

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Office of Grants and Research**



**Notice of Solicitation of Applications
for
2021 Car Seat Distribution Program**

May 20, 2021

**Charles D. Baker
Governor**

**Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor**

**Thomas A. Turco III
Secretary**

**Kevin J. Stanton
Executive Director**

I. Introduction

The Office of Grants and Research (OGR) is currently accepting applications from eligible entities for the 2021 Car Seat Distribution Program. Awarded applicants will be provided with car seats for distribution to families in need by certified child passenger safety (CPS) technicians at inspection stations and/or checkup events. 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 education on their proper installation and usage.

OGR is the State Administering Agency for NHTSA's traffic safety grants to reduce roadway crashes, injuries, fatalities, and their associated economic losses in Massachusetts. Requests for car seats will be fulfilled on a **competitive** basis to qualified applicants. The application, car seat order form, and other solicitation-related documents are available at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants.

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. Improper installation and seat misuse, however, are widespread. NHTSA estimates that nearly 60 percent of all seats are installed incorrectly. Additionally, caregivers may not have their children in the appropriate restraint for their size. NHTSA reports a quarter of all children between the ages of 4-7 are prematurely moved from booster seats to seat belts.

Massachusetts state law requires all children riding in passenger motor vehicles 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 children reach 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 that serve children and/or families that meet all of the requirements below are eligible to apply to receive free car seats. Applicants must:

- Have at least one certified CPS technician on staff who is currently completing in-person seat checks for your organization. Technicians must either be publicly listed on www.safekids.org or submit their Safe Kids Certification Confirmation for verification purposes.
- Develop an outreach plan to notify low-income families in their coverage area about the availability of car seats and their technicians' ability to assist with the installation.

- Be a registered user of the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF). Applicants that have yet to create an account can do so here: <https://carseatcheckform.org>. See [Section VII](#) for more information.
- Have an employee seat belt policy



IV. Key Dates

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SOLICITATION POSTED | May 20, 2021 |
| SOLICITATION QUESTIONS BY | June 2, 2021 |
| SOLICITATION ANSWERS POSTED | June 4, 2021 |
| DUE DATE | June 10, 2021 at 5:00 PM |
| AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS | June-July 2021 |
| SEATS DELIVERED | July 2021 |

Written questions regarding this solicitation may be submitted via email to John Fabiano, OGR Program Coordinator, at john.fabiano@mass.gov by June 2, 2021. Phone inquiries will not be accepted. All questions and OGR’s responses will be posted at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants by June 4, 2021.

As this is a competitive solicitation, questions about the strengths or weaknesses of potential applications will not be considered or answered.

V. Car Seat Request Details

Applicants must submit a car seat order form, along with their application, that is based on their projected car seat needs. Each applicant may submit an order valued at up to \$7,500. The order form must be filled out using information found within the car seat price list found at www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants. If selected to receive car seats under this solicitation, OGR will submit all seat orders and delivery instructions to Mercury Distributing; tracking information will be provided once orders are shipped. Someone from the recipient organization must be present to accept delivery. Upon delivery and receipt, OGR will submit payment for all invoices directly to Mercury Distributing.

Car seat recipients will be responsible for the following seat distribution and compliance guidelines.

Distribution of Seats

This opportunity is not intended to be a general giveaway/free-for-all to the general public. Selected car seat recipients are required to make substantial efforts to ensure seats go to low-income families. These efforts may involve partnering with local organizations, including but

not limited to food pantries, shelters, churches, Head Start programs, neighborhood health centers, public housing authorities, and Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) offices.

The availability of free seats may not be advertised publicly (e.g., social media, press release). OGR does, however, recommend that selected car seat recipients utilize social media and other media to promote CPS laws/best practices and their CPS program, including the capabilities and availability of technicians.

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 which 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. A check form must still be filled out, with liability statement signed by the caregiver in such cases.

All seat checks involving the distribution of seats provided by this opportunity must be entered into the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF) database, with "State Funds" entered into the *Car Seat Donor* field.



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

OGR does not require selected car seat recipients to establish income criteria for car seat distribution, however, selected car seat recipients may establish criteria that must be described in their application and align with the program's purpose.

Car seats must be stored in a secure location.

Compliance and Conditions

- Selected car seat recipients must retain pertinent documents on file (either hard or electronic), including copies of the application packet, award letters, paper check forms (if liability statement is signed on paper vs. NDCF).
- Selected car seat recipients are subject to compliance monitoring by OGR staff, including but not limited to site visits and file reviews.
- A selected car seat recipient's failure to comply with any of the requirements outlined in this document may jeopardize eligibility for future OGR grant funds and/or car seat distribution programs.
- Inspection station information will be posted at www.mass.gov/carseats.
- OGR is not responsible for redelivery costs resulting from staff not being present to accept initial delivery; if you need to schedule a delivery appointment, you must indicate that on your order form. All seats must be delivered by August 20, 2021.
- Selected car seat recipients must immediately report to OGR if they no longer have a certified technician on staff and must return any undistributed car seats to OGR.

VI. Application Review Process

This is a competitive solicitation and will be subject to a peer-review process. Applicants that meet all of the eligibility criteria will have their applications scored by a review team as follows:

| Element | Maximum Points |
|--|----------------|
| Quality of the applicant's CPS Program | 30 |
| Demonstrated commitment to providing outreach and seats to low-income families | 35 |
| Demonstrated need for number of seats being requested | 35 |
| Maximum Score | 100 |

OGR reserves the right to request modifications from applicants prior to final award selection.

Award decisions are at the discretion of the Executive Director of OGR and the Secretary of Public Safety and Security.

VII. National Digital Car Seat Check Form

All seat checks involving the distribution of seats awarded as a result of this opportunity must be entered into the National Digital Car Seat Check Form (NDCF) database. The NDCF streamlines data collection so that organizations can better monitor trends, track car seat distribution, and educate clients, patients, and/or the public. It also eliminates the monthly reporting requirement for this program as OGR Program Coordinator, John Fabiano, has immediate access to view all seat check data entered into the NDCF database.

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

OGR will be hosting a virtual NDCF orientation training in early June; exact date and time TBD. Once finalized, details will be emailed to all technicians. In the meantime, you may find NDCF FAQs on www.mass.gov/service-details/traffic-safety-grants or email info@carseatcheckform.org with questions about creating an account or using the form.

VIII. Submission Instruction

A complete application packet must be submitted via either U.S. Postal Service (USPS), United Parcel Service (UPS), or FedEx to the address below and **must be received by OGR by June 10, 2021 at 5:00 PM.**

Office of Grants and Research
ATTN: John Fabiano
10 Park Plaza, Suite 3720-A
Boston, MA 02116

A complete application packet must also be emailed to john.fabiano@mass.gov.

A complete application packet must include the following documents:

- Application
- Car Seat Order Form
- Organizational Seat Belt Policy
- Safe Kids Certification Confirmation (if applicable)

The Application must be signed manually in blue ink. Electronic and/or digital signatures will not be accepted.

Incomplete packets may be disqualified.