

[Fraud in Minnesota](#)

[Matt Sepic](#) and [Cait Kelley](#)

January 6, 2026 4:40 PM

Timeline: Fraud investigations stretch across Walz's tenure

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz [announced Jan. 5](#) that he would not seek a third term. The DFLer's decision came amid attacks from President Donald Trump and other Republicans over Walz's response to massive fraud in state-run social service programs.

There is no evidence that Walz took part in the fraud or committed any other crimes, but his political opponents say that he failed to stop the wholesale theft of taxpayer funds during his time in office.

"I have every confidence that if I gave it my all, we would win the race," Walz said during a brief news conference. But "I came to the conclusion that I can't give a political campaign my all."

Walz said he wanted to spend his final year as governor focused on fighting fraud in state programs instead of campaigning.

"Every minute that I spend defending my own political interests would be a minute I can't spend defending the people of Minnesota against the criminals who prey on our generosity and the cynics who want to prey on our differences."

Here is a timeline of how social services fraud unfolded during Walz's governorship. It's based on court documents and reporting from MPR News and other media outlets:

March 13, 2019 — Two months after Walz replaces fellow DFLer Mark Dayton as governor, Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles [releases a report on fraud](#) in Minnesota's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Nobles' review follows [allegations](#) reported by FOX 9 TV in 2018 that as much as \$100 million in child care funds was being funneled overseas to a Somali terror

group. While Nobles tells lawmakers that fraud in the program is a known problem, "we couldn't find evidence to substantiate that there is \$100 million in fraud in CCAP every year." Nobles says he found no evidence that taxpayer funds were being sent to terrorists.

March 18, 2019 — The inspector general of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Carolyn Ham, is put on investigative [leave](#) following the auditor's report.

"We take this incredibly seriously," Walz says. "We are doing our own internal investigations, and our goal is to bring accountability to the system and move forward. And at this time, that's about all I can say." DHS later [reassigns](#) Ham to another division.

April 2020 — During the COVID-19 pandemic, Twin Cities nonprofits Feeding Our Future and Partners in Quality Care (also known as Partners in Nutrition) dramatically increase sponsorship of meal distribution sites after the U.S. Department of Agriculture waives some of its rules for federal child nutrition programs. Among other things, the USDA allows for-profit restaurants to participate as meal sites when child care centers and after-school programs are shut down.

Aimee Bock, Feeding Our Future's executive director, grows her organization quickly by conspiring with dozens of people, including restaurant owners and their friends and relatives, to submit fraudulent reimbursement requests for millions of meals that they never served under the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the Summer Food Service Program.

Taxpayer funds from the USDA paid to Feeding Our Future via the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), which oversees the food programs on the state level, jump from \$3.5 million in 2019 to nearly \$43 million in 2020 before peaking at \$198 million in 2021.

Nov. 20, 2020 — Feeding Our Future sues MDE for racial discrimination, alleging that the department "wrongfully withheld federal

funding" and failed to approve dozens of meal sites operated by members of Minnesota's Somali American community in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Dec. 17, 2020 — MDE agrees to process Feeding Our Future's food site applications "in a reasonably prompt manner" in response to the nonprofit's request for a temporary restraining order.

April 2021 — MDE staff inform the FBI that "Feeding Our Future and sites under its sponsorship were diverting funds away" from taxpayer-funded child nutrition programs.

April 29, 2021 — MDE denies Feeding Our Future's request to sponsor 143 meal site applications because of "serious deficiencies as a sponsoring agency."

May 2021 — The FBI begins investigating Feeding Our Future.

June 24, 2021 — Ramsey County Judge John Guthmann finds MDE [in contempt](#) for moving too slowly on Feeding Our Future's meal site applications and orders MDE to pay the nonprofit \$47,500 in penalties and attorneys' fees.

A group of meal site operators celebrate Bock's short-lived legal victory with a party at Benadir Hall, a Minneapolis event venue later found to have been built with stolen taxpayer funds. Prosecutors would play [video of the celebration](#) at Bock's 2025 trial.

Jan. 20, 2022 — The FBI investigation [becomes public](#) when agents raid Feeding Our Future's offices, Aimee Bock's home and two dozen other homes and businesses.

Feb. 2022 — Feeding Our Future [dissolves](#). In a statement, Bock blames "negative media reports and frozen assets."

Sept. 20, 2022 — U.S. Attorney Andy Luger [announces charges](#) against the first four dozen Feeding Our Future defendants, including Aimee Bock. Federal prosecutors call it “the single largest COVID-19 fraud scheme in the country.”

Sept. 22, 2022 — Amid criticism from legislative Republicans and Scott Jensen, his GOP opponent in the gubernatorial race, [Walz defends MDE's response](#) to the Feeding Our Future allegations. “We caught this fraud. We caught it very early. We alerted the right people. We were taken to court. We were sued.”

Oct. 13, 2022 — The first three Feeding Our Future defendants [plead guilty](#).

Oct. 18, 2022 — During a [gubernatorial debate](#), Jensen blames Walz for the Feeding Our Future fraud. “Gov. Walz and his team could’ve stopped this anywhere along the line,” Jensen says. “Two questions are big on all of our minds: What did Gov. Walz know, and when did he know it?”

Nov. 8, 2022 — Walz [wins reelection](#) to a second term, beating Jensen 52 to 45 percent.

Jan. 6, 2023 — In a meeting with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Walz [proposes](#) more oversight of state grants, including more internal controls and inspectors at key agencies.

March 13, 2023 — Federal prosecutors [announce charges](#) against 10 more defendants as the Feeding Our Future investigation expands. Ultimately, 78 people would be charged by late 2025.

June 2023 — State lawmakers [approve nearly \\$1 billion](#) for Minnesota nonprofits. The spending package includes additional oversight for grants.

June 7, 2024 — After five weeks of trial testimony, a federal jury [convicts five people](#) connected to a small Shakopee restaurant of stealing \$47 million in taxpayer money by falsely claiming to have served 18 million meals to children. Jurors acquit two of the defendants.

U.S. District Judge Nancy Brasel halts the trial during closing arguments after several of the defendants, including one who was later acquitted, try to [bribe a juror](#) by dropping a Hallmark gift bag containing \$120,000 in cash at her home.

June 13, 2024 — In a [strongly worded report](#), Minnesota Legislative Auditor Judy Randall finds that “actions and inactions” by MDE opened the door for fraud in the child nutrition programs. “We can always do better,” Walz says in [response](#) to the report, but he denies any “malfeasance” on the part of state officials.

“There’s not a single state employee that was implicated in doing anything that was illegal,” Walz says. “They simply didn’t do as much due diligence as they should have.”

Aug. 6, 2024 — After President Joe Biden announces that he will not seek a second term, Vice President Kamala Harris chooses Walz as her running mate.

Sep. 4, 2024 — Congressional Republicans [attack Walz](#) over Feeding Our Future. House Education and Workforce Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) [subpoenas](#) the governor for documents related to the scheme.

Dec. 12, 2024 — The nutrition program fraud investigation expands into Medicaid fraud as [FBI raids autism treatment centers](#) in Minneapolis and St. Cloud.

Feds allege that the operator of Smart Therapy in Minneapolis stole \$14 million by recruiting parents in the Somali American community and “diagnosing” their children with autism regardless of the symptoms in a scheme to rip off Minnesota’s Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention program. The operator of Star Autism Center in St. Cloud is alleged to have stolen \$6 million in a similar manner.

Jan. 3, 2025 — In an executive order, Walz [directs](#) the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to create a new, centralized fraud investigation unit.

May 1, 2025 — Television station KARE11 airs an [investigative series](#) on fraud in Minnesota's Housing Stabilization Services Medicaid program, which draws the attention of the FBI and federal prosecutors.

July 1, 2025 — New anti-fraud [laws](#) take effect in Minnesota, including protections for whistleblowers and a measure to freeze state payments to those suspected of committing fraud.

July 16, 2025 — The FBI [executes search warrants](#) at five Twin Cities businesses as part of its Medicaid housing fraud probe.

Aug. 1, 2025 — Department of Human Services [announces shutdown](#) of Housing Stabilization Services program amid fraud concerns. Program [ends](#) Oct. 31.

Sep. 17, 2025 — Walz issues executive [order](#) directing state agencies to take more action to prevent fraud.

Sept. 18, 2025 — Federal prosecutors [charge eight people](#) with defrauding the Housing Stabilization Services program.

Sept. 24, 2025 — [Asha Farhan Hassan](#), the owner of Smart Therapy, becomes the first person charged with defrauding the Medicaid autism program and the 76th person charged in the Feeding Our Future investigation.

Nov. 29, 2025 — The New York Times publishes a [story](#) on Feeding Our Future and Medicaid, drawing fresh national attention to public program fraud in Minnesota.

Dec. 12, 2025 — Walz [appoints](#) former Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Superintendent Tim O'Malley as the first "Director of Program Integrity" in state government.

Dec. 16, 2025 — The Department of Human Services [pauses new licenses](#) for adult day care centers over concerns about fraud.

Dec. 18, 2025 — At a news conference to announce more charges in the Medicaid housing and autism program investigations, First Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson estimates that fraud in Minnesota Medicaid programs [may have cost taxpayers as much as \\$9 billion](#) since 2018.

Dec. 19, 2025 — Walz [questions](#) Thompson's \$9 billion fraud estimate as "speculating," but pledges to take accountability.

Dec. 26, 2025 — Conservative content creator Nick Shirley, with help from Minnesota Republicans, [posts a video](#) that alleges massive fraud in child care centers owned by Somali Americans. The state agency that oversees child care centers [later determines](#) that all nine sites that Shirley visited were "operating as expected."

Dec. 30, 2025 — The Trump Administration announces a [freeze](#) on federal child care funds to Minnesota in response to Shirley video.

Jan. 5, 2025 — Walz [drops his bid for a third term](#), saying he plans to focus on his administration's response to fraud in social service programs.