

As you craft your budget memo recommendations, **we would appreciate it if you would include support for the \$150,000 in one-time funds in the House-passed budget to the health department for Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for schools. We'd also appreciate your support for inclusion of language that would also allow this funding to be used by schools for CPR training costs.**

This funding is related to an initiative you supported last year. This past session, the legislature passed H.480 which was enacted into law in June ([Act 72](#)) and included language to ensure that schools and sporting events have cardiac emergency response plans (CERPs). Schools need to have these plans in place by the 2026 school year.

Though many Vermont schools have AEDs, the plans may dictate a need for multiple AEDs based on the size of the school, and some smaller schools may not already have AEDs. Schools also need to make sure they have a team that is CPR-trained which would be a cost as well related to their CERP plan.

While safety grants of up to \$10,000 are available to school districts via the Vermont School Boards insurance Trust (VSBIT) and can be used to purchase AEDs, we have heard this year that some districts have used that funding for other safety needs -- such as security cameras, radios, go-bags -- leaving them with the expense of an AED purchase(s) and CPR training.

This funding request is intended to help those schools that need it to fully implement those plans by purchasing AEDs and to ensure that appropriate staff are properly trained in the deployment of the plan, the use of AEDs, and lifesaving techniques such as CPR.

This small investment could literally mean the difference between life and death. It would take away any reason for not implementing these life-saving plans. And the first person saved, would be worth every cent. **We'd appreciate your help in ensuring it remains in the budget.**

Since cardiac emergency response plans involve more than just purchasing an AED, we would also appreciate it if you could insert the following language in the budget with the appropriation:

The Department of Health shall designate \$150,000 to aid in implementing Cardiac Emergency Response Plans and (CERPs) and Emergency Action Plans (EAPs).

- Funding shall be used for activities and equipment that further promotes CERP and EAP preparedness for high-needs schools, including, but not limited to the purchase of AEDs and AED maintenance (pads and battery replacement), the purchase of CPR training kits or CPR training for faculty and staff, basic first aid training and educational materials.*
- There shall be funding priority given to high needs schools.*

There have already been 25 cardiac arrests at VT schools in the last ten years and our cardiac arrest survival rate statewide is only 7.5%. When schools are prepared survival rates double and in some cases triple. Please help ensure they do in Vermont.