



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 26-1033: EXPANDING THE COLORADO COTTAGE FOODS ACT

Prime Sponsors:

Rep. Gonzalez R.; Duran
Sen. Rodriguez; Pelton B.

Fiscal Analyst:

Brendan Fung, 303-866-4781
brendan.fung@coleg.gov

Bill Outcome: Signed into Law

Drafting Number: LLS 26-0535

Version: Final Fiscal Note

Date: July 13, 2026

Fiscal note status: The final fiscal note reflects the enacted bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill expands the Colorado Cottage Food Acts to include the production and sale of refrigerated food, and makes changes to the act's applicability, requirements, and penalty authorization.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- State Revenue
- State Expenditures
- State Transfers
- Local Government

Appropriations. For FY 2026-27, the bill requires and includes an appropriation of \$119,354 to the Department of Public Health and Environment.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Out Year FY 2028-29	Out Year FY 2029-30
State Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$141,860	\$144,860	\$144,860	\$144,860
Transferred Funds	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE

Fund sources for these impacts are shown in the table below.

Table 1A
State Expenditures

Fund Source	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Out Year FY 2028-29	Out Year FY 2029-30
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$109,074	\$122,354
Cash Funds	\$119,354	\$122,354	\$13,280	\$0
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Centrally Appropriated	\$22,506	\$22,506	\$22,506	\$22,506
Total Expenditures	\$141,860	\$144,860	\$144,860	\$144,860
Total FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE

General Fund is required in FY 2028-29, once transferred funding has been fully spent.

Table 1B
State Transfers

Fund Source	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Out Year FY 2028-29	Out Year FY 2029-30
Cottage Foods Cash Fund	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Medical Administration Fund	-\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Assisted Living Residence Fund	-\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Transfer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Summary of Legislation

The bill expands the Colorado Cottage Foods Act (CCFA) to include certain refrigerated products, eliminates the regulatory revenue cap on producers, and authorizes counties to impose fines on producers for specific actions.

CCFA Expansion

The CCFA currently allows producers to sell a limited range of nonhazardous and nonrefrigerated foods produced from their home kitchen, such as pickled fruits and vegetables, spices, teas, honey, and more. The bill expands the CCFA to include the production and sale of packaged foods that require refrigeration, such as tamales, burritos, tortas, but excludes other products such as raw milk, fermented foods, and alcohol. The bill also permits the production and sale of meat and meat products if the producer has been federally inspected or satisfies an inspection exemption.

Producers selling refrigerated food product must also:

- meet existing state and federal food safety regulations;
- follow all cooking, cooling, and holding temperature requirements established by the Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE);
- complete a food safety and handling course specific to time and temperature control;
- produce no more than five individual types of food that control time and temperature controls for safety;
- package produced foods that require time and temperature control; and
- upon request, provide the CDPHE and local public health agencies (LPHAs) with a list of produced foods that require time and temperature control.

On July 1, 2026, the bill requires the State Treasurer to transfer \$300,000 from two cash funds to the newly created Cottage Foods Cash Fund, which is subject to annual appropriation.

Registration

Beginning January 1, 2027, cottage food producers must annually register with the CDPHE before selling any products. Registrants must indicate the types of foods sold, and the department must issue each approved producer a registration number, which must be included on all labels affixed to products sold. Further, the CDPHE must provide a website address to registrants with contact information for consumers to report food-borne illnesses and verify a producer's registration. The bill repeals the requirement for local governments to create a voluntary registry of existing producers, and requires the CDPHE to maintain one that is publicly accessible and updated monthly.

Regulatory Cap

Current law caps CCFA regulations on individuals earning \$10,000 or less per year for each eligible food product sold. The bill increases this cap to \$150,000 or less per year, which the CDPHE must annually adjust for inflation. Producers may not operate multiple entities to circumvent the regulatory cap.

State and County Fines and Enforcement

Upon receipt of a consumer complaint or in the instance of a foodborne illness outbreak, the CDPHE and LPHAs may implement local response procedures, including additional training requirements and corrective action plans. They may also impose fines on producers that misbrand products or may cause a food-borne illness outbreak, and recover costs incurred during enforcement. If a producer misbrands food or violates the provisions of the bill three times within a year, they are prohibited from selling refrigerated foods in the state.

Background and Assumptions

Cottage Foods Program

The CDPHE currently regulates those cottage food producers that sell nonhazardous, nonrefrigerated products. At the current inquiry volume—approximately 50 inquiries per week—and existing staffing levels of 1.2 FTE, the cottage foods program is operating at full capacity. Explicitly authorizing meat and meat products is expected to increase both the volume and complexity of inquiries, as well as the number of complaints requiring follow-up and response. In particular, meat-related inquiries and investigations typically require substantially more staff time due to applicable federal regulatory requirements and the need for coordination with LPHAs.

Foodborne Illness Outbreaks

Homemade foods may be prepared in environments that lack commercial equipment, and refrigerated foods pose a higher risk of foodborne illness than foods currently covered by the CCFA. For context, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that food prepared in private homes has resulted in 978 foodborne illness outbreaks across the nation between 2013 and 2023.¹ Therefore, the costs identified in the fiscal note reflect public health responses to an assumed two outbreaks of foodborne illnesses per year in Colorado. Since such incidents are unpredictable, and the scale and types of pathogens involved vary, actual costs may depart from the fiscal note. In years with fewer outbreaks, some expenditures will not occur. In years with more or larger outbreaks, additional resources may be required, which will be addressed through the annual budget process.

Federal Meat Inspection

The Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA) requires all meat and meat food products intended for sale in commerce, including direct-to-consumer transactions, to be prepared in USDA-inspected facilities. The FMIA provides limited exemptions for private, uninspected home kitchens, including retail operations that use meat processed in a USDA-inspected facility and sold direct to consumers. Therefore, this fiscal note assumes that producers under the CCFA meet the bill's criteria to sell meat and meat products.

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [BEAM Dashboard](#).

State Revenue

Beginning in FY 2026-27, the bill may increase state revenue from fines and cost recovery mechanisms. Under the bill, producers that misbrand products or cause food borne illnesses are subject to a fine of up to \$100 per violation. Additionally, the CDPHE is authorized to recover costs from producers for investigations and inspections, not to exceed \$1,000 per instance. These impacts depend on a wide variety of complaints and outbreak occurrences, actions taken by producers, actual administrative costs incurred, and decisions made by the CDPHE. Therefore, the fiscal note cannot estimate revenue from fines and cost recovery. This revenue is subject to TABOR.

State Transfers

In FY 2026-27, the bill requires the following transfers to the Cottage Foods Cash Fund:

- \$200,000 from the Medication Administration Cash Fund; and
- \$100,000 from the Assisted Living Residence Cash Fund.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in the CDPHE by about \$142,000 in FY 2026-27, and \$145,000 in FY 2027-28 and FY 2028-29, as shown in Table 2 and discussed below. These costs are paid entirely from the Cottage Foods Cash Fund in the first two years, after which the transferred funds are depleted and costs are paid from the General Fund.

Department of Public Health and Environment

Staff

Beginning in FY 2026-27, the Division of Environmental Health and Sustainability in the CDPHE requires 1.0 FTE Environmental Protection Specialist II to respond to producer questions, review complaints, provide investigative support, develop guidance around refrigerated food production, coordinate with LPHAs, and ensure federal compliance. Staff costs and FTE are assumed to begin July 1, 2026, and include standard operating and capital outlay costs.

Laboratory Costs

Equipment and testing costs are estimated at \$20,000 per year, assuming that the department tests about 20 samples per outbreak at a rate of \$500 per test. Based on the bill's effective date, it is assumed that only one outbreak will occur in FY 2026-27.

Database Update

The CDPHE requires an estimated \$15,000 per year to update and maintain an existing database to include cottage food producer registrations. Workload to provide a website to registrants with contact information for consumers to report food-borne illnesses and verify a producer's registration can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

Table 2
State Expenditures
Department of Public Health and Environment

Cost Component	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28	Out Year FY 2028-29
Personal Services	\$86,074	\$86,074	\$86,074
Operating Expenses	\$1,280	\$1,280	\$1,280
Capital Outlay Costs	\$7,000	\$0	\$0
Laboratory Costs	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Database Update	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Centrally Appropriated Costs	\$22,506	\$22,506	\$22,506
Total Costs	<u>\$141,860</u>	<u>\$144,860</u>	<u>\$144,860</u>
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$109,074
Cottage Foods Cash Fund	\$119,354	\$122,354	\$13,280
Centrally Appropriated	\$22,506	\$22,506	\$22,506
Total FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE	1.0 FTE

Centrally Appropriated Costs

Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which include employee insurance and supplemental employee retirement payments, are shown in Table 2 above.

Local Government

To the extent that additional foodborne illness outbreaks occur or local governments implement response procedures, workload and costs will increase in LPHAs. Revenue will also increase if local agencies impose fines on producers for misbranding product or causing a foodborne illness outbreak, which is expected to offset costs at the local level.

Effective Date

This bill was signed into law by the Governor and took effect on June 4, 2026, except that section 2 and section 6 of the bill take effect January 1, 2027.

State Appropriations

For FY 2026-27, the bill requires and includes an appropriation of \$119,354 from the Cottage Foods Cash Fund to the Department of Public Health and Environment, with 1.0 FTE.

Without further action taken by the General Assembly, the CDPHE will require General Fund for this program in FY 2028-29, which will be addressed through the annual budget process.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Public Health and Environment