

State Recovery Now



Marco Verch
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State Recovery Now

a project of America Achieves

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

COVID-19 vaccines are the most effective tool to help us end the pandemic. A digital vaccine verification gives those who are vaccinated a way to show their vaccination status without having to carry their CDC card.

WHY USE ARP FUNDS?

Most of the cost of providing access to digital vaccination records is paid upfront as states roll out the program. Digital vaccine records are among the most immediately actionable areas that support public health goals and help kickstart sustained economic activity, providing a long-term boost to state revenue sources.

WHY DO THIS NOW?

With the emergence of the highly infectious COVID-19 Delta variant, establishing a more effective verification mechanism creates stronger incentives for vaccination among unvaccinated populations. This results in reduced hospitalizations and deaths.

Stimulating Business Recovery: Reducing the challenge to verify vaccination status



What are we trying to accomplish? With over 190 million people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in the US, state and local governments can overcome the challenges associated with verifying vaccination status. The Digital COVID-19 Vaccine Record (DCVR) is an easy to use solution for all parties.



Problem we're addressing: Every state in the US maintains an immunization registry (also known as an "immunization information system", or IIS for short), where every COVID-19 vaccination is required by federal law to be reported. Currently, there is no standard way for these records to be shared with vaccinated individuals. The state of California built a web-based application that works with the states' IIS and allows residents to request their DCVR.



How does it help? An increasing number of venues are interested in confirming the vaccination status of people who gather indoors. A DCVR gives those who are vaccinated a way to show their vaccination status without having to show their CDC cards, avoiding risk of damage or loss. It also gives businesses a reliable mechanism for easily verifying vaccination status.



What is the policy intervention? The Vaccination Credential Initiative, a public-private coalition of states, health systems, nonprofits, and technology companies, developed a Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) based framework for digitally presenting vaccination records called the SMART Health Cards (SHC) framework. States can present SHC credentials based on the information in their IIS, enabling all vaccinated residents the ability to store a digital copy of their paper CDC card. Those residents can then optionally share that digital copy anywhere that proof of vaccination is required.

What are the outcomes we're prioritizing?



- Reduce the challenges associated with showing vaccination status.
- Provide businesses an efficient way to enforce mandates for indoor gatherings without fearing they would lose customers while maintaining a safe environment for their staff.
- Provide a cost-effective way for local and state governments to support public health goals while sustaining economic activity that can provide a long-term boost to revenue sources.



Using American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Funding. Most of the cost of providing access to digital vaccination records is paid upfront as states prepare to roll out the program, while ongoing costs are low. And while there are many competing priorities in funding, digital vaccine records are among the most immediately actionable areas that could both support public health goals and help kickstart and sustain desired economic activity, providing a long-term boost to state revenue sources.

Cost: There are potential costs associated with maintaining the DCVR system, as well as costs associated with data quality improvements and support for individuals who are unable to successfully retrieve a DCVR. These will vary by state, depending on how much work has been done to improve the quality of data in the IIS. By releasing the code to the public domain, California hoped to reduce the costs associated with implementing a similar system in other states.

ROI: Economic benefits would be high at the local level, especially for small businesses. Digital vaccination records would remove a barrier for people to prove their vaccination status when requested. Businesses can choose to enforce mandates without fearing they would lose customers, while ensuring their staff feel safe at work. Research [shows](#) that when such mandates are enforced, people who may be hesitant to get immunized are more likely to get their vaccinations, improving the health and protection of the entire community.



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TAKEAWAYS

Size of the Challenge

As the percentage of adults fully vaccinated in many cities, counties and states surpasses the 70 percent benchmark, verifying vaccination status without a digital, verifiable proof of vaccination is going to be difficult. DCVRs can reduce the challenges for residents to show and businesses to verify vaccination status.

Lower development costs with high potential benefits

DCVRs create an incentive for vaccination, resulting in reduced hospitalizations and deaths while boosting economic recovery. Each state that commits to using a similar system helps create a common approach to vaccine verification. By releasing the code to the public domain, the state of California hoped to reduce costs associated with implementing a similar system in other states.

Promoting a faster and more equitable recovery

Digital vaccination records would remove a barrier for people to prove their vaccination status when requested. By reducing the burden to prove vaccination status, DCVRs both support public health goals and help kickstart and sustain economic activity.