

- The economic downturn has contributed to historic growth in public assistance caseloads. For example, the Colorado Works caseload has increased by **63.3%**, Food Assistance has increased by **84.1%**, and Medicaid has increased by **45.8%**.
- Counties must adhere to Federal and State rules and regulations when determining eligibility for these programs.
- The State has not had the ability to respond to caseload growth with additional administrative funding outside the Federal stimulus funds.

**COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

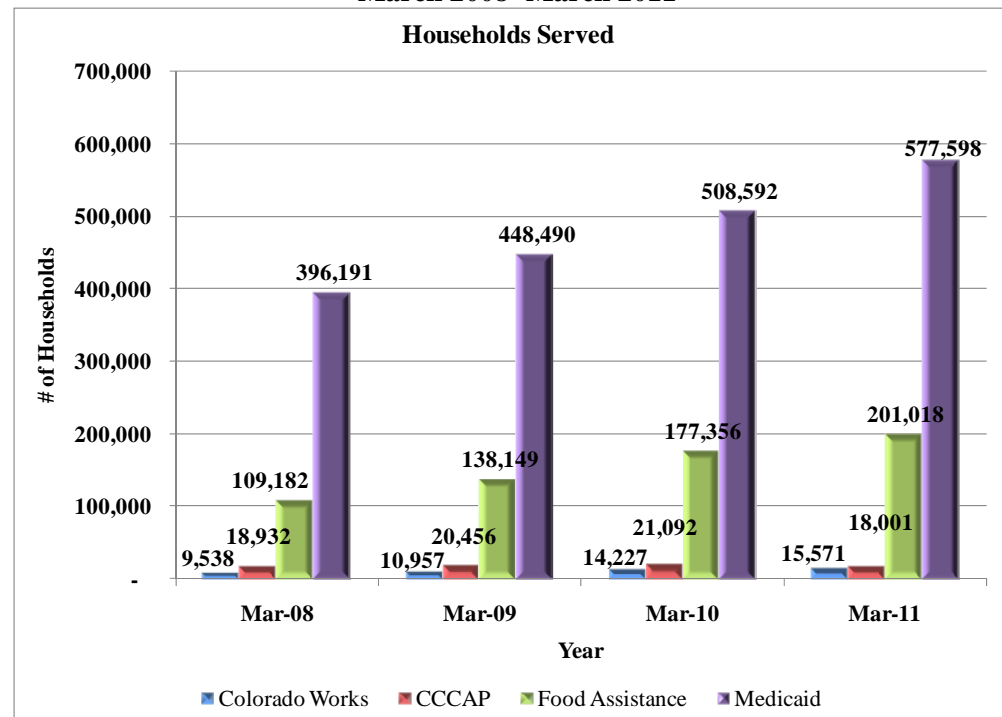
Colorado Counties are responsible for receiving and processing applications and determining eligibility for the following public financial assistance programs: Colorado Works (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF), Food Assistance, Adult Financial Assistance, Adult Medical Assistance, Family and Children’s Medical Assistance, Child Support Enforcement, and Colorado Child Care Assistance Program.

Counties follow federal and state rules and regulations to determine an applicant’s eligibility for assistance, as well as follow varying mandated processing timeframes and documentation requirements. Cases are managed in the State’s computerized systems, including: Colorado Benefits Management System (CBMS), Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES), and the Child Care Automated Tracking System (CHATS).

**Caseload Increases**

The economic downturn continues to impact growth in public assistance caseloads across the State. Public assistance programs across the board have experienced an increase in total caseloads when comparing March 2008, March 2009, March 2010, and March 2011. The Colorado Works caseload has increased by **63.3%**, the Food Assistance caseload has increased by **84.1%**, and the Medicaid caseload has increased by **45.8%**. The CCCAP caseload has decreased by 4.9% from March 2008 to March 2011 because of decreases to the allocation to pre-2008 levels, resulting in changing eligibility requirements.

**Households Served by Public Assistance Programs, March 2008- March 2011**



**Source:** Colorado Benefits Management System Issuance Data;

\*Data is point-in-time and does not reflect annual totals.

## **Funding**

The State has not had the ability to respond with any further increases in funding to meet the growing need for public assistance benefits with the exception of increased funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

## **COMPLEXITY IN ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING**

Public assistance program requirements for processing cases and re-determining eligibility are not aligned within the programs resulting in more complex processing. Different program eligibility requirements also add to the complexities within program determination. This is compounded by the inefficiencies of the State computer system (CBMS).