

As judge blocks Trump's freeze on loans and grants, here are the Mass. programs and projects that could be affected

By [Danny McDonald](#), [Samantha J. Gross](#), [Jason Laughlin](#) and [John Hilliard](#) Globe Staff, Updated January 28, 2025, 7:54 p.m.



Governor Maura Healey said that among the programs she expects to be affected by federal funding are infrastructure projects such as the overhaul of the aging Cape Cod bridges. JOHN TLUMACKI/GLOBE STAFF

The Trump administration's attempt to temporarily freeze federal grants and loans was temporarily blocked by a federal judge Tuesday afternoon as lawmakers, local officials, and advocates worried it could throw trillions of dollars into limbo and cause widespread

chaos in schools, health centers and hospitals, child care centers and universities, and on public works and transit operations.

In a memo late Monday, Matthew J. Vaeth, acting director for the federal Office of Management and Budget, set out the Trump's administration's reasoning for the freeze: "The use of Federal resources to advance Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green new deal social engineering policies is a waste of taxpayer dollars that does not improve the day-to-day lives of those we serve."

But US District Judge Loren L. AliKhan blocked the administration's action, minutes before it was set to go into effect. The administrative stay pauses the freeze until Monday.

Confusion reigned Tuesday afternoon regarding the scope of the order, and a subsequent memo from OMB, [tweeted out by a Washington Post reporter](#), stated the pause would not impact a slew of federal programs, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, funds for small businesses and farmers, rental assistance, Pell grants, and Head Start.

"This is a wide-ranging threat that impacts every city around the country and the most basic services that are offered, on funding for police and fire and housing and addressing homelessness. So I can't imagine that it will be implemented to the fullest," Boston Mayor Michelle Wu said Tuesday. "It affects blue states. It affects red states. It's really every single person in the country is impacted in some way here. So we will wait to see what happens.

Governor Maura Healey added that her administration is still "analyzing" what President Trump's order could mean for state programs and projects that receive federal funding, but is concerned about how the state will fare in coming weeks and months.

She said that among programs affected will be funding for low-income families who send their children to preschool, another that provides heating for low-income seniors, and infrastructure projects such as the overhaul of the aging Cape Cod bridges.

Her concerns were mirrored by officials in neighboring [Rhode Island](#) and [New Hampshire](#).

These are just some of the areas that could be directly affected by a funding freeze:

Health care

Some 50 community health centers in the state could see an immediate and dramatic impact from a funding freeze, said Michael Curry, president of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers. More than 1 million people statewide rely on these community clinics for health care, many of whom are struggling financially and have difficulty accessing other kinds of health care providers.

Some clinics get as much as 40 percent of their budgets from the federal government, about \$130 million statewide. Curry said health centers were not able to access federal funds Tuesday.

Top 10 Mass. departments receiving federal grant funding

Based on the fiscal year 2025 state budget

Elementary and Secondary Education			\$1.7B
Housing and Livable Communities		\$1.1B	
Emergency Management Agency		\$935M	
Public Health		\$583.7M	
Career Services		\$576.4M	
Economic Development	\$133M		
Rehabilitation Commission	\$104.6M		
Elder Affairs	\$94M		
Refugees and Immigrants	\$91.2M		
Unemployment Assistance	\$90.7M		

”This is very consequential,” Curry said, “this is very devastating.”

One of those community institutions is Fenway Health in Boston, which serves roughly 33,000 patients a year, said Dallas Ducar, its executive vice president for donor

engagement and external relations. Fenway receives about \$20 million a year in federal funding, or 14 percent of its budget for health care, public health programs, and research.

“Right now, we are assessing the immediate actions we may need to take to ensure the sustainability of our organization,” Ducar said.

Fenway is known for its decades-long care and advocacy for the LGBTQ+ community, and Ducar said potential restrictions on program income or changes in grant conditions going forward could significantly affect the future of such critical services like gender affirming care, which was targeted by a Trump executive order on Tuesday. But the health center also provides primary care, dental, optometry and other essential health services, as well.

Carlene Pavlos, executive director of the Massachusetts Public Health Alliance, suggested there was a bigger reason behind Trump’s funding pause.

”All of it feels intentional to sow a sense of panic and chaos, uncertainty, all of which leads to fear,” Pavlos said. “Who has the power and what is the intent of this order? Is it intended to claw back money already in state hands, is it intended to not make new awards, is it intended to not follow through on existing awards?”

Top 10 Mass. accounts receiving federal grants in fiscal year 2025

Account	Department	Grant amount
COVID-19 Pandemic OG 2020	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency	\$800M
Special Assistance Funds	Elementary and Secondary Education	\$541M
Housing Choice Voucher	Housing and Livable Communities	\$472M
Disabled Veterans Outreach Program	Career Services	\$437M
Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund COVID-19	Elementary and Secondary Education	\$359M
Special Education Grants	Elementary and Secondary Education	\$340M
Title I Basic Program	Elementary and Secondary Education	\$290M
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program	Housing and Livable Communities	\$260M
Nutritional Status of Women, Infants and Children	Public Health	\$124M

Medicaid

Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell said Tuesday that the state tried to draw \$40 million in Medicaid funds on Monday but had not received the payment yet. The website states use to get Medicaid payments from the federal government is down, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in an X social media post.

Leavitt said states would still have their payments processed. The outage, which occurred just after the White House ordered a pause on federal grants, raises concerns that billions in Medicaid funding would be cut off.

“No payments have been affected,” Leavitt said, and “the portal will be back online shortly.”

Campbell is one of 23 Democratic attorneys general who are [seeking a court order](#) to stop the enforcement of Trump’s policy.

”The president’s directive to pause federal aid, simply put, violates the separation of powers,” Campbell said Tuesday.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services reported Tuesday that it received clarification from the Office of Management and Budget that programs such as Medicaid and SNAP can continue.

Primary and secondary education

In one urban Massachusetts school district, Trump's pause on federal grants Tuesday was chaotic, as administrators scrambled to figure out what funds could be affected, according to the district's superintendent. The superintendent asked not to be named, and the school district as well, out of fear of retaliation by the Trump administration.

A sizable piece of the district's budget is federally funded, and if that money was unavailable, it could have significant repercussions for staffing, while programs like special education, literacy, and services for English language learners could be affected.

"I don't know what we are going to do," the superintendent said.

The superintendent said many of the district's students were born outside of the United States, and many speak languages other than English.

"I'm looking at kids and families that are in my school district, and they are scared," the superintendent said. "The ones that have come here to make their lives in the United States from other countries, they are scared."

Pam Nourse, the executive director of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, criticized the prospect of having federal grant money stripped away for an uncertain amount of time. The Boston-based organization supports parents of special-education students.

"Each week that our doors would be closed, we estimate about 200 parents would not be getting help with resources and educational options for their children with disabilities and complex health needs," Nourse said.

Higher education

Federal Pell Grants for low-income students and federal student loans are excluded from the freeze, said Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C., which represents more than 1,600 colleges and universities.

However, funds for work-study programs are included in the freeze. Many students rely on the programs to earn money to help pay for college.

The idea that hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of grants will be reviewed in a timely manner is "preposterous," said Mitchell. In the meantime, he said, university leaders are worried. Individual colleges will have to make budgeting decisions during the freeze, which could cause a "cash flow problem" for many institutions.

"We don't know enough about the particulars of this freeze to know whether to be angry, worried, resentful, maybe even hopeful, and that's going to evolve over the next couple of days," Mitchell said.

Mark Becker, president of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, said in a statement the freeze "will sideline world-leading American scientists who are working toward cures for cancer, developing breakthroughs in AI and quantum computing, driving progress in advanced manufacturing, and supporting American farmers."

Infrastructure

[A list of major federal funds awarded to Massachusetts](#) includes billions for replacing bridges on Cape Cod and in downtown Boston, \$335 million for rebuilding a portion of the Massachusetts Turnpike that could transform the Allston neighborhood of Boston, tens of millions for cleaner, greener buses, and more than \$380 million to modernize New England's power grid.

It was not immediately clear how any of those projects would be impacted by Tuesday's news, if at all.

“You’ve got a lot of people busting their butts, working hard to build out this infrastructure,” Healey said. “To have it just stopped overnight . . . I don’t get it.”

Kay Lazar, Hilary Burns, and Emma Platoff of the Globe staff contributed to this story.

Danny McDonald can be reached at daniel.mcdonald@globe.com. Follow him [@Danny__McDonald](https://twitter.com/Danny__McDonald). Samantha J. Gross can be reached at samantha.gross@globe.com. Follow her [@samanthajgross](https://twitter.com/samanthajgross). Jason Laughlin can be reached at jason.laughlin@globe.com. Follow him [@jasmlaughlin](https://twitter.com/jasmlaughlin). Follow him on Bluesky at [iamjohnhilliard.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/iamjohnhilliard.bsky.social). He can also be reached on Signal at [john_hilliard.70](https://signal.me/#joh_hilliard.70) or email him at john.hilliard@globe.com.



Show 160 comments