collected **25** MCDHS employees

Meaningful Employment

The Workforce Center is housed within MCDHS, and our department is unique in that only four other counties are structured this way. This provides the opportunity for a continuum of services to help individuals achieve self-sufficiency.

Job Seekers

Programs open to all, such as resume building, mock interviews, job readiness testing and job search support, help participants increase wages and maintain employment over time.

\$11,492 annual median wage increase

71% job retention rate after one year

Business Services

The Workforce Center also supports local employers by funding internships and on-the-job training, graduating students from its GED program, and hosting multiple job fairs involving many industries each year.

51 GED graduates

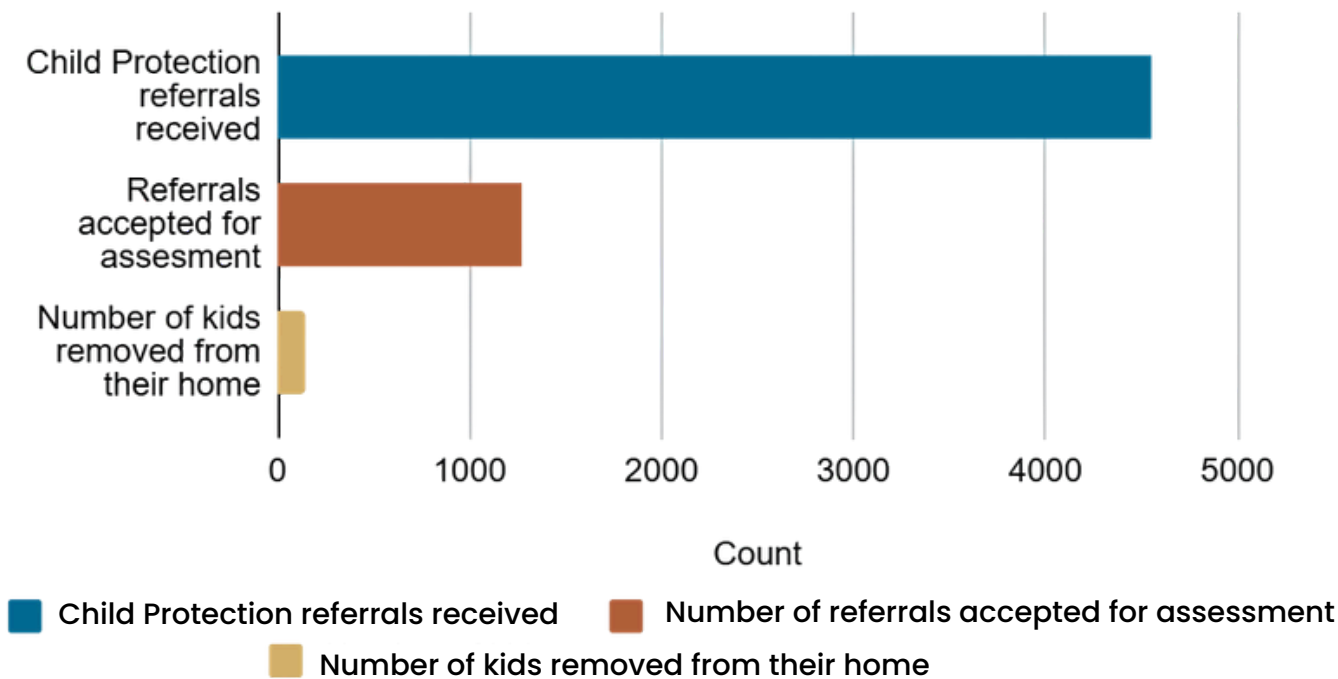
\$780,000 paid to offset employee wages



Safety

Child Welfare reviews reports of abuse or neglect to determine next steps. When concerns meet that threshold, families participate in an assessment or safety investigation. When immediate safety concerns are identified, children may be placed outside the home, with nearly half remaining connected to family through kinship placements. Out of 4,667 referrals received in 2025, roughly 27% were accepted for assessment, and just 13% of those resulted in kids being removed from the home.

2025 Child Welfare Referrals



Adult Protective Services (APS) investigates abuse and neglect allegations for at-risk adults. The difference between Child Welfare and Adult Protection is that investigations can only occur if the adult has diminished capacity, such as Alzheimer's. Adults have the right to self-determination, so if an individual is deemed competent and chooses to live in a hoarding situation, they have the right to do so.

2382

APS referrals received

46%

cases referred to additional services



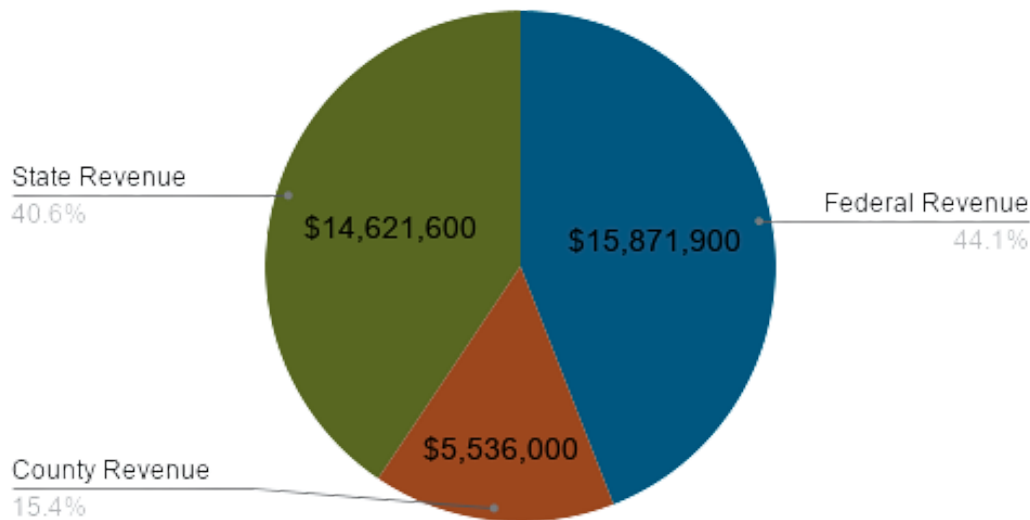
Fiscal

MCDHS is committed to remaining highly adaptable, prioritizing fiscal stewardship and efficiency above all else to ensure essential services to our community remain available and accessible.

Our \$36M budget expresses the financial effort required to meet the mandated safety, stability, and meaningful employment needs of the citizens of Mesa County, as determined by local, state or federal law and policy.

This budget consists State, Federal and county funding streams.

Funding sources (2026 adopted budget)



Anticipated challenges in 2026:

- Increased service demand: We expect continued growth in the number of individuals seeking our services.
- Unfunded mandates: Requiring us to commit substantial resources to new rules and programmatic requirements without corresponding revenue.
- Statewide budget shortfalls: While we strive for efficiency, relying on current revenue streams to meet escalating operational costs is proving unsustainable.
- Shifting budget priorities: Changes in legislative focus and funding adds another layer of instability making multi-year planning exceedingly difficult.



Accountability

State measures

Performance measures set by the State are used to monitor how well county based programs are working. These measures are reviewed monthly with leadership and the Board of County Commissioners. A few examples as of Dec. 2025 are:

- 97% of SNAP new applications are processed within the state guidelines of 30 days
 - 98% of new Medicaid applications are processed within the state guidelines of 45 days
 - 99% of monthly contacts in Adult Protection are within the state guidelines of 35 days
 - 90% of our initial response time (immediate, 3-day or 5-day) to child welfare abuse and neglect assessments are within the state guidelines
 - 100% of new child support cases are initiated within 20 days
-

Fraud measures

MCDHS also monitors progress and reports monthly in all areas of our programs. The Fraud & Recovery team proactively investigates benefit fraud allegations. In 2025, the team completed 132 investigations, leading to 42 intentional program violations. These investigations are actively recovering over \$326,000 in ineligible benefit payments.



Accountability

Staffing

MCDHS prioritizes staff retention as a core strategy to enhance operational effectiveness. In 2025, we recorded a 21% employee turnover rate. This was down by 4.25% from 2024 and is significantly less than the national average for this industry. Retention is essential because it:

- Significantly reduces the costs and lost efficiency associated with recruiting and training new employees.
- Preserves valuable institutional knowledge.
- Boosts overall team productivity.
- Fosters a positive and stable workplace culture.
- Ultimately, improves the quality of service delivered to clients.





Child Welfare

Child Welfare provides a range of services to support children, youth and families. Foster Care services include conducting home studies and certifying families who wish to provide foster homes.

Child Protection staff receive and investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect. Adolescent Services work closely with families and the juvenile court system to provide guidance, support and resources for youth in conflict.

Core services also include adoption, permanency planning and family preservation efforts.

Workforce Center

Veterans Services

Assist Veterans and their qualifying family members accessing and securing VA benefits such as disability, pension and survivor benefits. Also have staff dedicated to helping Veterans navigate resources and find employment.

Child Support

Child Support helps families by establishing parentage, setting up and enforcing child and medical support orders, and updating orders when circumstances change.

Economic Assistance

Medicaid (Health First Colorado)

Medicaid is public health coverage that helps eligible individuals pay for doctor visits, hospital care, prescriptions, mental health care, etc..

SNAP

SNAP is a food assistance program that helps eligible applicants buy groceries each month.

Aid to the Needy Disabled

Adult Financial program that provides cash assistance to eligible adults with a disability.

Home Care Allowance (HCA)

Adult Financial program that helps eligible adults pay for home-based care.

Adult Protection

APS connects at-risk adults with services and resources. An at-risk adult is defined as an individual 18 years of age or older who is susceptible to mistreatment or self-neglect because the individual is unable to perform or obtain services necessary for the individual's health, safety and welfare.

Area Agency on Aging

Whether you are an older adult yourself, or a caregiver concerned about the well-being and independence of an older adult, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is ready to help with links to services.

Business Services

Serving the needs of businesses with no-cost services such as employee assessments and connections to a skilled workforce.

Job Seeker Services

Helping prepare job seekers for employment through job search assistance, career coaching, resume building, and mock interviews. Also providing opportunities for education, GED, training, work-based learning and connections to employment opportunities.

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Income and eligibility-based program designed to assist families with the cost of child care.

Old Age Pension (OAP)

Adult Financial program that may provide cash assistance and limited health care benefits to eligible adults aged 60 or older.

TANF/Colorado Works

Colorado's TANF program helps eligible families with children through temporary cash assistance and case management that promotes stability, self-efficiency, and employment.

Long-Term Care

Long-term care includes ongoing services and supports for eligible individuals who need help with daily activities because of age, disability or medical needs, whether at home, in the community or in a facility.