

# **ANNUAL SYNAR REPORT**

**42 U.S.C. 300x-26**

OMB № 0930-0222

**FFY 2026**

**State: MA**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Annual Synar Report (ASR) format provides the means for states to comply with the reporting provisions of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x-26) and the Tobacco Regulation for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) (45 C.F.R. 96.130 (e)).

### **How the Synar report helps the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention**

In accordance with the tobacco regulations, states are required to provide detailed information on progress made in enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access laws (FFY 2025 Compliance Progress) and future plans to ensure compliance with the Synar requirements to reduce youth and young adult tobacco access rates (FFY 2026 Intended Use Plan). These data are required by 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and will be used by the Secretary to evaluate state compliance with the statute. Part of the mission of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) is to assist states<sup>1</sup> by supporting Synar activities and providing technical assistance helpful in determining the type of enforcement measures and control strategies that are most effective. This information is helpful to CSAP in improving technical assistance resources and expertise on enforcement efforts and tobacco control program support activities, including state Synar program support services, through an enhanced technical assistance program involving conferences and workshops, development of training materials and guidance documents, and onsite technical assistance consultation.

### **How the Synar report can help states**

The information gathered for the Synar report can help states describe and analyze substate needs for program enhancements. These data can also be used to report to the state legislature and other state and local organizations on progress made to date in enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access laws when aggregated statistical data from state Synar reports can demonstrate to the Secretary the national progress in reducing youth and young adult tobacco access problems. This information will also provide Congress with a better understanding of state progress in implementing Synar, including state difficulties and successes in enforcing retailer compliance

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<sup>1</sup>The term “state” is used to refer to all the states and territories required to comply with Synar as part of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Program requirements (42 U.S.C. 300x-64 and 45 C.F.R. 96.121).

with youth and young adult tobacco access laws.

### **Getting assistance in completing the Synar report**

If you have questions about programmatic issues, you may call CSAP's Division of Primary Prevention at (240) 276-2550 and ask for your respective State Project Officer, or contact your State Project Officer directly by telephone or email. If you have questions about fiscal or grants management issues, you may call your Grants Management Specialist in the Office of Financial Resources, Division of Grants Management, at (240) 276-1422.

### **Where and when to submit the Synar report**

The ASR must be received by SAMHSA no later than December 31, 2025 and must be submitted in the format specified by these instructions. Use of the approved format will avoid delays in the review and approval process. The chief executive officer (or an authorized designee) of the applicant organization must sign page one of the ASR certifying that the state has complied with all reporting requirements.

The state must upload one copy of the ASR using the online WebBGAS (Block Grant Application System). In addition, the following items must be uploaded to WebBGAS:

- FFY 2026 Synar Survey Results: States that use the Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) must upload one copy of *SSES Tables 1–8* (in Excel) to WebBGAS. **Please note that, in the FFY 2026 ASR, SSES will generate Tables 6, 7, and 8, which are based on the optional microdata on product type, retail outlet type, and whether identification was requested. If your state does not submit these optional data, Tables 6, 7, and 8 will be blank. Tables 6, 7, and 8 are generated for the convenience of the state, and states are not required to submit completed versions of Tables 6, 7, or 8.** States that do not use SSES must upload one copy of ASR Forms 1, 4, and 5, and Forms 2 and 3, if applicable, (in Excel), as well as a database with the raw inspection data to WebBGAS.
- Synar Inspection Form: States must upload one blank copy of the inspection form used to record the result of each Synar inspection.
- Synar Inspection Protocol: States must upload a copy of the protocol used to train inspection teams on conducting and reporting the results of the Synar inspections. This document should be different than the Appendix C attached to the Annual Synar Report.
- A scanned copy of the signed Funding Agreements/Certifications

Each state SSA Director has been emailed a login ID and password to log onto the Synar section of the WebBGAS site.

## FFY 2026: FUNDING AGREEMENTS/CERTIFICATIONS

The following form must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or an authorized designee and submitted with this application. Documentation authorizing a designee must be attached to the application.

### PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES ACT AND SYNAR AMENDMENT

42 U.S.C. 300x-26 requires each state to submit an annual report of its progress in meeting the requirements of the Synar Amendment and its implementing regulation (45 C.F.R. 96.130) to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. By signing below, the chief executive officer (or an authorized designee) of the applicant organization certifies that the state has complied with these reporting requirements and the certifications as set forth below.

### SYNAR SURVEY SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

The state certifies that the Synar survey sampling methodology on file with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and submitted with the Annual Synar Report for FFY 2026 is up-to-date and approved by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

### SYNAR SURVEY INSPECTION PROTOCOL

The state certifies that the Synar Survey Inspection Protocol on file with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and submitted with the Annual Synar Report for FFY 2026 is up-to-date and approved by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

**State:** Massachusetts

**Name of Chief Executive Officer or Designee:** Robert Goldstein, MD, PhD

**Signature of CEO or Designee:** 

**Title:** Commissioner, Department of Public Health

**Date Signed:** 12/10/2025

**If signed by a designee, a copy of the designation must be attached.**

**SECTION I: FFY 2025 (Compliance Progress)****YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT ACCESS LAWS, ACTIVITIES, AND ENFORCEMENT**

42 U.S.C. 300x-26 requires the states to report information regarding the sale/distribution of tobacco products to individuals under age 21.

- 1. Please indicate any changes or additions to the state tobacco statute(s) relating to youth and young adult access since the last reporting year. If any changes were made to the state law(s) since the last reporting year, please upload a copy of the state law to WebBGAS. (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26).**

- a. Has there been a change in the minimum sale age for tobacco products?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*If Yes, current minimum age:* ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21

- b. Have there been any changes in state law that impact the state's protocol for conducting Synar inspections?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*If Yes, indicate change. (Check all that apply.)*

- ☐ Changed to require that law enforcement conduct inspections of tobacco outlets  
☐ Changed to make it illegal for youth and young adults to possess, purchase or receive tobacco  
☐ Changed to require ID to purchase tobacco  
☐ Changed definition of tobacco products  
☐ Other change(s) (Please describe.) \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Have there been any changes in state law that impact the following?**

Licensing of tobacco vendors ☐ Yes ☒ No

Penalties for sales to minors ☐ Yes ☒ No

Vending machines ☐ Yes ☒ No

Added product

categories to youth and young adult access law ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 2. Describe how the Annual Synar Report (see 45 C.F.R. 96.130(e)) was made public within the state prior to submission of the ASR. (Check all that apply.)**

☐ Placed on file for public review

☒ Posted on a state agency Web site (Please provide exact Web address and the date when the FFY 2026 ASR was posted to this Web address.)

*Web address:* <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-state-and-federal-laws-related-to-tobacco>

*Date published:* December 16, 2025

- ☐ Notice published in a newspaper or newsletter
- ☐ Public hearing
- ☐ Announced in a news release, a press conference, or discussed in a media interview
- ☐ Distributed for review as part of the SABG application process
- ☐ Distributed through the public library system
- ☐ Published in an annual register
- ☐ Other *(Please describe.) Initial data from the FFY 2026 Annual Synar Report was presented to local boards of health program partners meeting held on December 10, 2025. Attendees at this meeting represent our board of health enforcement partners and technical assistance providers funded by the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP). These program partners use this data in hearings and presentations to stakeholders. The Synar data was also shared at the Tobacco Free Mass (a statewide tobacco coalition) meeting on December 5, 2025.*

**3. Identify the following agency or agencies (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130).**

**a. The state agency(ies) designated by the Governor for oversight of the Synar requirements:**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

**b. The state agency(ies) responsible for conducting random, unannounced Synar inspections:**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health in conjunction with Local Boards of Health

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

**c. The state agency(ies) responsible for enforcing youth and young adult tobacco access law(s):**

\_\_\_\_\_

Has this changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?

☐ Yes ☒ No

**4. Identify the following agencies and describe their relationship with the agency responsible for the oversight of the Synar requirements.**

**a. Identify the state agency responsible for tobacco prevention activities (the agency that receives the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Tobacco Control Program funding).**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Tobacco

- b. **Has the responsible agency changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?**  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- c. **Describe the coordination and collaboration that occur between the agency responsible for tobacco prevention and the agency responsible for oversight of the Synar requirements. (Check all that apply.) The two agencies**  
☒ Are the same  
☐ Have a formal written memorandum of agreement  
☐ Have an informal partnership  
☐ Conduct joint planning activities  
☐ Combine resources  
☐ Have other collaborative arrangement(s) *(Please describe.)* \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No relationship
- d. **Does a state agency contract with the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products (FDA/CTP) to enforce the youth and young adult access and advertising restrictions in the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act?**  
☒ Yes ☐ No (if no, go to Question 5)
- e. **If yes, identify the state agency responsible for enforcing the youth and young adult access and advertising restrictions in the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (the agency that is under contract to the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products (FDA/CTP)).**  
*Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP). Molly Butler, Senior Tobacco Enforcement Coordinator, oversees both the Synar Program and the FDA Tobacco Enforcement Program for MTCP* \_\_\_\_\_
- f. **Has the responsible agency changed since last year's Annual Synar Report?**  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- g. **Describe the coordination and collaboration that occur between the agency contracted with the FDA to enforce federal youth and young adult tobacco access laws and the agency responsible for oversight of the Synar requirements. (Check all that apply.) The two agencies:**  
☒ Are the same  
☐ Have a formal written memorandum of agreement  
☐ Have an informal partnership  
☐ Conduct joint planning activities  
☐ Combine resources  
☐ Have other collaborative arrangement(s) *(Please describe.)* \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No relationship

h. Does the state use data from the FDA enforcement inspections for Synar survey reporting?

☒ Yes ☐ No

5. Please answer the following questions regarding the state's activities to enforce the state's youth and young adult access to tobacco law(s) in FFY 2025 (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130(e)).

a. Which one of the following describes the enforcement of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws carried out in your state? (Check one category only.)

- ☐ Enforcement is conducted exclusively by local law enforcement agencies.  
☐ Enforcement is conducted exclusively by state agency(ies).  
☒ Enforcement is conducted by both local *and* state agencies.

b. The following items concern penalties imposed for all violations of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws by LOCAL AND/OR STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (this does not include enforcement of local laws or federal youth and young adult tobacco access laws). Please fill in the number requested. If state law does not allow for an item, please mark "NA" (not applicable). If a response for an item is unknown, please mark "UNK." The chart must be filled in completely.

PENALTY	OWNERS	CLERKS	TOTAL
Number of <u>citations issued</u>	285	0	285
Number of <u>finest assessed</u>	284	0	284
Number of <u>permits/licenses suspended</u>	23		23
Number of <u>permits/licenses revoked</u>	1		1
Other (Please describe.) Referred to another agency	124		124

c. Are citations or warnings issued to retailers or clerks who sell tobacco to minors for inspections that are part of the Synar survey?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" to 5c, please describe the state's procedure for minimizing risk of bias to the survey results from retailers alerting each other to the presence of the survey teams:

State law mandates a one-thousand-dollar fine for a first-time violator of the state law, this applies for all state law violations, including a sale to a person under 21. In the case of a second violation within 36 months, a fine of two thousand dollars shall be imposed; and a third violation within 36 months, a five thousand dollar fine shall be imposed. In addition, state law also allows for a suspension as determined by the local Board of Health (BOH) after the first and second violations.

To minimize the risk of bias to survey results, it is MTCP protocol that correction orders and fines be issued after the full round of compliance checks has been completed instead of immediately after the sale. This protocol reduces the risk of “phone trees” that could potentially bias subsequent checks. This protocol also helps protect the safety and anonymity of the underage purchaser. For Synar checks that are completed by FDA Inspectors, the FDA handles all aspects of citations/warnings with their own process for warning letters, Civil Money Penalties, and the No Tobacco Sales Orders.

Many BOH collaboratives cover multiple cities/towns within a region of Massachusetts. At times, the inspectors that are out conducting the compliance checks are not “deputized” in that municipality to issue the ticket/fine. Referral to another agency is used when the local BOH administrative functions are needed. Each municipality BOH is responsible for issuing the correction orders to the retailer.

**d. Which one of the following best describes the level of enforcement of state youth and young adult access to tobacco laws carried out in your state? (Check one category only.)**

- ☐ Enforcement is conducted only at those outlets randomly selected for the Synar survey.
- ☐ Enforcement is conducted only at a subset of outlets not randomly selected for the Synar survey.
- ☒ Enforcement is conducted at a combination of outlets randomly selected for the Synar survey and outlets not randomly selected for the Synar survey.

**e. Did every tobacco outlet in the state receive at least one compliance check that included enforcement of the state youth and young adult tobacco access law(s) in the last year?**

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

**f. What additional activities are conducted in your state to support enforcement and compliance with state youth and young adult tobacco access law(s)? (Check all that apply and briefly describe each activity in the text boxes below each activity.)**

- ☐ Merchant education and/or training

For Synar FFY25, 211 municipalities received Board of Health (BOH) funding to provide merchant education and/or retail visits at each permitted retailer at least once during the fiscal year. Merchant education visits include checks for state required signage, sales of loose cigarettes, sales of restricted products, illegal self-service displays, and for current state and local permits. These visits also serve to educate store managers and clerks about tobacco sales laws and regulations that apply to tobacco products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS), FDA regulations, and local regulations that may be stronger than the state law.

Retailer education is available as an online training tool. It is offered in both English and Spanish. This is a free training tool that can be shared with clerks and staff. This retailer training is currently in the process of being redesigned and will be launched in early 2026.

In the spring of 2023, MTCP conducted a retailer outreach campaign that included mailing reminders about the minimum legal sales age of 21 and resources for retailer education. This postcard was sent out to all the current retailers in Massachusetts at the time. The mailing contained a “QR” code the retailer could use to connect to the training directly on their chosen device. Additional printed postcards are available at the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse for local programs to order and hand to retailers during their education visits.

The Massachusetts Health Officers Association Tobacco Program, funded by MTCP, is the entity that provides online retailer training as well as regional in-person trainings for tobacco retail owners interested in receiving in-person retailer training. The past fiscal year, John Snow Inc, (JSI) conducted the second phase of a project to get feedback on how MTCP could better support BOH with supporting their retailers. JSI conducted individual key informant interviews with BOH Regional Coordinators to elicit their thoughts on the challenges tobacco product retailers in their own regions face. Further participants were asked to identify consistent messages and tools on policy and practices that MTCP might adopt to support them, their boards of health, and others involved in tobacco sales compliance work across the Commonwealth. MTCP is in the process of incorporating the feedback into current and future work.

- ☐ Incentives for merchants who are in compliance (e.g., nonenforcement compliance checks in which compliant retailers are given positive reinforcement and noncompliant retailers are warned about youth and young adult access laws)

n/a

- ☒ Community education regarding youth and young adult access laws

Community education regarding youth access laws/local regulations is provided on a regular basis in the communities that currently have MTCP funded BOH. Technical assistance regarding youth access laws and regulations is provided to any interested boards of health through the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and the Massachusetts Health Officers Association, all funded by MTCP.

In addition, MDPH website, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-statistics-and-tobacco-policies-data> now hosts an interactive Tableau map where users can select their city or town from the drop-down box to obtain information on their local tobacco regulations such as permit capping and cigar packaging. Users can also use interactive maps to view smoking rates in their community relative to others across the state as well as other community-level health data on smoking-related chronic disease (asthma emergency room visits and lung cancer standardized incidence ratios) and number of intakes to the MA Quitline. MTCP also has an additional dashboard [An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control: Evaluation Data Overview | Mass.gov](#) which provides state-level data including retail sales, adult tobacco use and access rates, youth tobacco use and access rates, and cessation data. Both MTCP Dashboards will be updated in FY2026.

- ☐ Media use to publicize compliance inspection results

- ☒ Community mobilization to increase support for retailer compliance with youth and young adult access laws

Strong support for retailer compliance and enforcement of youth access laws exists in MA communities. BOHs funded by MTCP have continuous work plan activities that support increasing support for retailer compliance with youth and young adult access laws. In cities/towns without MTCP funding, BOH, can request assistance in developing a plan for retailer compliance and enforcement checks. Several of these municipalities have worked with the Massachusetts Health Officers Association and MTCP to determine free and low-cost ways that they can address compliance and enforcement of youth access to tobacco in their communities, such as creating a revolving fund using local tobacco permit fees and fines for violations. MTCP's Community Partnership Programs and The 84 Movement (youth engagement program) also help to increase community mobilization and support for youth prevention activities and regulations in communities across the Commonwealth

- ☒ Other activities (*Please list.*) \_\_\_\_\_

Over the past few years, meetings and coordination increased with inspectors at the Department of Revenue (DOR). This collaboration has led to an increased understanding of what each agency does in the tobacco retail environment. MTCP and DOR staff now coordinate notification of inspection activity so that local boards of health can follow up on any violations found by DOR and the DOR can follow up on any tax violations found by local BOH. A great outcome of this relationship has been increased retailer compliance to laws. DOR notifications of revocations, suspensions, and warning letters are uploaded into MTCP's database for our BOH programs to reference. This increased communication allows the local programs to have broader knowledge about retailer compliance in their purview. In addition, DOR inspectors let us know when they find illegal products that do not fall under their jurisdiction.

Jacqueline Doane, Director of MTCP is the Department of Public Health's appointed member of the Commonwealth's Illegal Tobacco Task Force. The Illegal Tobacco Task Force is a multi-agency task force created to combat illegal tobacco distribution and the resulting loss of revenue to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Task Force is co-chaired by designees from DOR and the State Police. In addition to DPH, designees also represent the Attorney General's Office, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General. The Task Force meets throughout the year and coordinates enforcement activity regarding illegal sale of untaxed tobacco products in the Commonwealth. As required by statute, the Task Force releases an Annual Report to the Legislature.

Coordination with the DPH Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) has continued to be successful. OLRH is using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to offer more tobacco services to the additional 140 communities that are currently not associated with a local funded tobacco program. MTCP has contracted with the Massachusetts Health Officers Association to support additional technical assistance, training, and consultation to implement and enforce local, state, and federal tobacco laws. Assistance to municipalities offered include review of local regulations, retailer training, compliance training, inspection training, and compliance checks. One of the goals of this funding is for local programs to incorporate tobacco tasks into their daily public health work, i.e. food inspections to help with sustainability.

## SYNAR SURVEY METHODS AND RESULTS

The following questions pertain to the survey methodology and results of the Synar survey used by the state to meet the requirements of the Synar Regulation in FFY 2025 (see 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 and 45 C.F.R. 96.130).

**6. Has the sampling methodology changed from the previous year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*The state is required to have an approved up-to-date description of the Synar sampling methodology on file with CSAP. Please submit a copy of your Synar Survey Sampling Methodology (Appendix B). If the sampling methodology changed from the previous reporting year, these changes must be reflected in the methodology submitted.*

**a. If yes, describe how and when this change was communicated to SAMHSA**

**7. Please answer the following questions regarding the state's annual random, unannounced inspections of tobacco outlets (see 45 C.F.R. 96.130(d)(2)).**

**a. Did the state use the optional Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) to analyze the Synar survey data?**

☒ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, upload a copy of SSES tables 1–8 (in Excel) to WebBGAS. Then go to Question 8. If No, continue to Question 7b.*

**b. Report the weighted and unweighted Retailer Violation Rate (RVR) estimates, the standard error, accuracy rate (number of eligible outlets divided by the total number of sampled outlets), and completion rate (number of eligible outlets inspected divided by the total number of eligible outlets).**

Unweighted RVR

Weighted RVR

Standard error (s.e.) of the (weighted) RVR

Fill in the blanks to calculate the right limit of the right-sided 95% confidence interval.

	+	(1.645	×		)	=	
RVR Estimate	plus	(1.645	times	Standard Error )	equals	Right Limit	

Accuracy rate

Completion rate

c. **Fill out Form 1 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5).** *(Required regardless of the sample design.)*

d. **How were the (weighted) RVR estimate and its standard error obtained?**  
*(Check the one that applies.)*

☐ Form 2 (Optional) in Appendix A (Forms 1–5) *(Attach completed Form 2.)*

☐ Other *(Please specify. Provide formulas and calculations or attach and explain the program code and output with description of all variable names.)*

e. **If stratification was used, did any strata in the sample contain only one outlet or cluster this year?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ No stratification

*If Yes, explain how this situation was dealt with in variance estimation.*

f. **Was a cluster sample design used?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, fill out and attach Form 3 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5), and answer the following question.*

*If No, go to Question 7g.*

**Were any certainty primary sampling units selected this year?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, explain how the certainty clusters were dealt with in variance estimation.*

g. **Report the following outlet sample sizes for the Synar survey.**

	Sample Size
<b>Effective sample size</b> (sample size needed to meet the SAMHSA precision requirement assuming simple random sampling)	
<b>Target sample size</b> (the product of the effective sample size and the design effect)	
<b>Original sample size</b> (inflated sample size of the target sample to counter the sample attrition due to ineligibility and noncompletion)	
<b>Eligible sample size</b> (number of outlets found to be eligible in the sample)	
<b>Final sample size</b> (number of eligible outlets in the sample for which an inspection was completed)	

h. **Fill out Form 4 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5).**

**8. Did the state's Synar survey use a list frame?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*If Yes, answer the following questions about its coverage.*

**a. The calendar year of the latest Sampling frame coverage study:** \_\_\_\_\_

**b. Percent coverage from the latest Sampling frame coverage study:** \_\_\_\_\_

**c. Was a new study conducted in this reporting period?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If Yes, please complete Appendix D (List Sampling Frame Coverage Study) and submit it with the Annual Synar Report.*

**d. The calendar year of the next coverage study planned:** \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Has the Synar survey inspection protocol changed from the previous year?**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*The state is required to have an approved up-to-date description of the Synar inspection protocol on file with CSAP. Please submit a copy of your Synar Survey Inspection Protocol (Appendix C). If the inspection protocol changed from the previous year, these changes must be reflected in the protocol submitted.*

**a. If Yes, describe how and when this change was communicated to SAMHSA**

**b. Provide the inspection period: From 10/1/2024 to 9/30/2025**  
MM/DD/YY MM/DD/YY

**c. Provide the number of youth and young adult inspectors used in the current inspection year:**

67

NOTE: If the state uses SSES, please ensure that the number reported in 9b matches that reported in SSES Table 4, or explain any difference.

The total number of underaged purchasers reported in Table 4 is listed as 34 Males and, 44 Females for a total of 78 which is inaccurate. The actual number of underaged purchasers used during this Synar period is 67. During this Synar year, 4 Males and 7 Females had a birthday that moved them into the next age group. Because the SSES system thinks it is an error when the underaged purchaser number has two different ages, we had to change the underaged purchaser number to reflect their birth date.

**d. Fill out and attach Form 5 in Appendix A (Forms 1–5). (Not required if the state used SSES to analyze the Synar survey data.)**

## SECTION II: FFY 2026 (Intended Use):

Public Law 42 U.S.C. 300x-26 of the Public Health Service Act and 45 C.F.R. 96.130 (e) (4, 5) require that the states provide information on future plans to ensure compliance with the Synar requirements to reduce youth and young adult tobacco access.

**1. In the upcoming year, does the state anticipate any changes in:**

Synar sampling methodology ☐ Yes ☒ No

Synar inspection protocol ☐ Yes ☒ No

*If changes are made in either the Synar sampling methodology or the Synar inspection protocol, the state is required to obtain approval from CSAP prior to implementation of the change and file an updated Synar Survey Sampling Methodology (Appendix B) or an updated Synar Survey Inspection Protocol (Appendix C), as appropriate.*

**2. Please describe the state's plans to maintain and/or reduce the target rate for Synar inspections to be completed in FFY 2026. Include a brief description of plans for law enforcement efforts to enforce youth and young adult tobacco access laws, activities that support law enforcement efforts to enforce youth and young adult tobacco access laws, and any anticipated changes in youth and young adult tobacco access legislation or regulation in the state.**

Massachusetts' Synar sales rate for FFY25 was 6.0% which is a decrease from 10.4% in FFY24. This decrease may be directly contributed to BOH consistently conducting routine inspections, compliance checks and education to retailers. Also, with the state enforcing compliance with the flavor restrictions, boards of health (BOH) were spending more time with retailers and reminding them about the importance of asking for age verification.

MTCP's youth access efforts have historically focused heavily on funding local BOH to provide merchant education and enforcement of youth access laws. In the beginning of FFY20, MTCP funded 196 out of 351 BOH to conduct youth prevention work. In the fall of 2020, due to the vaping epidemic and EVALI emergency, MTCP was awarded additional state funds to support municipal BOH in their enforcement efforts, bringing the total number of funded BOH to 199. In the spring of 2023, MTCP was able to open the procurement which allowed us to expand funding to 211 total communities as of July 1, 2023.

MTCP has continued the current scope of service for the funded BOH programs which includes a full round of compliance checks plus an additional round in the assigned Synar communities. The Synar assigned compliance checks are completed using approved protocols. In addition, it is required that funded programs complete the follow up checks at all locations that have violations within three to four months.

Also included in the scope of service is the requirement to complete one round of merchant education visits/inspections at each of their permitted tobacco retailers. The continued presence in the retail environment in addition to consistent compliance checks and enforcement has assisted to reduce the illegal sales rates to minors. Funded BOH programs conduct enforcement on violations and record the results of their enforcement actions in our Counter Tools Point of Sale Toolkit (POST) system.

In addition to local BOH efforts, the MA FDA Tobacco Enforcement Program is contracted to

conduct routine FDA youth buyer/compliance checks at 100% of the retailers in the state, with an emphasis in communities that have high non-compliance rates. The Massachusetts FDA Tobacco Enforcement Program, in place since 2010, is helping to provide strong enforcement and large fines in areas of the state that may not typically have active enforcement of youth access laws. Over the years, many retailers in Massachusetts have been assessed fines of \$7,115 to \$14,232 and there have been five no-tobacco-sale-orders (NTSO) issued. Many of these fines and NTSOs are at retailers in municipalities that do not receive MTCP funding.

MTCP continues to collaborate with the DOR and AGO on enforcement issues and compliance efforts to strengthen overall compliance with tobacco laws and regulations.

MTCP's core policy work continues to be done at the municipal level providing support and education for municipalities in passing comprehensive regulations – including cigar packaging restrictions, permit capping, and Nicotine Free Generations policies - to reduce youth exposure and access to tobacco products. To garner public and BOH support for these policies, MTCP-funded Community Partnership programs continue to work with funded and unfunded communities to help mobilize community members to attend public hearings to strengthen tobacco regulations.

Technical assistance in developing tobacco sales regulations will continue to be provided to BOH through our Community Assistance Statewide Team (CAST). MTCP will continue to maintain a database to track adopted regulations and to provide tools for community and retailer education to assist with post-enactment and effective enforcement of tobacco retail policies.

MTCP Epidemiology staff will continue to review POST data to identify geographic areas with higher-than-average sales rates to minors where additional TA may be needed. In addition, MTCP epidemiologists have developed an evaluation plan to assess the impact of recently passed local tobacco sales laws, such as Nicotine Free Generation policies, on tobacco sales rates to minors and minor's perception of how easy it is to access tobacco products and prevalence of tobacco use amongst their peers.

MTCP's statewide contracts with the Massachusetts Health Officers Association (MHOA), Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), and the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards (MAHB) will continue to provide local BOH with the skills, resources and technical assistance needed to help communities institute and/or strengthen local youth access laws and effectively provide tobacco services to communities. These statewide TA providers will assist both MTCP funded and unfunded boards of health. Communities that do not have MTCP funding will be offered technical assistance to help develop a plan to provide evidence-based tobacco services with limited resources. The goal of this approach is to build the capacity of communities to have a positive effect on the social norms related to youth tobacco use with or without MTCP funding.

**3. Describe any challenges the state faces in complying with the Synar regulation. (Check all that apply and describe each challenge in the text box below it.)**

☒ Limited resources for law enforcement of youth and young adult access laws

Resources to cover all cities and towns in Massachusetts continue to be limited. As of October 1, 2024, 211 of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts have MTCP funding for enforcement of youth access tobacco laws. In the municipalities without MTCP funding, the enforcement of state youth access laws continues to be limited, often resulting in a higher rate of illegal sales rates to minors. Additional enforcement costs are incurred by

communities when appeals, court, and/or litigation costs arise from enforcement activities.

The Massachusetts FDA Enforcement Program complements statewide efforts by providing one round of inspections at 100% of the state tobacco retailers each year.

As mentioned earlier in the report, beginning on July 1, 2024, MTCP received additional funding from the Office of Local and Regional Health to support additional technical assistance in communities without MTCP tobacco funding. MTCP will be analyzing this program/funding coordination and outcomes throughout the year.

- ☐ Limited resources for activities to support enforcement and compliance with youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limitations in the state youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limited public support for enforcement of youth and young adult tobacco access laws

- ☐ Limitations on completeness/accuracy of list of tobacco outlets

- ☐ Limited expertise in survey methodology

- ☐ Laws/regulations limiting the use of minors in tobacco inspections

- ☐ Difficulties recruiting youth and young adult inspectors

- ☐ Issues regarding the balance of inspections conducted by youth inspectors age 15 and under

- ☐ Issues regarding the balance of inspections conducted by one gender of youth and young adult inspectors

- ☐ Geographic, demographic, and logistical considerations in conducting inspections

- ☐ Cultural factors (e.g., language barriers, young people purchasing for their elders)

- ☐ Issues regarding sources of tobacco under tribal jurisdiction

- ☐ Other challenges (*Please list.*) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX A: FORMS 1–5

### FORM 1 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) to analyze the Synar Survey data)

Complete Form 1 to report sampling frame and sample information and to calculate the unweighted retailer violation rate (RVR) using results from the current year’s Synar survey inspections.

**Instructions for Completing Form 1:** In the top right-hand corner of the form, provide the state name and reporting federal fiscal year (FFY 2026). Provide the remaining information by stratum if stratification was used. Make copies of the form if additional rows are needed to list all the strata.

Column 1: *If stratification was used:*

1(a) Sequentially number each row.

1(b) Write in the name of each stratum. All strata in the state must be listed.

*If no stratification was used:*

1(a) Leave blank.

1(b) Write “state” in the first row (indicates that the whole state is a single stratum).

*Note for unstratified samples: For Columns 2–5, wherever the instruction refers to “each stratum,” report the specified information for the state as a whole.*

Column 2: 2(a) Report the number of over-the-counter (OTC) outlets in the sampling frame in each stratum.

2(b) Report the number of vending machine (VM) outlets in the sampling frame in each stratum.

2(c) Report the combined total of OTC and VM outlets in the sampling frame in each stratum.

Column 3: 3(a) Report the estimated number of eligible OTC outlets in the OTC outlet population in each stratum.

3(b) Report the estimated number of eligible VM outlets in the VM outlet population in each stratum.

3(c) Report the combined total estimated number of eligible OTC and VM outlets in the total outlet population in each stratum.

*The estimates for Column 3 can be obtained from the Synar survey sample as the weighted sum of eligible outlets by outlet type.*

Column 4: 4(a) Report the number of eligible OTC outlets for which an inspection was completed, for each stratum.

4(b) Report the numbers of eligible VM outlets for which an inspection was completed, for each stratum.

4(c) Report the combined total of eligible OTC and VM outlets for which an inspection was completed, for each stratum.

Column 5: 5(a) Report the number of OTC outlets found in violation of the law as a result of completed inspections, for each stratum.

5(b) Report the number of VM outlets found in violation of the law as a result of completed inspections, for each stratum.

5(c) Report the combined total of OTC and VM outlets found in violation of the law as a result of completed inspections, for each stratum.

Totals: For each subcolumn (a–c) in Columns 2–5, provide totals for the state as a whole in the last row of the table. These numbers will be the sum of the numbers in each row for the respective column.

**FORM 1 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar Survey data.)**

[illegible]

**RECORD COLUMN TOTALS ON LAST LINE (LAST PAGE ONLY IF MULTIPLE PAGES ARE NEEDED).**

## FORM 2 (Optional)

### Appropriate for stratified simple or systematic random sampling designs.

Complete Form 2 to calculate the weighted RVR. This table (in Excel form) is designed to calculate the weighted RVR for stratified simple or systematic random sampling designs, accounting for ineligible outlets and noncomplete inspections encountered during the annual Synar survey.

**Instructions for Completing Form 2:** In the top right-hand corner of the form, provide the state name and reporting federal fiscal year (FFY 2026).

- Column 1: Write in the name of each stratum into which the sample was divided. These should match the strata reported in Column 1(b) of Form 1.
- Column 2: Report the number of outlets in the sampling frame in each stratum. These numbers should match the numbers reported for the respective strata in Column 2(c) of Form 1.
- Column 3: Report the original sample size (the number of outlets originally selected, *including* substitutes or replacements) for each stratum.
- Column 4: Report the number of sample outlets in each stratum that were found to be eligible during the inspections. Note that this number must be less than or equal to the number reported in Column 3 for the respective strata.
- Column 5: Report the number of eligible outlets in each stratum for which an inspection was completed. Note that this number must be less than or equal to the number reported in Column 4. These numbers should match the numbers reported in Column 4(c) of Form 1 for the respective strata.
- Column 6: Report the number of eligible outlets inspected in each stratum that were found in violation. These numbers should match the numbers reported in Column 5(c) of Form 1 for the stratum.
- Column 7: Form 2 (in Excel form) will automatically calculate the stratum RVR for each stratum in this column. This is calculated by dividing the number of inspected eligible outlets found in violation (Column 6) by the number of inspected eligible outlets (Column 5). The state unweighted RVR will be shown in the Total row of Column 7.
- Column 8: Form 2 (in Excel form) will automatically calculate the estimated number of eligible outlets in the population for each stratum. This calculation is made by multiplying the number of outlets in the sampling frame (Column 2) times the number of eligible outlets (Column 4) divided by the original sample size (Column 3). Note that these numbers will be less than or equal to the numbers in Column 2.
- Column 9: Form 2 (in Excel form) will automatically calculate the relative stratum weight by dividing the estimated number of eligible outlets in the population for each stratum in Column 8 by the Total of the values in Column 8.
- Column 10: Form 2 (in Excel form) will automatically calculate each stratum's contribution to the state weighted RVR by multiplying the stratum RVR (Column 7) by the relative stratum weight (Column 9). The weighted RVR for the state will be shown in the Total row of Column 10.
- Column 11: Form 2 (in Excel form) automatically calculates the standard error of each stratum's RVR (Column 7). The standard error for the state weighted RVR will be shown in the Total row of Column 11.
- TOTAL: For Columns 2–6, Form 2 (in Excel form) provides totals for the state as a whole in the last row of the table. For Columns 7–11, it calculates the respective statistic for the state as a whole.

**FORM 2 (Optional) Appropriate for stratified simple or systematic random sampling designs.**

Calculation of Weighted Retailer Violation Rate										
										State: _____
										FFY: 2026
(1) Stratum Name	(2) N Number of Outlets in Sampling Frame	(3) n Original Sample Size	(4) n1 Number of Sample Outlets Found Eligible	(5) n2 Number of Outlets Inspected	(6) x Number of Outlets Found in Violation	(7) p=x/n2 Stratum Retailer Violation Rate	(8) N'=N(n1/n) Estimated Number of Eligible Outlets in Population	(9) w=N'/Total Column 8 Relative Stratum Weight	(10) pw Stratum Contribution to State Weighted RVR	(11) s.e. Standard Error of Stratum RVR
<b>Total</b>										

- N - number of outlets in sampling frame  
 n - original sample size (number of outlets in the original sample)  
 n1 - number of sample outlets that were found to be eligible  
 n2 - number of eligible outlets that were inspected  
 x - number of inspected outlets that were found in violation  
 p - stratum retailer violation rate ( $p=x/n2$ )  
 N' - estimated number of eligible outlets in population ( $N'=N*n1/n$ )  
 w - relative stratum weight ( $w=N'/\text{Total Column 8}$ )  
 pw - stratum contribution to the weighted RVR  
 s.e. - standard error of the stratum RVR

**FORM 3 (Required when a cluster design is used for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar survey data.)**

Complete Form 3 to report information about primary sampling units when a cluster design was used for the Synar survey.

**Instructions for Completing Form 3:** In the top right-hand corner of the form, provide the state name and reporting federal fiscal year (FFY 2026).

Provide information by stratum if stratification was used. Make copies of the form if additional rows are needed to list all the strata.

Column 1: Sequentially number each row.

Column 2: *If stratification was used:* Write in the name of stratum. All strata in the state must be listed.

*If no stratification was used:* Write “state” in the first row to indicate that the whole state constitutes a single stratum.

Column 3: Report the number of primary sampling units (PSUs) (i.e., first-stage clusters) created for each stratum.

Column 4: Report the number of PSUs selected in the original sample for each stratum.

Column 5: Report the number of PSUs in the final sample for each stratum.

TOTALS: For Columns 3–5, provide totals for the state as a whole in the last row of the table.

Summary of Clusters Created and Sampled				
State: _____				
FFY: 2026				
(1) Row #	(2) Stratum Name	(3) Number of PSUs Created	(4) Number of PSUs Selected	(5) Number of PSUs in the Final Sample
Total				

**FORM 4 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar Survey data)**

Complete Form 4 to provide detailed tallies of ineligible sample outlets by reasons for ineligibility and detailed tallies of eligible sample outlets with noncomplete inspections by reasons for noncompletion.

**Instructions for Completing Form 4:** In the top right-hand corner of the form, provide the state name and reporting federal fiscal year (FFY 2026).

Column 1(a): Enter the number of sample outlets found ineligible for inspection by reason for ineligibility. Provide the total number of ineligible outlets in the row marked “Total.”

Column 2(a): Enter the number of eligible sample outlets with noncomplete inspections by reason for noncompletion. Provide the total number of eligible outlets with noncomplete inspections in the row marked “Total.”

<b>Inspection Tallies by Reason of Ineligibility or Noncompletion</b> <b>State:</b> _____ <b>FFY:</b> 2026 _____			
<b>(1) INELIGIBLE</b>		<b>(2) ELIGIBLE</b>	
<b>Reason for Ineligibility</b>	<b>(a) Counts</b>	<b>Reason for Noncompletion</b>	<b>(a) Counts</b>
Out of business		In operation but closed at time of visit	
Does not sell tobacco products		Unsafe to access	
Inaccessible by youth or young adult		Presence of police	
Private club or private residence		Youth or young adult inspector knows salesperson	
Temporary closure		Moved to new location	
Unlocatable		Drive-thru only/youth or young adult inspector has no driver's license	
Wholesale only/Carton sale only		Tobacco out of stock	
Vending machine broken		Ran out of time	
Duplicate		Other noncompletion reason(s) <i>(Describe.)</i>	
Other ineligibility reason(s) <i>(Describe.)</i>			
<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>	

**FORM 5 (Required for all states not using the Synar Survey Estimation System [SSES] to analyze the Synar survey data)**

Complete Form 5 to show the distribution of outlet inspection results by age and gender of the youth and young adult inspectors.

**Instructions for Completing Form 5:** In the top right-hand corner of the form, provide the state name and reporting federal fiscal year (FFY 2026).

Column 1: Enter the number of attempted buys by youth and young adult inspector age and gender.

Column 2: Enter the number of successful buys by youth and young adult inspector age and gender.

If the inspectors are age eligible but the gender of the inspector is unknown, include those inspections in the “Other” row. Calculate subtotals for males and females in rows marked “Male Subtotal” and “Female Subtotal.” Sum subtotals for Male, Female, and Other and record in the bottom row marked “Total.” Verify that the total of attempted buys and successful buys equals the total for Column 4(c) and Column 5(c), respectively, on Form 1. If the totals do not match, please explain any discrepancies.

Synar Survey Inspector Characteristics		
State: _____		
FFY: 2026		
	(1) Attempted Buys	(2) Successful Buys
<b>Male</b>		
15 years		
16 years		
17 years		
18 years		
19 years		
20 years		
<b>Male Subtotal</b>		
<b>Female</b>		
15 years		
16 years		
17 years		
18 years		
19 years		
20 years		
<b>Female Subtotal</b>		
<b>Other</b>		
<b>Total</b>		

## **APPENDIXES B & C: FORMS**

### Instructions

Appendix B (Sampling Design) and Appendix C (Inspection Protocol) are to reflect the state's CSAP-approved sampling design and inspection protocol. These appendixes, therefore, should generally describe the design and protocol and, with the exception of Question #10 of Appendix B, are not to be modified with year-specific information. Please note that any changes to either appendix must receive CSAP's advance, written approval. To facilitate the state's completion of this section, simply cut and paste the previously approved sampling design (Appendix B) and inspection protocol (Appendix C) and respond to Question #10 of Appendix B to provide the requested information about sample size calculations for the Synar survey conducted in FFY 2025.

## APPENDIX B: SYNAR SURVEY SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

State: MA  
FFY: 2026

**1. What type of sampling frame is used?**

- ☐ List frame (*Go to Question 2.*)  
☒ Area frame (*Go to Question 3.*)  
☐ List-assisted area frame (*Go to Question 2.*)

**2. List all sources of the list frame. Indicate the type of source from the list below. Provide a brief description of the frame source. Explain how the lists are updated (method), including how new outlets are identified and added to the frame. In addition, explain how often the lists are updated (cycle). (*After completing this question, go to Question 4.*)**

*Use the corresponding number to indicate Type of Source in the table below.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 – Statewide commercial business list    | 4 – Statewide retail license/permit list |
| 2 – Local commercial business list        | 5 – Statewide liquor license/permit list |
| 3 – Statewide tobacco license/permit list | 6 – Other                                |

Name of Frame Source	Type of Source	Description	Updating Method and Cycle

**3. If an area frame is used, describe how area sampling units are defined and formed.**

The sampling areas are the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts or smaller subdivided areas within the large cities. These sampling areas are then broken down into zip codes to obtain smaller clusters. Every zip code in Massachusetts is associated with one of the 351 cities and towns.

**a. Is any area left out in the formation of the area frame?**

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

*If Yes, what percentage of the state's population is not covered by the area frame?*  
\_\_\_\_\_%

**4. Federal regulation requires that vending machines be inspected as part of the Synar survey. Are vending machines included in the Synar survey?**

- ☐ Yes ☒ No

If **No**, please indicate the reason(s) they are not included in the Synar survey. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ State law bans vending machines.
- ☒ State law bans vending machines from locations accessible to youth and young adults.
- ☐ State has a contract with the FDA and is actively enforcing the vending machine requirements of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.
- ☐ Other (Please describe.) \_\_\_\_\_

If **Yes**, please indicate how likely it is that vending machines will be sampled.

- ☐ Vending machines are sampled separately to ensure vending machines are included in the sample
- ☐ Vending machines are sampled together with over the counter outlets, so it is possible that no vending machines were sampled, however they are included in the sampling frame and have a non-zero probability of selection
- ☐ Other reasons (Please describe.) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Which category below best describes the sample design? (Check only one.)**

- ☐ **Census** (STOP HERE: Appendix B is complete.)

**Unstratified statewide sample:**

- ☐ Simple random sample (Go to Question 9.)
- ☐ Systematic random sample (Go to Question 6.)
- ☐ Single-stage cluster sample (Go to Question 8.)
- ☐ Multistage cluster sample (Go to Question 8.)

**Stratified sample:**

- ☐ Simple random sample (Go to Question 7.)
- ☐ Systematic random sample (Go to Question 6.)
- ☐ Single-stage cluster sample (Go to Question 7.)
- ☒ Multistage cluster sample (Go to Question 7.)
- ☐ **Other** (Please describe and go to Question 9.) \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Describe the systematic sampling methods. (After completing Question 6, go to Question 7 if stratification is used. Otherwise go to Question 9.)**

n/a

**7. Provide the following information about stratification.**

**a. Provide a full description of the strata that are created.**

The 13 counties in Massachusetts were organized into five geographic regions of roughly equal size. The cities and towns in each region are further stratified into two groups according to whether or not the health department receives funding from the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program. This funding status is updated every year thus, there are 10 strata.

**c. Is clustering used within the stratified sample?**

☒ **Yes** (Go to Question 8.)

☐ **No** (Go to Question 9.)

**8. Provide the following information about clustering.**

- a. Provide a full description of how clusters are formed.** (If multistage clusters are used, give definitions of clusters at each stage.)

Clusters at the first stage are the sampling areas formed by the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Before the random selection of sampling areas occurs, the 351 Massachusetts cities and towns are broken into applicable zip codes to obtain smaller sampling clusters.

- b. Specify the sampling method (simple random, systematic, or probability Proportional to size sampling) for each stage of sampling and describe how the method(s) is (are) implemented.**

There are 10 fixed strata used in the Massachusetts sampling. These strata are based on geographic region and funding status for the Board of Health Tobacco Programs. All 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts fall into one of the 10 strata and have an equal chance of being selected. Each city or town is grouped into the appropriate strata and broken into all applicable zip codes. The zip code is the final unit of sampling. Each zip code is assigned a random number, the zip codes within the strata are chosen sequentially until the estimated number of vendors represented by those zip codes exceeds the target number needed for the stratum. Thus, the number of clusters used within each stratum changes every year based on the number of retailers in each zip code that is selected. The data included for each outlet is from the most recent inspection completed during the inspection period. All zip codes within a stratum are eligible to be selected in the sample each year. Every outlet within a selected zip code is inspected. In both the funded and unfunded stratum included in the sample, the whole area covered by the zip code is completely canvassed and every outlet is inspected. Massachusetts refers to lists contained in the POST data systems. Board of Health program receives the local tobacco permit lists from their partner cities and towns. Staff both at Boards of Health and MTCP also compare the retailers listed from the Department of Revenue online permit database and also canvassing is completed in the geographical area to determine if additional outlets are present. All outlets within the selected zip codes are inspected. The state calculates sampling weights using the same method for funded and unfunded strata. The weights are calculated based on the percentage of the entire state population of 15-20 year-olds that live in the strata based on census data. This method of sampling weight calculation was developed with SAMHSA's assistance in 2005.

**9. Provide the following information about determining the Synar Sample.**

- a. Was the Synar Survey Estimation System (SSES) used to calculate the sample size?**

☐ **Yes** (Respond to part b.)

☒ **No** (Respond to part c and Question 10c.)

- b. SSES Sample Size Calculator used?**

☐ **State Level** (Respond to Question 10a.)

☐ **Stratum Level** (Respond to Question 10a and 10b.)

- c. Provide the formulas for determining the effective, target, and original outlet sample sizes.

**10. Provide the following information about sample size calculations for the Synar survey conducted in FFY 2025.**

- a. If the state uses the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator to calculate the state level sample size, please provide the following information:

**Inputs for Effective Sample Size:**

RVR:

Frame Size:

**Input for Target Sample Size:**

Design Effect:

**Inputs for Original Sample Size:**

Safety Margin:

Accuracy (Eligibility) Rate:

Completion Rate:

- b. If the state uses the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator to calculate the stratum level sample sizes, please provide the stratum level information:

- c. If the state does not use the sample size formulas embedded in the SSES Sample Size Calculator, please provide all inputs required to calculate the effective, target, and original sample sizes as indicated in Question 9.

$$385 = \frac{0.15}{0.0182^2} (1 - 0.15)$$

, where P is the target retailer violation rate (15%). Within the past 5 years, the average retailer violation rate in MA was 11%. However, a safety margin was added and 15% was used to calculate the target sample size.

The target sample size ( $n_t$ ) is given by:

$$1386 = 3.6 (385), \text{ where } d \text{ is the assumed design effect of } 3.6.$$

The original sample size ( $n_o$ ) is then obtained by:

$$1871 = (1 + .35) 1386$$

where s is an incremental factor (or safety margin) of 35% to compensate for the loss of the sample during inspection.

## APPENDIX C: SYNAR SURVEY INSPECTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

State: MA

FFY: 2026

*Note: Upload to WebBGAS a copy of the Synar inspection form under the heading “Synar Inspection Form” and a copy of the protocol used to train inspection teams on conducting and reporting the results of the Synar inspections under the heading “Synar Inspection Protocol.”*

### 1. How does the state Synar survey protocol address the following?

#### a. Consummated buy attempts?

☒ Required

☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:      )

☐ Not permitted

#### b. Youth and young adult inspectors to carry ID?

☐ Required

☐ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe:      )

☒ Not permitted

#### c. Adult inspectors to enter the outlet?

☐ Required

☒ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe: If an inspector can blend into the surroundings while underaged purchaser is conducting the compliance check, then it is encouraged. This can typically happen in big box department and grocery stores.)

☐ Not permitted

#### d. Youth and young adult inspectors to be compensated?

☐ Required

☒ Permitted under specified circumstances (Describe: Local Board of Health programs and FDA programs typically give an hourly monetary rate to underaged purchasers. If purchasers would rather be compensated with volunteer hours, that is also an option.)

☐ Not permitted

### 2. Identify the agency(ies) or entity(ies) that actually conduct the random, unannounced Synar inspections of tobacco outlets. (Check all that apply.)

☐ Law enforcement agency(ies)

☒ State or local government agency(ies) other than law enforcement

☐ Private contractor(s)

☐ Other

List the agency name(s): MA Department of Public Health in conjunction with local boards of health, and the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards. In addition, we utilize data from our FDA Tobacco Enforcement team. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Are Synar inspections combined with law enforcement efforts (i.e., do law enforcement representatives issue warnings or citations to retailers found in violation of the law at the time of the inspection)?**

☐ Always   ☐ Usually   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Rarely   ☒ Never

**4. Describe the type of tobacco products that are requested during Synar inspections.**

**a. What type of tobacco products are requested during the inspection?**

- ☒ Cigarettes
- ☒ Small Cigars
- ☒ Cigarillos
- ☒ Smokeless Tobacco
- ☒ Electronic Cigarettes/Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)
- ☒ Other Oral Nicotine Products

**b. Describe the protocol for identifying what types of products and what brands of products are requested during an inspection.**

Depending on the location, the underage purchaser could ask for any of the above products. The inspector will request that the underage purchaser attempt to buy which product is more popular with youth/young adults in that area. The underage purchaser is instructed to ask for the most commonly found and popular brands of each product type. When asking for cigarettes, underage purchasers are trained to ask for Marlboro or Newport. Cigars/cigarillos currently being requested are Backwoods, Black & Mild, Game, Phillies, or Swisher Sweets if available. For oral nicotine products, underage purchasers attempt to buy Zyn, Crave, On!, or Velo.

When requesting ENDS, underage purchasers typically ask for Airis, Crave, Puff Bar, Blue, or JUUL. If one of these preferred brands are not available, the underage purchaser is trained to ask for an ENDS product that includes nicotine. Although flavored products should not be available in Massachusetts, underage purchasers are trained to ask for a flavored product if they see one available.

**5a. Describe the methods used to recruit, select, and train adult supervisors.**

Adult supervisors for MTCP funded boards of health (BOH) programs are the personnel of municipalities. The adult supervisors are hired or contracted by the local municipalities or agencies using their municipal hiring practices. FDA full-time adult supervisors are recruited and selected following the guidelines provided by the Department of Public Health Human Resources Department.

The training for adult supervisors working with MTCP funded BOH programs include both an online component and a field component conducting tobacco control inspections and enforcement. Youth access issues, especially related to enforcement, are discussed at monthly program meetings held throughout the year. DPH staff and attorneys from Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Massachusetts Association of Health Boards

are contracted to provide updates, resources and technical assistance during these meetings. In addition, funded BOH are sent new updated protocols with their chosen synar zip codes as another reminder.

The adult supervisor training for BOH staff is refreshed annually to address any updated products, procedures and new best practices. New BOH inspectors are required to attend both the “Youth Access Tobacco Compliance Check Training” and “Retail Tobacco Inspection Training” offered by the Massachusetts Health Officers Association. These trainings are conducted by a team of experienced professionals. In addition, new BOH inspectors shadow experienced inspectors prior to conducting inspections on their own.

FDA adult supervisors take the required FDA inspector online training (approximately 12 hours) in addition to MA specific one-on-one training held in person or online. After the formal trainings are completed, FDA inspectors shadow experienced FDA inspectors for several days before completing inspections on their own.

**5b. Describe the methods used to recruit, select, and train youth and young adult inspectors.**

A variety of youth/young adult recruitment strategies are used including making presentations at schools, local community-based organizations, and local community colleges. In addition, current underage purchasers receive referral bonuses for referring a friend or relative. Recruitment is also done in conjunction with The 84 Movement. The 84 is a statewide movement of youth fighting tobacco in Massachusetts. Youth job opportunities are posted on the84.org website, and recruitment events happen at the annual 84 Youth Power Summit and at ENUFF Day (Ending Nicotine Use For the Future), formally known as Kick Butts Day at the Massachusetts State House.

During the mandatory compliance check training for adult supervisors, the trainers review techniques for recruiting, screening and training underage purchasers.

Youth and young adults must take the required online underaged purchaser training which we plan on updating in 2026. The training includes an online portion as well as “show and tell” and “role playing” sections. During this training, underaged purchasers learn about compliance check procedures as well as policies and practices that may be unique to the program or areas where they are working. During the “show and tell” portion, youth/young adults have an opportunity to look, touch, and vocalize products they will be requesting. This also includes several role plays practicing various scenarios that can occur during compliance checks, with an emphasis on safety.

Prior to conducting compliance checks on their own, it is best practice for new underage purchaser to observe experienced underage purchaser conducting checks so that they can become more comfortable with the job. When possible, the more experienced youth/young adult is asked to help lead the training with the adult inspector.

**6. Are there specific legal or procedural requirements instituted by the state to address the issue of youth and young adult inspectors’ immunity when conducting inspections?**

**a. Legal**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

**b. Procedural**

☐ Yes ☐ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

**7. Are there specific legal or procedural requirements instituted by the state to address the issue of the safety of youth and young adult inspectors during all aspects of the Synar inspection process?**

**a. Legal**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

**b. Procedural**

☒ Yes ☐ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

Underaged purchasers are always accompanied by trained adult inspectors to the retail establishment during compliance checks. If the adult or young person feels that an establishment is unsafe to attempt a buy, the check is aborted. Parents and/or guardians of minors are required to give their permission for their youth to participate if they are under 18. Additionally, underaged purchasers are trained and encouraged to bring their personal cell phone into each establishment. Underaged purchasers bringing in their cell phones allows them to send a text that they are in a long line or request that the inspector enter the establishment.

**8. Are there any other legal or procedural requirements the state has regarding how inspections are to be conducted (e.g., age of youth and young adult inspector, time of inspections, training that must occur)?**

**a. Legal**

☐ Yes ☒ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

**b. Procedural**

☒ Yes ☐ No

*(If Yes, please describe.)*

MTCP requires that funded BOH programs use the MTCP Compliance Check Protocols. For compliance checks conducted since FFY21, MTCP's updated approved protocols include using young people aged 16-20 years old as youth buyers. All adult supervisors must attend a compliance check training standardized by MTCP. All undercover purchaser must be trained before conducting checks. Underaged purchasers must take online training while working with inspector to provide support and answer any real-time questions. Inspectors are also required to provide additional training to youth buyers that includes a "show and tell" and role-playing activities. In addition, the recommended best practice is for a more experienced young person to lead this training with the adult inspector.

## APPENDIX D: LIST SAMPLING FRAME COVERAGE STUDY

(LIST FRAME ONLY)

State: \_\_\_\_\_  
FFY: 2026

1. Calendar year of the coverage study: \_\_\_\_\_

2.   a. Unweighted percent coverage found: \_\_\_\_\_ %  
      b. Weighted percent coverage found: \_\_\_\_\_ %  
      c. Number of outlets found through canvassing: \_\_\_\_\_  
      d. Number of outlets matched on the list frame: \_\_\_\_\_

3.   a. Describe how areas were defined. (e.g., census tracts, counties, etc.)

b. Were any areas of the state excluded from sampling?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

*If Yes, please explain.*

4. Please answer the following questions about the selection of canvassing areas.

a. Which category below best describes the sample design? (Check only one.)

☐ Census (Go to Question 6.)

**Unstratified statewide sample:**

☐ Simple random sample (Respond to Part b.)

☐ Systematic random sample (Respond to Part b.)

☐ Single-stage cluster sample (Respond to Parts b and d.)

☐ Multistage cluster sample (Respond to Parts b and d.)

**Stratified sample:**

☐ Simple random sample (Respond to Parts b and c.)

☐ Systematic random sample (Respond to Parts b and c.)

☐ Single-stage cluster sample (Respond to Parts b, c, and d.)

☐ Multistage cluster sample (Respond to Parts b, c, and d.)

☐ Other (Please describe and respond to Part b.) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Describe the sampling methods.

- c. Provide a full description of the strata that were created.

- d. Provide a full description of how clusters were formed.

5. Were borders of the selected areas clearly identified at the time of canvassing?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Were all sampled areas visited by canvassing teams?

☐ Yes (*Go to Question 7.*) ☐ No (*Respond to Parts a and b.*)

- a. Was the subset of areas randomly chosen?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- b. Describe how the subsample of visited areas was drawn. Include the number of areas sampled and the number of areas canvassed.

7. Were field observers provided with a detailed map of the canvassing areas?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If No, describe the canvassing instructions given to the field observers.*

8. Were field observers instructed to find all outlets in the assigned area?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*If No, respond to Question 9.*

*If Yes, describe any instructions given to the field observers to ensure the entire area was canvassed, then go to Question 10.*

9. If a full canvassing was not conducted:

- a. How many predetermined outlets were to be observed in each area? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. What were the starting points for each area? \_\_\_\_\_

- c. Were these starting points randomly chosen?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- d. Describe the selection of the starting points.

- e. Please describe the canvassing instructions given to the field observers, including predetermined routes.

10. Describe the process field observers used to determine if an outlet sold tobacco.

11. Please provide the state's definition of "matches" or "mismatches" to the Synar sampling frame? (i.e., address, business name, business license number, etc.)

12. Provide the calculation of the weighted percent coverage (if applicable).