

**2026 Legislative Priority Proposal**  
**Updated: 9/15/25**

<b>State funding availability for Emergency Management</b>	
<b>Jefferson County (Commissioner Lesley Dahlkemper)</b>	
Preferred Contact:	ldahlkem@jeffco.us
Co-Sponsoring Counties/Commissioners:	Rachel Zenzinger, Andy Kerr.
Who is your subject matter expert?	Nathaniel Whittington, Emergency Management Manager, 303-271-4947, njwhittington@jeffco.us
Has this proposal been approved by your BoCC?	Yes.
Have you reviewed the CCI Instructional Memo?	Yes.
Describe the problem your proposal will solve.	The State of Colorado's statutory framework--specifically C.R.S. 24 33.5 707--emphasizes the foundational role of local emergency management directors or coordinators in delivering disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery (C.R.S. 24 33.5 707(4)). As FEMA considers sweeping reforms and reductions to funding, county governments are burdened with increased costs to support all aspects of emergency management. Additionally, the state faces budget restrictions and cannot support an increase in funding through the general fund.
Areas of Impact:	Functionality of county programs or services.
What is the ultimate source of this problem?	There is a funding shortfall.
What is your initial proposal to solve this problem?	As federal capacity contracts, the argument for robust, state-supported emergency management becomes increasingly compelling. Strengthening local emergency management efforts empowers community-led mitigation, preparedness, and recovery. Similar to the Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP), which made the state's forest restoration and wildfire risk mitigation grants available to counties through <a href="#">SB21-259</a> , the state can restructure state funding so that counties are eligible to receive funding for emergency management. Additionally, the state can assist local emergency management efforts by creating a state-wide mutual aid agreement and a dashboard/data base of available resources.
Please provide sample language for this solution.	The funding solution would require a bill similar to <a href="#">SB21-259</a> .

Are there any solutions that do not require state-level legislation? Has your county explored these alternatives?	The state-wide mutual aid agreement and dashboard do not require legislation.
Has CCI or any other organizations sought a solution to this problem before?	No.
What possible organization(s) would <b>support</b> your proposed solution?	Colorado Emergency Management Association.
What possible organization(s) would <b>oppose</b> your proposed solution?	Unknown.
Have you spoken with any legislators about your proposed solution? If so, what was their response?	No.
What are the financial implications of this <b>problem</b> to your county?  Are there any financial implications to this <b>solution</b> either?	The problem does not require new funding from the state; just reprioritization and redistribution of existing funding.
What are the financial implications of this <b>problem</b> to any other impacted parties?  What are the financial implications of this <b>solution</b> to any other impacted parties? <i>Please consider any</i>	Successful local emergency management reduces long-term recovery costs.

relevant Colorado State Departments.	
Staff Feedback	<p><u>Risk / Difficulty:</u> Medium - There is precedent for restructuring grant funding for public safety purposes such that counties are eligible to apply for and receive additional funding (e.g. Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program). It is unknown at this time if the state is willing to explore this bill concept at a time when the Governor's Office is using money from a variety of funds to cover the costs associated with the loss of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money.</p> <p><u>Time Commitment:</u> Medium - This bill proposal will require extensive conversations with the state Department of Public Safety's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, as well members and staff of the Joint Budget Committee.</p>