

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Grants & Research
Highway Safety Division



Notice of Solicitation of Applications for
FFY 2024 Car Seat Distribution Program

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I. Introduction

The Office of Grants and Research (OGR) is currently accepting applications from eligible entities for the FFY 2024 Car Seat Distribution Program. This program, funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), aims to reduce child passenger injuries and fatalities by ensuring **low-income families** are provided with free car seats and caregivers are educated on their proper installation and usage. Awarded applicants will be provided with car seats for distribution to families in need by certified child passenger safety (CPS) technicians.

OGR is the State Administering Agency (SAA) for NHTSA's traffic safety grants to reduce roadway crashes, injuries, fatalities, and their associated economic losses in Massachusetts. It is estimated that approximately \$400,000 will be made available for this program. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until either all the funds set aside for the program have been used or August 31, 2024, whichever comes first.

The application, car seat order form, and other solicitation-related documents are available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/car-seat-distribution-program>. Each applicant may submit an order valued at up to \$10,000; please keep in mind that resources are limited and all applicants must demonstrate sufficient need. There is no minimum order amount.

II. Background


Nationwide, traffic crashes are a leading cause of death for children aged 12 and under. Size- appropriate car seats installed and used correctly significantly reduce the risk of death and injury to children involved in crashes. However, improper seat installation and restraint misuse are widespread. NHTSA estimates 46 percent of seats are installed incorrectly by parents, and Massachusetts has a 58 percent misuse rate per the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF) online database in 2023.

Massachusetts state law requires all children riding in passenger motor vehicles to be in a federally approved child passenger restraint that is properly secured and fastened according to the manufacturer's instructions until they are 8 years old or more than 57 inches tall. When a child reaches the age of 8 and/or outgrow their booster seats, they must wear a seat belt.

III. Eligibility

Massachusetts municipal agencies, state agencies, not-for-profit hospitals, and 501 (c)(3) organizations serving children and/or families that meet all the requirements below are eligible to apply for this opportunity. Applicants must:

- Have at least one certified CPS technician on staff who is currently completing in-person seat checks for your organization. See [Section VIII](#) for more information.
- Identify low-income families in their community(-ies) and/or identify low-income serving organizations they will partner with to ensure distribution is prioritized to those who are most in need.
- Demonstrate need for the seats being requested, both the quantity and the seat type(s).
- Be a registered user of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF). See [Section VI](#) for more information.

 Returning applicants who received seats from this program in 2022 and/or 2023 and are **not** up to date with submitting check data into the NDCF for seats distributed will not be eligible to receive additional seats through this 2024 solicitation.

IV. Application Details

Eligible entities must submit the Online Application found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/car-seat-distribution-program>. The Car Seat Order Form must be uploaded to the Online Application as an Excel file. This Form has been updated to include a question regarding justification for each type of seat purchased. OGR will accept applications on a rolling basis until either all the funds set aside for the program are depleted or August 31, 2024, whichever comes first.

Each applicant may submit an order valued at up to \$10,000. Grant writers **MUST** consult with their CPS technician(s).

OGR and MA CPS Program staff will review all applications received to determine if the eligibility criteria stated throughout this solicitation has been met. It is important that applicants provide detailed answers to each question to justify the need for the seats (both the quantity and types) included in their order.

Applicants who do not demonstrate sufficient need or who fail to meet other eligibility requirements detailed in this document will not be awarded car seats.

If selected to receive car seats under this solicitation, OGR will submit all seat orders and delivery instructions to Mercury Distributing; tracking information may be provided once orders are shipped. Please note that seats may come in one or multiple shipments, depending on supplier inventory. OGR will do its best to ensure all delivery instructions are adhered to; however, we cannot guarantee that special requests will be met. Someone from the recipient organization must be present to accept the delivery. If you do not receive the correct order, you must let the delivery driver know. OGR will submit payment for all invoices directly to Mercury Distributing upon delivery and receipt.

OGR estimates that awarded agencies will receive their car seats approximately 2-4 weeks after their application has been received and approved by OGR.


V. Seat Distribution Guidelines

This opportunity is not a general giveaway for the public. As such, the availability of free seats must not be advertised publicly (e.g., on social media, in press releases, event announcements). Instead, subrecipients are required to make meaningful and substantial efforts to ensure seats go to low-income families. These efforts may involve work internally (patients, clients) or externally (partnering with local organizations, such as Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) offices, shelters, neighborhood health centers, and Boys & Girls Clubs). This process must be described in your application.

OGR has developed **the Car Seat Referral Form** to help with establishing partnerships and determining low-income status; thus, ensuring seats are provided to those most in need. Please see [Section IX](#) for more information.

Seats must be installed into vehicles by or with the help of certified technicians unless the caregiver does not own a vehicle and intends on using the seat for travel in someone else's vehicle. In this case, the technician may provide a pre-registered and unboxed seat to the caregiver and give as much instruction as possible on its proper installation and usage. A check form must always be filled out, with a liability statement signed by the caregiver, and submitted into the NDCF database even when no vehicle is present.

Subrecipients must distribute all seats at no cost. The car seats may not be part of a fundraiser or raffle and may not be sold.

 All seat checks involving the distribution of seats provided by this opportunity must be entered into the NDCF database, with “State Funds” entered in the Car Seat Donor field. See the next section for more information.

VI. National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF)

All seat checks involving the distribution of seats awarded resulting from this opportunity must be entered into the NDCF database. The NDCF streamlines data collection so organizations can better monitor trends, track car seat distribution, and educate clients, patients, and/or the public.

Applicant organizations must be registered to use the NDCF. To create an account, please visit <https://carseatcheckform.org> and follow the steps listed.

There are four options for entering seat checks into the NDCF database:

1. If connected to the Internet/Wi-Fi, the technician can use their phone/tablet/computer to sign into their account on <https://carseatcheckform.org>, select Create Check Form, complete all relevant fields, and submit directly into the NDCF database.
2. If connected to the Internet/Wi-Fi, the technician can use their phone/tablet/computer to sign into the NDCF App, select Create Check Form complete all relevant fields, press save, go to View or Submit Saved Check Forms, find the form and press Submit.
3. If not connected to the Internet/Wi-Fi, the technician can still use the NDCF App on their phone/tablet/computer. Select Create Check Form, complete all relevant fields, and press Save. Once the device is connected to the internet/Wi-Fi, the technician can go into View or Submit Saved Check Forms on the app, find the form and press Submit. Note: The technician must first sign into the app while online to load their settings to use the app offline.
4. Checks can also be recorded using the NDCF paper form (version 8.0) and then manually entered into the NDCF database using a phone/tablet/computer.

Please visit <https://www.cpsboard.org/ndcf/digital-user-guide> for more information, including tutorial videos.

VII. Award Conditions

- Car seats must be stored in a secure location.
- Car seats cannot be stored in a private residence.
- OGR is not responsible for redelivery costs resulting from staff not being present to accept delivery.
- Agencies must alert the delivery driver if they do not receive the correct car seat order.
 - Orders cannot be corrected after the driver departs the delivery site.
- Subrecipients must immediately report to OGR if they no longer have a certified technician on staff or have ended their CPS program and must coordinate with OGR the transfer of any undistributed car seats to another organization.
- A subrecipient who fails to comply with any of the requirements outlined in this document will not be eligible to receive future Car Seat Distribution Program awards.

VIII. Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification Training

The Massachusetts CPS Technician Certification Training is a 3-day course that combines classroom and hands-on learning. There is no cost to attend; OGR covers the costs of instructors and certification fees. To

be certified as a CPS Technician, you must attend the entire 3 days and pass both written (open book) quizzes and skills assessments. Successful completion certifies you as a CPS Technician for two years. Please visit [Safe Kids Worldwide](#) to search for upcoming trainings in MA.

If attending a training course to qualify for this opportunity, you are expected to serve your clients, patients, and/or community as a CPS Technician. Organizations who are awarded car seats through this opportunity but are found to have inactive technicians who were used to establish eligibility may not be eligible for this program in the future.

If you are looking to create a new CPS Program within your organization, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health created this toolkit to help: www.mass.gov/doc/child-passenger-safety-toolkit-for-pre-hospital-providers/download. While designed for EMS providers, it can also serve as a guide for non-EMS organizations.

IX. Other Resources Available to Applicants

Please direct any questions about this solicitation, the Online Application, or the Car Seat Distribution Program to OGR Program Coordinator, John Fabiano: John.Fabiano@mass.gov.

For questions related to CPS Technician Certification training opportunities, recertification, and using the NDCF, please contact Statewide Training Coordinator and Lead Instructor, Mandi Summers: Mandi.Summers@baystatehealth.org.



Referral Form

This form was developed to help subrecipients establish relationships with low-income serving organizations in their town(s) and to better identify families in need of a car seat. The subrecipient can either use this form themselves or provide this form to organizations who can screen clients/patients for need and then link families to technicians who can provide a seat and education. The form uses MassHealth as the low-income determinant and includes a listing of all MassHealth Plans' car seat benefits.

Using this form is optional; a copy of it can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/car-seat-distribution-program>.