

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay.

Publicly purchased vaccines for eligible children are supplied at no charge to VFC-enrolled public and private providers in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and territories. VFC is an entitlement program that requires screening and documentation of eligibility status (by category) for all patients from birth through 18 years of age. **Eligibility screening and documentation must take place at each immunization visit prior to immunization.**

To Enroll as a VFC Provider:

- Be licensed in the District of Columbia to administer vaccines to children aged 18 years and younger.
- Be willing and able to follow all VFC program requirements, policies, and procedures, including participation in site visits and educational opportunities.
- Have the capacity to order, receive, manage, store, and monitor the temperature of public vaccines. Maintain correct storage units and digital data loggers with current certificates of calibration.
- Be open at least four consecutive hours on a day other than a Monday to receive VFC vaccines.
- Specialty locations, e.g., school-based facilities, juvenile detention centers, pharmacies, must have a Medical Director with the highest-ranking clinical license.

VFC Storage and Handling Requirements:

- Use purpose-built or pharmaceutical-grade units designed to either refrigerate or freeze (unit cost can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000).
- Must contain a Temperature Monitoring Device; most accurate device is a Digital Data Logger.
- Check and record storage unit minimum and maximum temperatures at the start of each workday.
- Conduct routine maintenance for all vaccine storage units and related equipment.
- Vaccines and diluents must be carefully unpacked, stored at recommended temperatures, and documented immediately after they arrive.
- Establish a working agreement with at least one alternative storage facility even if you have a generator as backup equipment.

The Medical Director will be held accountable for VFC program compliance for the entire practice/facility

VFC Program Enrollment Requirements

Provider Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually submit a provider profile representing populations served by the practice/facility. • Screen patients and document eligibility status at each immunization encounter.
Vaccine Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer all ACIP-recommended vaccines and comply with the immunization schedules, dosages, and contraindications that are established by the ACIP unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » the requirements contradict DC law, including laws pertaining to religious or other exemptions.
Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all records related to the VFC program are maintained and available for a minimum of three years. • Ensure that the current VIS is distributed each time a vaccine is administered and maintain record in accordance with the NCVIA, which includes reporting clinically significant adverse events to the VAERS. • Ensure that all healthcare providers in the enrolled practice — and their corresponding professional license numbers — are listed on the provider profile.
Fee Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no charges are billed for a publicly supplied vaccine administered to VFC-eligible children. • Agree to not charge a vaccine administration fee to non-Medicaid federal vaccine-eligible children that exceeds the set administration fee cap per vaccine and agree to accept the reimbursement for immunization administration set by DC Medicaid or the contracted Medicaid health plans. • Agree to not deny administration of a publicly purchased vaccine to an established patient because the child's parent/guardian/individual of record is unable to pay the administration fee and agree to not send unpaid administration fees to collections.
Vaccine Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order vaccines and maintain appropriate vaccine inventories. • Not storing vaccines in dormitory-style units at any time. • Storing vaccines under conditions specified by the CDC at all times. Refrigerator and freezer storage units and temperature monitoring equipment must meet the VFC storage and handling requirements. • Return all spoiled/expired public vaccines to CDC's centralized vaccine distributor within six months of spoilage/expiration. • Agree to replace vaccine purchased with federal funds that are deemed non-viable due to provider negligence. • Providers are expected to notify and revaccinate, at their own cost, any child who received compromised or potentially compromised vaccine due to provider negligence.
Compliance Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to participate in VFC program compliance site visits including unannounced visits, and other educational opportunities associated with VFC program requirements.
Vaccine Administration Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to register as a provider with DOCIIS. • Report the administration of all vaccines within 24 hours of providing any vaccine dose, regardless of the age of the vaccinated patient.
Training and Educational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all staff are educated in proper vaccine ordering, inventory maintenance, and storage and handling practices. • Ensure that all staff members who receive deliveries and/or handle or administer vaccines are familiar with storage and handling policies and procedures at the facility. • Primary and Backup Vaccine Coordinators complete required educational programs annually.
Vaccine Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medical Director is responsible for ensuring that their staff is ordering an appropriate amount of vaccine to vaccinate the provider's eligible population until the next scheduled order date. • Providers are expected to have enough vaccine on hand to cover anticipated and unanticipated delays in vaccine shipment (e.g., natural disasters that might interrupt delivery, holidays, unexpected ordering system outages).
Emergency Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must have access to the facility for emergency responses to temperature excursions, power outages, or alarms, even if there is a backup generator onsite.