

# CERP

## Implementation Resource Guide

A Comprehensive Guide to Cardiac Emergency  
Response Plan Implementation and Resources



American  
Heart  
Association®



# GREETINGS

In 2025 the Missouri Legislature passed SB 68, requiring Cardiac Emergency Response Plans (CERPs) in schools. The Missouri Emergency Medical Services Association (MEMSA) was also awarded funding by the Department of Health and Senior Services to support schools during the implementation process.

The following guide has been developed by the American Heart Association to assist schools in implementing their plan.

Resources included herein:

- [Legislation Information \(page 3\)](#)
- [CERP Infographic \(page 4\)](#)
- [Implementation Guide and Checklist \(pages 5-6\)](#)
- [Resources \(pages 7-8\)](#)
- [Staff Contacts \(page 9\)](#)
- [Media Resources \(pages 10-15\)](#)
- [FAQs \(pages 16-17\)](#)

Thank you for your support and commitment. Together, we can save lives from cardiac arrest.



## [SB 68 - Creates, repeals, and modifies provisions relating to elementary and secondary education.](#)

### **When does this legislation go into effect?**

- Signed into law on July 9, 2025.
- Implements on August 28, 2025, beginning for 2026-2027 and subsequent school years.

### **What does it require?**

- For the 2026-27 school year and all subsequent school years, each public school shall develop and implement a cardiac emergency response plan that addresses the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to incidents involving an individual experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening emergency while on a school campus.
- A cardiac emergency response plan shall integrate evidence-based core elements, such as those recommended by the American Heart Association guidelines, Project ADAM, or another set of nationally recognized, evidence-based standards or core elements.

# CARDIAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS **IN SCHOOLS**

Cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death in the U.S.



**356,000+**

**CARDIAC ARRESTS**  
occur outside of a hospital  
annually in the U.S.



**40%**

**OF PEOPLE**  
get the immediate help  
that they need



**AMONG CHILDREN**

**23,000**

experience cardiac arrest  
outside of a hospital

You don't need to be a first responder to save a life.

- ▶ CPR, if performed immediately, can double or triple a person's chance of survival.
- ▶ In schools with AEDs, approximately **70% OF CHILDREN SURVIVE** cardiac arrest - **7X** the overall survival rate for children.

## What is Cardiac Arrest?

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. In seconds, a person becomes unresponsive and cannot breathe. Death occurs within minutes if the person does not receive treatment. But cardiac arrest can be reversible in some victims if it's treated within a few minutes.



Cardiac arrest is an  
**"electrical"** problem



A cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) is a written document that establishes the specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in any setting – be it a school, community organization, workplace or sports facility. The following guidance will help organizations create, share, practice, activate and evaluate a cardiac emergency response plan.

## 1 **Create a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**

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All schools, community organizations or workplaces, and sports facilities should establish a cardiac emergency response plan (CERP). Learn about sudden cardiac arrest, CERPS and other resources available to guide you. Then, you identify the members of the cardiac emergency response team (CERT) and start drafting the CERP based on your organization’s resources and needs.

**Learn** about sudden cardiac arrest and CERPs.

- Learn about sudden cardiac arrest and CPR at [Heart.org/NationofLifesavers](https://www.heart.org/nationoflifesavers)
- Learn about CERPs at [Heart.org/CERP](https://www.heart.org/cerp)

**Understand** your local resources and organizations that can support your organizational efforts to prepare for and respond to an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Local resources can include the following:

- Community organizations, such as local offices of the [American Heart Association](https://www.heart.org) or [Project Adam](https://www.projectadam.org).
- Emergency medical responders such as your local fire department.
- Local government, such as local health departments or elected officials.

**Identify** the members of the cardiac emergency response team. The CERT is a group of staff members who have current CPR and AED training and are designated to respond to and provide basic life support during a cardiac emergency. The following resources can help you organize your team.

- [Developing Cardiac Emergency Response Team](#)
- [CERP Team Roster](#)
- [Sample CERP Action Steps](#)
- [Sample Timeline for CERP Action Steps](#)

**Draft** your cardiac emergency response plan based on the following evidence-based guidance and be familiar with resources to help you draft your plan.

- [Cardiac Emergency Response Plan and Protocol](#)

## 2 **Share** your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

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Share the CERP at your site. Ensure the plan is integrated with local emergency medical services, fire and police (if applicable). Post the CERP in key locations throughout the site.

- **Share** the plan with all staff, volunteers (if applicable), organizations using the facility and other people who are frequently in the location. Post it broadly in high traffic, widely accessible places.
- **Distribute** the cardiac emergency response plan annually and when updates are made.
- **Review** the [CERP Plan and Protocol: Communication of CERP \(Section 4\)](#).

## 3 **Practice** your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

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Practice the CERP plan using routine drills (for instance fire and lock-down drills). Doing regular AED drills is the best way to test your cardiac emergency response plan, your communication system and your response team's readiness. Review the [CERP Drill and Evaluation template](#) and conduct an [Annual Review of Drills](#).

## 4 **Activate** your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

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Activate the CERP Team in response to a sudden cardiac event. Remember that the protocol for responding to a cardiac emergency should be posted and readily available.

- [Cardiac Emergency Response Protocol](#)
- [Simplified Adult Basic Life Support](#)

## 5 **Elevate** your Cardiac Emergency Response Plan

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- Evaluate your plan to improve the response process and documentation. Review the CERP resources: [Annual Review and Evaluation of the Plan](#) and [Annual Review of Drills](#).
- If applicable, conduct a [Post Event Review](#).

## RESOURCES

### **DOWNLOAD THE IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST**

Click the appropriate checklist below for the minimum steps to include in your implementation:

[American Heart Association Checklist](#)

[Project ADAM Checklist](#)

### **FIND CPR & AED TRAINING**

Find [First Aid CPR & AED training](#) to support the cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) implementation process.

# RESOURCES

## AED RESOURCES

### Non-Title I Schools:

- [BJC Healthcare, St. Louis Blues, The Foundation for Barnes-Jewish Hospitals AED Request](#)
- <https://www.smartheartsports.com/>

OR

### Contact:

Dr. Deepa Mokshagundam, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Pediatric Cardiologist

Washington University in St. Louis | Project ADAM

Grace Presley, BSN, Program Coordinator, St. Louis Children's Hospital | Project ADAM

Request form: <https://forms.office.com/r/PSj2Spg8R6>

Email questions to: [ProjectADAM@bjc.org](mailto:ProjectADAM@bjc.org)

### Title I Schools Contact:

Shelby Cox, Executive Director | Missouri EMS Association (MEMSA)

[shelby@cabllc.com](mailto:shelby@cabllc.com)

Visit: <https://memsa.org/memsa-cerp-aed-project/>

**Follow this link to register your AED with the Missouri 911 Board:**

<https://www.missouri911.org/aed-registry>

## CONTACTS

Please reach out to us to assist in helping your school implement a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP).

### **American Heart Association Community Impact Directors**

Erin Gabert, Kansas City - [erin.gabert@heart.org](mailto:erin.gabert@heart.org)

Rachelle Bartnick, St. Louis - [rachelle.bartnick@heart.org](mailto:rachelle.bartnick@heart.org)

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### **American Heart Association School Engagement Director**

Kary Bachert, Missouri - [kary.bachert@heart.org](mailto:kary.bachert@heart.org)

### **American Heart Association Community CPR Manager**

Yolana Wakefield-Wilson, Midwest - [yolana.wilson@heart.org](mailto:yolana.wilson@heart.org)

### **Project ADAM Staff Members**

Kaitlyn Bennett, RN, Kansas City - [kbennett@cmh.edu](mailto:kbennett@cmh.edu)

Dr. Deepa Mokshagundam & Grace Presley, RN, St. Louis - [ProjectADAM@bjc.org](mailto:ProjectADAM@bjc.org)

## MEDIA RESOURCES

Leverage these turn key media resources to build awareness and garner coverage for your school.

[Sample Letter to the Editor](#)

[Sample Media Alert](#)

[Sample Press Release](#)

[Social Media Posts](#)

[School Newsletter Insert](#)



## **SAMPLE LTE: CERP IMPLEMENTATION**

[Insert personal experience]

Every second counts in a cardiac arrest - the recent passing of SB 68 is not just a legislative step, but a critical lifeline for Missouri's schools. This pivotal legislation, enacted on [insert date], is designed to save lives. Consider this: of the 23,000 children who will experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital, about 40% of these events are sports-related. This means that the lives of our students are at stake, and every moment is crucial.

The American Heart Association, a member of the Smart Heart Sports Coalition established by the NFL to advocate for all 50 states to adopt evidence-based policies that will save lives from cardiac arrests outside of a hospital among students, is moving forward to support the legislation's implementation phase. While the passage of this legislation marks a significant milestone in heart health, the effective execution of these new policies will ultimately impact lives.

Now, schools have the opportunity to utilize the resources and guidelines to ensure their cardiac emergency response plans are prepared. Whether in the classroom or on the playing field, the presence of well-trained faculty and staff can be the difference between life and death in a cardiac emergency.

Immediate CPR can double or triple a person's chance of survival. In schools equipped with AEDs, approximately 70% of children survive cardiac arrest – a staggering seven times the overall survival rate for children. This is not just a statistic, but a testament to the life-saving potential of our actions.

The implementation phase is where the real change happens. During this crucial period, schools must turn the potential benefits outlined in the law into tangible outcomes. The success of these outcomes will be a measure of the life-saving potential of CERPs. This is why I'm standing with the American Heart Association, advocating for Missouri's new school policies that have the power to save lives from cardiac arrest.

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## **MEDIA ALERT**

### ***[Insert School District or Host Organization] Hosts Local Press Conference to Kickoff Implementation Phase of Cardiac Emergency Response Plan and AED Legislation***

*Educators, advocates and legislators embark on the implementation of [insert bill], recently passed CPR and AED legislation to save lives in school.*

**Who:** [Insert School District or Host Organization] highlights the implementation phase of legislation that requires Missouri schools to have a cardiac emergency response plan in place.

Featured Guests/Speakers:

Name - Title/Organization

Name - Title/Organization

Name - Title/Organization

Name - Title/Organization

**What:** [Insert State or County] Press Conference

**When:** Date | Time

**Where:** Address

**Why:** Educators, advocates, legislators and families will convene to kick off the implementation phase of SB 68 for CPR and AED training. This critical legislation was passed on [insert date] to save lives. Of the 23,000 children who will experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital, about 40% of these events are sports related. Whether in the classroom or on the playing field, having properly trained faculty and staff in place to quickly, and correctly, respond to a cardiac emergency can save lives. CPR, if performed immediately, can double or triple a person's chance of survival. In schools with AEDs, approximately 70% of children survive cardiac arrest – seven times the overall survival rate for children.

**Media:** For media inquiries please contact [insert contact email or phone number].

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## **NEXT STEPS FOR NEW [INSERT STATE] LEGISLATION TO PREPARE SCHOOLS FOR CARDIAC ARREST**

*[Insert State or County] schools move forward to implement new life-saving policies for cardiac arrest*

[CITY, Date] - Schools across the state of Missouri are preparing for the implementation phase of SB 68, recently passed cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) legislation for schools and athletic facilities.

This landmark legislation, approved by the Missouri State Legislature on [Date of Passage] and signed into law by Governor Kehoe on [Date of Signing], represents a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to save more lives from cardiac arrest. This legislation aims to ensure school safety. The implementation phase will begin on [Start Date].

[Insert School District or Host Organization] will host a local press conference to kickoff the implementation phase of SB 68. The district aims to spread the word on critical resources to support schools or facilities' successful execution of the provisions outlined in the CERP legislation.

Who: Insert Details

What: [Bill Name] Implementation Press Conference

When: Insert Details

Where: Insert Details

Resources: For media inquiries, please contact [insert contact email or phone number].

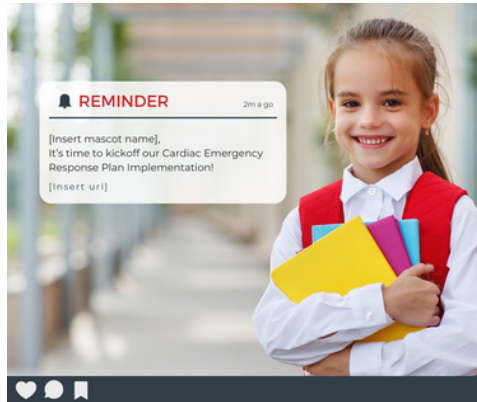
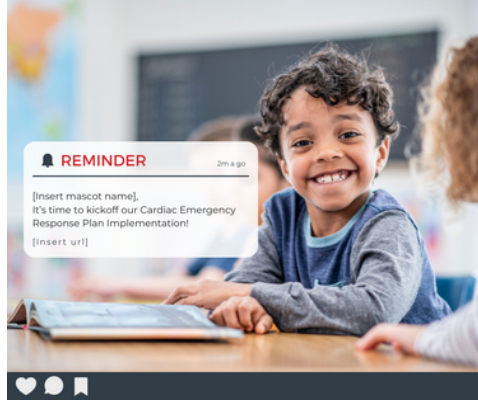
- Implementation Guide
- Implementation Checklist
- Implementation Plan & Protocol
- CERP Training Information

For more detailed information on CERP implementation and how you can get involved, please visit [Website URL].

For Media Inquiries: [Insert contact name – email – phone number]

**[CLICK TO DOWNLOAD](#)**

# SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLES



[CLICK TO CUSTOMIZE IMAGES](#)

[DOWNLOAD RECOMMENDED CAPTIONS](#)

# SAMPLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



## CARDIAC EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Great news, [\[insert mascot or school name\]](#),

We are entering the implementation phase of SB 68, the recently passed cardiac emergency response plan (CERP) legislation for schools and athletic facilities by our state legislature.

This legislation, backed by advocacy efforts of the American Heart Association, aims to [\[brief overview of the bill\]](#), a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to save more lives from cardiac arrest.

The implementation phase will begin on [\[Start Date\]](#). We will follow the recommended guidelines for a safe and effective implementation phase. Learn more at [\[insert url\]](#).

[CLICK TO CUSTOMIZE IMAGE](#)

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IS A CERP AND HOW IS IT USED?

A CERP is a written document that establishes specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in school settings. It can be stand-alone guidelines or merged with a school's existing medical emergency response plans. It should be posted at key locations throughout the school and practiced regularly. It is also important to work directly with local emergency service providers to integrate the CERP into the community's EMS responder protocols.

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## WHY IS A CERP IMPORTANT?

The safety of students, school staff and visitors can be enhanced when CERPs are in place and school teams are trained and empowered to administer lifesaving care until emergency medical services arrive. More than 356,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital annually in the U.S., and nearly 90% of them are fatal. A CERP can increase survival rates from cardiac arrest by 50% or more by enabling a trained lay-responder team to take action.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN A CERP?

CERPs should include the following steps:

- ▶ Develop a cardiac emergency response team
- ▶ Activate the cardiac emergency response team during an identified cardiac emergency
- ▶ Place and maintain AEDs
- ▶ Communicate the plan throughout the campus
- ▶ Train in CPR and AED use
- ▶ Integrate local EMS with the school or athletic event/facility
- ▶ Review and evaluate the plan each year

The Association has developed three CERP checklists for general workplace and community organizations, schools and sports facilities. Download the checklist that works best for your organization and establish the specific steps to reduce death from cardiac arrest in any setting.

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## WHY ARE CERPS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR SCHOOLS AND SPORTS FACILITIES/EVENTS?

A cardiac event can happen anywhere, and schools are a nucleus for a variety of events in all communities. Shared use agreements allow communities to access schools to vote, exercise, garden, cook, host community meetings and more. In addition to shared use agreements, parents and community members are often at school facilities for school plays, concerts and athletic events.

With nearly 50 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools in pre-K to grade 12, about 3 million teachers in the public school system, and numerous staff, it is important for school facilities to have a plan in place to address cardiac arrest. It is estimated that there are more than 23,000 children under the age of 18 who experience cardiac arrest outside of a hospital each year in the U.S.

Only 40% are sports-related. The American Heart Association recommends implementing emergency response plans for cardiac and other medical events in all schools. In schools with AEDs, approximately 70% of children survive cardiac arrest — seven times the overall survival rate for children.

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## WHAT'S THE COST OF AN AED?

An AED can range in cost from \$1,200 to \$3,000 depending on the manufacturer. This cost is for the AED itself; the maintenance plan is an additional cost. A maintenance plan is recommended to help ensure the AED is ready for use in case of an emergency. There are ways to lower the cost – school districts can buy in bulk, or they can be donated. The AED has evolved

and is continuing to evolve from its beginnings as a heavy, expensive piece of hospital equipment designed for medical professionals to a more portable, lower-cost and user-friendly device intended for laypeople.

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## RESOURCES TO HELP PAY FOR CERPS IN SCHOOLS

CPR and AED training, as well as AED placement and maintenance, will have a cost associated with implementation. Working with state agencies such as the Department of Education or Department of Health will help identify existing grants that could be utilized to support implementation. Appropriations should also be made available to support the development, implementation and evaluation of CERPs in schools. CERPs should still be in effect where related appropriations are lacking; in these cases, indirect sources of community or EMS-related support could be utilized.

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## DO SCHOOLS NEED A CERP IF THEY HAVE AN AED?

Yes! Having an AED is an important part of an emergency response plan, but it is not enough by itself. A CERP ensures that the AED is regularly maintained and that school responders are trained in emergency response, including CPR and how to use the AED. A CERP also ensures the plan is coordinated with local EMS and is reviewed and updated each year.

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## WHAT IF SCHOOLS ALREADY HAVE SOME KIND OF EMERGENCY PLAN IN PLACE?

CERPs can be stand-alone guidelines or merged with a school's existing medical emergency response plans. The CERP can be used by school personnel, healthcare providers, boards of education and school safety advocates to better prepare for cardiac arrest.

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## WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED IN CPR AND AED USE?

Ideally, all school staff should be trained in first-aid, CPR and AED use. However, at the very least, we ask that all coaches become trained, as well as any additional personnel identified by the emergency response plan. This could be any additional school staff or administrators.

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## HOW DO CERPS FIT WITHIN THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION'S NATION OF LIFESAVERS™ CAMPAIGN?

Establishing CERPs in all schools and sports facilities/events aligns with the American Heart Association's Nation of Lifesavers™ movement to double survival rate from cardiac arrest by 2030. The Association is committed to turning a nation of bystanders into a Nation of Lifesavers™. The long-term goal is to ensure that in the face of a cardiac emergency, anyone, anywhere is prepared and empowered to perform CPR and become a vital link in the chain of survival.

### Sources

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2 Virani SS, Alonso A, Benjamin EJ, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2020 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2020 Mar 3;E139-596.

3 Rose et al. Cardiac Emergency Response Planning for Schools: A Policy Statement. *NASN School Nurse*. 2016 31(5), 263-270. doi: 10.1177/1942602X16655839.

4 Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by level, grade, and state or jurisdiction: Fall 2021. National Center for Educational Statistics. Table 203.40.

5 Public and private elementary and secondary teachers, enrollment, pupil/teacher ratios, and new teacher hires: Selected years, fall 1955 through fall 2031. National Center for Educational Statistics. Table 208.20.

6 Okubo, M., Chan, H. K., Callaway, C. W., Mann, N. C., & Wang, H. E. (2020). Characteristics of paediatric out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in the United States. *Resuscitation*, 153, 227–233. doi.org/10.1016/j.resuscitation.2020.04.023.

7 Jayaraman R, Reinier K, Nair S, Aro AL, Uy-Evanado A, Rusinaru C, Stecker EC, Gunson K, Jui J, Chugh SS. Risk factors of sudden cardiac death in the young: multiple-year community-wide assessment. *Circulation*. 2018; 137:1561–1570. doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.117.031262.



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