

# ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MAY 2026

DIRECTOR - LINDA BEERS, MPH



## Department Highlights –

**PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE** Leadership from across the state gathered in Lake Placid in April for the Public Health Partnership Conference at which our own Department had an amazing showing. Two presentations were accepted and warmly received for the conference. *A Behind the Scenes Look: How We Built a Colorectal Cancer Screening Awareness Campaign* was presented by Communications Specialist, **Lindsay Java**. The presentation *WellFed, Well Prepared: How a Local Coalition Responded to the SNAP Delay* was presented by Public Health Outreach Coordinator, **Molly Lawrence**. Both presentations were extremely well received with follow-up requests for more information from other counties. KUDOS to our program staff!



Lindsay Java



Molly Lawrence



Linda Beers, Kristen Sayers, Jessica Darney Buehler

Our Department was also pleased to nominate and have and selected as the recipient of the 2026 Environmental Health Leadership Award, **Kristen Sayers**. Through her steady leadership, collaborative approach, and unwavering commitment to environmental health, Kristen Sayers exemplifies excellence in public service. The NYSDOH Environmental Health District Office is highly deserving of recognition for its impact, and dedication to protecting and promoting public health across the region.

**CAMP SEASON** Collaboration with our District Office continues as we head into another busy **Camp Season**. There are with 12 overnight & 11 Day camps registered for the 2026 season. As the District Office opens up these camps our staff will accompany to cover hot topics that we engage with them with all summer long including communicable diseases and outbreak investigations and potential rabies exposures that occur mostly through bat bites, wildlife contact and dog bites. Staff attended a session with NYSDOH State, Regional, District and local members to review and best understand the regulations pertaining to health, illness management, vaccine-preventable disease management and how all entities work together for healthy and safe camp seasons.

**SPRING RABIES BAIT DROP & PARK SIGNS** The USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Services (APHIS) announced a spring rabies bait distribution initiative occurring across New York State (and other regions) as part of their ongoing effort to reduce rabies transmission in terrestrial animals. The bait drops are expected to begin on or after May 6 in Essex County. A press release describing this initiative was issued by our department in late April.



Related to rabies and other illnesses that can potentially spread by contact with wildlife, we are providing signage for each town to display in outdoor areas where people may frequently encounter wild animals and birds. People finding dead birds may report them up to the NYSDEC Wildlife Health Program [through their website](https://dec.ny.gov/nature/wildlife-health/animal-diseases) as they are monitoring the occurrence and impact of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) across the state. <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/wildlife-health/animal-diseases>

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## ECHD Program Data – APRIL (unless otherwise noted)

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### Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Improvement Planning (CHIP)

CHA/ARHN/Data Meetings – 0

CHA/CHIP Partner Meetings – 1

CHA Training/Webinars – 0

NYSACHO CHA/CHIP Workgroup – 1 (minutes reviewed)

Key finding and priorities from the 2025 CHA and 2026-2030 CHIP were presented during the April Human Services Committee meeting and to the BRIEF Coalition. Additional presentations are planned in May for Well Fed members and in June for the Public Health Advisory Committee and the Lake Placid Rotary Club.

Work with partners continues, including plans to host a Community Health Coalition Summit in the fall.

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### Communicable Disease

#### Communicable Disease Surveillance/Epidemiological Investigations

Respiratory Illness investigations (Flu, COVID, RSV, TB) - 35

GI Illness (Water/Foodborne) Illness Investigations - 0

STI/Hepatitis & HIV Investigations – 4

Arthropod-borne (Mosquitos and Ticks) Disease Investigations – 10

Food Safety/Outbreak Investigations – 0

Other investigations – 0

\*Highlights, campaigns, trainings – RSV Vaccine Mother-Baby Teaching Tool created; Children and Camps Illness and Outbreak training (NYSDOH)

#### Immunization Program

Clinics in the community - 0

Individuals immunized – 1

Healthcare provider, school nurse, day care provider or other public health detailing activities: 2 healthcare provider calls, 5 school nurse phone calls, and 9 school nurse e-mail communications regarding immunizations. Public health nurses manually added immunization records for 3 students from local school districts and 1 adult. Nurses also attended the Public Health Leadership Conference, North Country Immunization Coalition Quarterly Meeting, VFC Office Hours, National Foundation for Infectious Disease: Addressing the Resurgence of Measles, Strategies for increasing HPV Vaccination Rates, and completed VFC annual training. Education and vaccination materials provided to WIC and Office of the Aging. Office of the Aging reports they will be sending the Immunize.org adult vaccine information paper out with their mailings soon, and WIC coordinator was grateful for the poster and baby/childhood immunization schedules from Immunize.org.

#### NYSDOH Immunization Program – Vaccine for Children Compliance Site Visit/Audit

Approximately every 2 years the NYSDOH conducts an on-site visit to providers enrolled in the Vaccine for Children Program. This program is federally funded and ensures Medicaid-eligible children and those, un-insured, underinsured, Native American or Alaskan Native, received vaccines at no cost through the age of 18 years. The audit covers visual and verbal review of program policies, procedures, records, space and facilities. Topics include:

\*ELIGIBILITY & DOCUMENTATION (Screening & Billing)

\*STORAGE & HANDLING (Vaccine Management)

\*INVENTORY Management (to meet an annually submitted Provider Profile & Vaccine Management Plan) and more.

**This year's Compliance visit results - Congratulations: no compliance issues were identified during this visit!**

#### Screening Services

HCV Screenings - 0

HIV Screenings – 0

HCV and HIV screenings and information offered at North Country Community College Ticonderoga

TB Screening - 0

STI Screening Services – referrals and/or services rendered – 1

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## Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies Vaccine Clinics – **1 (Moriah)**

Pets Vaccinated – **137**

Rabies investigations - **25**

Specimens submitted for testing – **5 (all negative)**

People approved for rabies post exposure prophylaxis – **7**

\*Staff trained in rabies investigation and response activities attended a CDC Rabies COCA (Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity) Call that covered national rabies trend data, tools and resources for evaluating exposures and determining post-exposure treatment.

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## Emergency Preparedness & Response

Real World Events, Drills & Exercises – **1 (Vaccine Freezer Temperature Excursion)**

Training/Continuing Education – **1**

Volunteer Coordination – **0**

Plan Updates/Revisions – **1** (in process of revising Public Health Preparedness & Response Plan)

Meetings/Coalitions/Community Engagement – **1** (Capital District PHEP Coordinators Monthly Meeting)

\*Highlights, campaigns, activities – Two staff attended (virtually) the national Preparedness Summit in April. The annual summit gathers professionals who work in all levels of the government (federal, state, and local), emergency management, volunteer organizations, healthcare coalitions, and academia to share best practices, build partnerships, advance skillsets, and take away innovative solutions and practical strategies to address the vulnerabilities in our country's health security system.

A required CHEMPACK Survey was completed and submitted to the NYSDOH Office of Health Emergency Preparedness. CHEMPACKs are containers of nerve agent antidotes placed in secure locations in local jurisdictions around the country to allow rapid response to a chemical incident.

Work is underway to update the list of Essex County Cooling Centers and share this information with the public and vulnerable groups.

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## Chronic Disease

**April 1, 2026 – May 3, 2026 Reporting Period**

Public Health Detailing – **0**

Coalition/Collaboration Interactions/Meetings & Highlights:

- Coalitions Coordinated by ECHD
  - Well Fed Essex County Collaborative; - **0**
  - Tobacco Use Reduction Network (TURN) of Essex County – **0**
- NYSACHO Emerging Issues Committee (discussion RE: Sign-on Letter; Alcohol Policy Framework to Prevent Excessive Drinking and Related Harms by the NY Coalition for Alcohol Policy) - **1**
- North Country Project ECHO – Brain Health & Risk Reduction – **1**
- Mercy Care for the Adirondacks - **1**

Trainings and Webinars - **0**

Campaigns & Awareness – **2**

- Testicular Cancer Awareness Month
- Alcohol Awareness Month

Events – NYS Public Health Partnership Conference (detailed in Department Highlights section)



## Community Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (COOP)

Narcan Kits Distributed – 30

Groups Trained - 0

SUDOR Submissions/ODs – 3 Non-Fatal; 0 Fatal

2026 ODs Non-Fatal/Fatal\* – 8 Non-Fatal/2 Fatal

Attended Fentanyl poisoning presentation at NCCC for students, staff, and community members:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJgPmrLjkuo>

**Community Care Kiosks** – Three (3) Community Care Kiosk Locations

remain in place in Port Henry (MLS Consignment Shop), Elizabethtown (DMV), and Lewis (Public Safety Building).

Total items dispensed in April:

Tubby Tester	0
Personal Hygiene kits	8
Sunblock	0
Emergency plan	0
First Aid Kits	28
Forehead thermometer	16

CAP packs	7
Narcan kits	35
Fentanyl test kit	6
Xylazine test kit	4
Nail kits	29
Deterra bags	4
Gun locks	31
Tick remover kits	11
Shoe deodorizer	18

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## Environmental Health

### Air, Water and Food Health & Safety

Air Safety/Quality/Excessive Heat Alerts - 0

Public Water Notices

Boil Water Orders – 2 (Moriah & Jay)

Blue-Green Algae Notices – 0

### Climate and Health

**Activities** – A location change was implemented for the Willsboro Active Transportation Study. A community survey was approved and is expected to be released for community responses in May.

The Highway Safety Grant was written and submitted to the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee. It focused on continuing bicycle and pedestrian safety outreach, and safe driving initiatives.

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## Family Health

### Baby Steps to Bright Futures



Babies born & families offered the Program – 13 (7 pending)

Families enrolled in the program – 3

DSS Collaboration Families - 0

Families that sent a packet as unable to reach or declined the program – 3

Referrals out to programs and services – 1



Our three Certified Lactation Consultants attended the North Country Lactation Summit where they continued to build their knowledge and skills in breastfeeding support.

Pictured at left:

Elizabeth Terry

Hillary Drake

Emily French

## Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

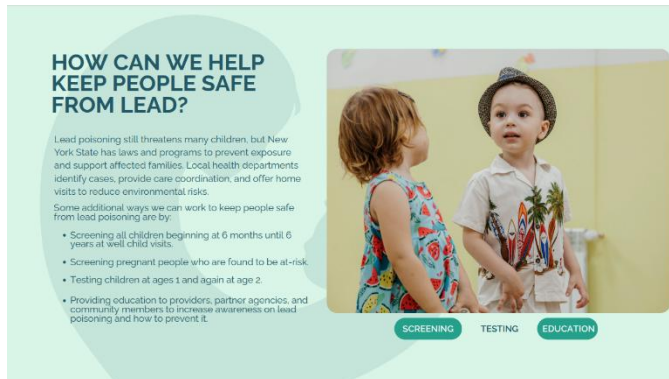
Lead Cases open (elevated lead levels in pregnant women or children) & ensure appropriate follow-up care:

Active Children - **19**

Pending confirmatory testing - **5**

Released with confirmatory testing stating capillary testing was falsely elevated – **0**

Released due to not following up on venous confirmatory testing – **0**



ECHD provided a presentation to the Bright Futures Coalition April 24 on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and the Essex County Lead Program. The presentation covered common sources of lead exposure, prevention strategies, testing guidelines for 1- and 2-year-olds, and ECHD's role in care coordination.

\* ECHD will also be sending educational packets to **town code enforcement officers** this month to share information on safe lead remediation practices.

## Car Seat Program

Car seat check clinics – **0** (Tech Check Tuesdays are set to begin on May 5!)

Car seats checked - **3**

Car seats issued as new & installed – **3**

**BIKE HELMETS** In recognition of Bike Safety Month, the Essex County Health Department, in partnership with Safe Kids Adirondack, is providing bike helmets and safety education to Pre-K through 1st grade students in Newcomb, Minerva, Schroon Lake, Keene, and Boquet Valley CSD (all other Essex County schools were served in 2024).

Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms are also included. Each student receives bike safety education and a free, properly fitted helmet!



Pictured Left: Newcomb School

Pictured Above: Minerva School



**School Nurse Stetho-Scoop Monthly Meeting – 2 in-person; communication sent to all school nurses.**

Meeting covered Statewide Respiratory Surveillance, RSV recommendations, influenza B case activity, AED grant fund sources, Pre-K and Kindergarten Roundup planning, Center for School Health Discontinuation, and Health Department Annual Nursing In-service planning.

## Sexual/Reproductive/Relationship Health Program

Schools/Camps/Groups – **2**

Classes/Students – **3/70**

CAP Pack Distribution – **9**

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## Children's Services

### Early Intervention

Referral received in to the program - **4**  
Children found eligible & enrolled (have a plan) - **31**  
Children awaiting evaluation - **4**  
Speech Therapy - **7** receiving; **17** waiting  
Occupational Therapy - **6** receiving; **3** waiting  
Physical Therapy - **5** receiving; **2** waiting  
Special Instructional Services - **9** receiving; **1** waiting

### Preschool Program

Children in process of evaluation, referrals - **22**  
Children enrolled - **83**  
Children waiting for services  
Counseling - **2**  
Occupational Therapy - **11**  
Physical Therapy - **3**  
Speech Therapy - **17**  
Special Education/Itinerant Teacher - **10**  
Children Attending Center Based Classrooms  
In County - **19** Out of County - **4**

### Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHN)

Children enrolled – **42**

The 5% rate increase authorized under the State Plan Amendment for providers was approved on April 3, 2026. BEI's Fiscal Unit and PCG (our fiscal agent) are collaborating with the Office of Health Insurance Programs (OHIP) to implement the rate increase for eligible in-person Medicaid-paid claims, with implementation targeted within the next 90 days. The retroactive cost to our county's escrow for the implementation of the 5% for the period of 10/1/2024 through 4/13/2026 is \$3,978.92.

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## WIC

Target Enrollment – **600**  
Enrolled - **501**  
Women enrolled - **95**  
Infants (0-1) enrolled - **94**  
Children (1-5) enrolled - **312**  
High Risk Families - **36**  
Nutrition Education sessions – **175**  
    In person - **24**  
    Remote - **103**  
Referrals made to other programs/services - **81**  
Breastfeeding Initiation Rate – **82%**

This month, WIC nutritionists participated in the New York WIC Association Annual Conference.

### **Essex County WIC was selected as one of four presenters on the theme of "innovative collaboration."**

We presented our project on our partnership with the Essex County Food Hub to deliver weekly local food boxes to WIC families. Overall, we had great feedback from association members, and we gained insight into what other WIC agencies are doing to best support their families.

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## Home Health Care

### March 17, 2026 – April 17, 2026 Reporting Period

Referrals accepted – <b>41</b>	Physical Therapy - <b>67</b>
Patients receiving services – <b>100</b>	Occupational Therapy – <b>27</b>
Nursing Services – <b>78</b>	Speech Therapy – <b>4</b>
Home Health Aid – <b>16</b>	

### NY State Department of Health Survey conducted on April 13 & 14, 2026

NY State Department of Health Survey Results – Exit Interview Summary

We are pleased to share the results from our recent NY State Department of Health survey exit interview.

Three minor documentation findings were identified:

- In one patient record, the home health aide's care plan did not include documented aspiration precautions.
- In another patient record, although the patient had a diagnosis of diabetes, a consistent carbohydrate (low-carbohydrate) diet was not reflected in the care plan.

- In one patient record Levothyroxine did not include instructions to take on an empty stomach 30-60 minutes before a meal.

These findings present opportunities for continued improvement in care plan accuracy and completeness.

Overall, excellent work to all staff for consistently providing exceptional patient care and maintaining documentation in compliance with Local, State, and Federal regulations. Their commitment to quality and compliance is clearly demonstrated.

The NY State Statement of Deficiencies were received on 4/21/26 and the Plan of Correction was completed and submitted to NY State Department of Health on 4/21/2026. A few clarifications were required and the final acceptance of the Agency Plan of Correction is expected by 5/1/2026.

The Plan of Correction has included immediate corrective action for patients found to have been affected by the deficient practice. A review of all current patients to identify other potentially affected patients. Systemic changes to prevent recurrence. Staff education on the deficiencies and plan of correction. On-going monitoring to reach a target compliance goal of 100% and what will happen if compliance is not sustained at 100%.

## COUNTY OVERVIEW

- **Rural:**
  - Majority of residents live **10–20 miles** from the nearest supermarket or lack vehicle access (USDA Food Atlas)
- **Low-income households:**
  - **\$3.64 million** annual food budget shortfall (Feeding America)
  - **70 % of schools** participate in the National Free Lunch Program (2023)
- **Nutrition insecurity:**
  - **1 in 3** adults reports consuming no fruits or vegetables daily
  - **Five leading causes of death** are linked to diet-related chronic diseases (2022 Community Health Assessment)
- **Kindship caregivers:**
  - WIC is seeing more families led by **senior caretakers**

## PROJECT DESIGN

**The project addresses families' immediate nutrition needs and equips them with resources to cook healthy foods at home.**

### 1. Kitchen Tools & Appliances

Families received:

- A high-value kitchen appliance (choice of an instant pot, air fryer, or microwave)
- Foundational tools (butcher and paring knives, measuring cups, cutting boards, mixing bowls, and grater)
- Child-friendly kitchen sets to engage the whole family



### 2. Meal Kits with Locally-Sourced Foods



- Ready-to-prepare meals with ingredients and recipes, to support home cooking
- Healthy, pre-made meals for families without kitchen access
- Whole or minimally-processed pesticide-free produce
- Proteins, including dairy, eggs, and meats

### 3. Biweekly Home delivery

### 4. Educational Programming

- Mobile kitchen (Charlie Cart) for in-person and virtual cooking demos
- Kits include farm info, simple recipes, and whole-food cooking tips.



## COMMUNITY IMPACT

**At project completion:**

- ✓ **9,750** local meals delivered
- ✓ **60** families enrolled, reaching **119** adults and **149** children
- ✓ **10** families with emergency needs, including loss of a parent to overdose or displacement due to house fire, served with extra meals
- ✓ **43** local and regional farms supported
- ✓ **95** simple recipes distributed
- ✓ **14** educational events reaching **400+** people
- ✓ **5** demos at community events reaching as many as **6,000** people
- ✓ **>50%** families report the project has helped them cook more whole foods
- ✓ **7** volunteers recruited
- ✓ **5** families in Warren County reached each distribution to pilot partnership & project expansion potential



*"I love all this extra info!!!...You are teaching me things I didn't know...[like] how to eat the turnips. I've been wanting to learn more about the local farms but haven't quite figured out how to do that. I feel so spoiled! THANK YOU!!!!!"*

*"We are loving the boxes. Even the food the kids hadn't tried before! They are trying and think it's so fun to get a new meal every time."*



## COLLABORATION

- ✓ **2023:** Essex Food Hub (EFH) donated 900 lbs of local, grass-fed beef to WIC.
- ✓ **2024:** EFH partnered with WIC in a state-funded project, providing \$150,000 in local whole foods to families.
- ✓ **2025:** EFH and WIC jointly design and implement the current project, funded by Mother Cabrini Health Foundation.

## WHAT'S NEXT ?

- Expanded multi-year extension 2026–2027
- Follow-up surveying and project brief at conclusion
- Funding requested for two additional years
- Project expansion planned to include a second county partner, Warren County



# Essex County Committee Form Miscellaneous Resolution Request

Department: Health / P.H. Preparedness

Committee: Human Services

Date: 05/05/26

Submitted By: Linda Beers

Nature of and Reason for Request:

Nature of Request: Amend Resolution #38 of March 2026 to allocate funds as follows across account groups:

PH Preparedness, Public Health Infrastructure (PHIG)

A4191B 444901 OTHER GRANT REVENUE	\$377,917.26
A4191B 510010 REGULAR WAGES	\$136,988.41
A4191B 520013 OTHER FFE	\$2,093.00
A4191B 541026 OTHER SUPPLIES	\$1,801.35
A4191B 547001 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	\$2,763.52
4191B 549104 CONTRACT FEES & SERVICES	\$152,133.20
A4191B 581000 RETIREMENT	\$17,510.36
A4191B 582000 SOCIAL SECURITY	\$2,915.70
A4191B 585000 HEALTH INSUR-CURRENT EMP	\$61,711.72

**ATTACH TEXT OF ANY SPECIAL PROVISIONS TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE FINAL RESOLUTION**  
Additional language can be submitted as an email attachment, or physically attached to this request.

Budget Impact:

A. Will Resolution impact current budget and/or future budgets:  Yes  No

Explain: See above -moving funds forward to revenue & appropriations 2025 to 2026

B. Is appropriation from contingent account required?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount:  Transferred to What Account #:

C. If a Budget transfer is required, please complete the following:

From Account #:  which has a current balance of:

To Account #:  which has a current balance of:

Transfer amount:

D. Were funds originally budgeted for this item or purpose?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount:  Account #:

E. Funds or Costs to be paid from: Account #:

Current Account Balance:  Balance after Expenditure:

F. Is there any State and/or Federal reimbursement?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount: \$377,917.26 Program: Public Health Infrastructure Grant

CERTIFICATION BY SIGNATURE THAT THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE.

Name: Linda L Beers

Title: Director of Public Health

Date: 05/05/2026

Signature: Linda L Beers



# Essex County Committee Form Miscellaneous Resolution Request

Department:

Committee:

Date:

Submitted By:

Nature of and Reason for Request:

Resolution for the Essex County Health Department to apply for the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Highway Safety Grant Program in the amount of \$3,500 for a contract term of October 2026-September 2027.

Funding is requested for education and outreach activities for Safe-Ride Home (to reduce impaired driving) and See-and-Be-Seen (bike and pedestrian safety).

**ATTACH TEXT OF ANY SPECIAL PROVISIONS TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE FINAL RESOLUTION**  
Additional language can be submitted as an email attachment, or physically attached to this request.

Budget Impact:

A. Will Resolution impact current budget and/or future budgets:  Yes  No  
Explain:

B. Is appropriation from contingent account required?  Yes  No  
If "Yes" amount:  Transferred to What Account #:

C. If a Budget transfer is required, please complete the following:  
From Account #:  which has a current balance of:   
To Account #:  which has a current balance of:   
Transfer amount:

D. Were funds originally budgeted for this item or purpose?  Yes  No  
If "Yes" amount:  Account #:

E. Funds or Costs to be paid from: Account #:   
Current Account Balance:  Balance after Expenditure:

F. Is there any State and/or Federal reimbursement?  Yes  No  
If "Yes" amount:  Program:

CERTIFICATION BY SIGNATURE THAT THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE.

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signature:



# Essex County Committee Form Miscellaneous Resolution Request

Department:

Committee:

Date:

Submitted By:

Nature of and Reason for Request:

Resolution for the Essex County Health Department to apply for the NYS Governor's Traffic Safety Child Passenger Safety Grant Program in the amount of \$5,720 for a contract term of October 2026-September 2027.

Funding will allow the continuing education required of Child Passenger Safety Technicians, a permanent fitting station, education to the public regarding correct child passenger safety seats, car seat checks for everyone requesting a check, and the distribution of car seats to income eligible families.

**ATTACH TEXT OF ANY SPECIAL PROVISIONS TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE FINAL RESOLUTION**  
*Additional language can be submitted as an email attachment, or physically attached to this request.*

Budget Impact:

A. Will Resolution impact current budget and/or future budgets:  Yes  No

Explain:

B. Is appropriation from contingent account required?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount:  Transferred to What Account #:

C. If a Budget transfer is required, please complete the following:

From Account #:  which has a current balance of:

To Account #:  which has a current balance of:

Transfer amount:

D. Were funds originally budgeted for this item or purpose?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount:  Account #:

E. Funds or Costs to be paid from: Account #:

Current Account Balance:  Balance after Expenditure:

F. Is there any State and/or Federal reimbursement?  Yes  No

If "Yes" amount:  Program:

**CERTIFICATION BY SIGNATURE THAT THE INFORMATION ABOVE IS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE.**

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signature:

*Linda L Beers 5/6/26*