

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Re: Vaccine Distribution, Federal Funding and Policy Guidelines for the Early Care and Education Workforce | January 2021

The following questions are drawn from the Town Hall for early childhood providers hosted by the IDHS on January 15, 2021. This FAQ answers the questions which were submitted before and during that webcast, which can be viewed here in [Spanish](#) and [English](#).

Please note that no questions directly related to the science of the vaccine, medical issues related to the vaccine, and/or other health or public health issues have been included in this FAQ. Instead, please consult with your primary health care provider, visit the [IDPH website](#), and/or contact your local health department with those questions.

We encourage you to check back frequently to the following websites for regularly updated information, as information is emerging and changing every day.

Thank you for your service to the State of Illinois by caring for young children and their families. The work you do is important to the health, well-being, and development of young children, in addition to serving as a critical component of our State's economy.

We value and appreciate you.

[State of Illinois COVID-19 Response](#)

www.DHS.Illinois.gov/COVIDvaccine

[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#)

[Phases 1A and 1B](#)

[Vaccine FAQs](#)

Also available in [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Spanish](#), [Hindi](#), [Tagalog](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Plan](#)

#VaxUpIL- upload a picture of yourself getting the vaccine to encourage others

[GOECD COVID-19 Vaccination Information](#)

[Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies](#)

<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx>

VACCINES

Q. When will early care and education providers be eligible for the vaccine?

A. Early care and education providers are eligible under the 'educator' category and are eligible in the same priority group as K-12 teachers. Some school districts/ROEs or independent schools may organize an on-site vaccination clinic for their staff, but this does not mean they are a higher priority. There are an estimated 3.2 million people eligible for the vaccine in group 1b, so it will take several months before everyone is vaccinated in group 1b.

Q. Will day care workers be eligible for paid time off to take the vaccine?

A. This is at the discretion of the individual employer.

Q. Is taking the vaccine tied to getting federal relief funding?

A. No, eligibility to receive federal relief funding is not dependent on vaccination.

Q. What additional efforts will be made to engage in outreach and promote vaccine utilization in communities with high COVID-19 cases?

A. A [communication was sent to child care providers](#) on January 25, 2021, encouraging them to connect with their local health department along with several other helpful websites to regularly visit for updated information.

Q. Will IDHS help to facilitate partnerships between vaccine providers and child care centers to help us get our employees vaccinated?

A. No. A [communication was sent to child care providers](#) on January 25th to help child care providers and child care facilities to find information about accessing a [vaccine](#).

Q. Is there a cost to receiving a vaccine and can hospitals charge an administration fee to people without insurance?

A. No. Recipients should not incur any costs for the vaccine.

Q. What proof will be required in order to receive a vaccine in priority group 1b?

A. The State is not requiring proof from child care providers in order to receive a vaccine in priority group 1b. However, since local health departments are administering vaccines with local guidelines, some counties are asking for proof. A [communication was sent to providers](#) on January 25, 2021, with a list of documents you could use to meet the request. Again, no one can be turned away from receiving a vaccine, even if you cannot prove you work in the early care and education field.

Q. Who is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in priority group 1b?

A. All early care and education professionals, including those working in Early Intervention, home visiting and MIECHV, Preschool for All and Early/Head Start, and licensed and license-exempt home and center providers are eligible. Support staff, including custodial, transportation, and other are also eligible.

Q. Are CCRR staff eligible for a vaccine in group 1b?

A. If CCRR staff like ECMH consultants, QRIS quality specialists, ITCCS, QS, ECMHC, etc. are doing in-home visits, then yes, they are eligible for access to the vaccine. However, if staff are not yet doing in-person visits, they should wait to get the vaccine until resuming in-person visits.

Q. Where can I receive the vaccine?

A. Please reference the [State of Illinois COVID-19 Response website](#), the [IDPH website](#), the [City of Chicago website](#), and the [communication sent to early care and education providers on January 25, 2021](#), for information on where and how to access a vaccine.

Q. Cook County Health Department has a link for [individual sign up](#); should Chicagoans sign up with the county or does Chicago have its own system?

A. For most of the State, the local county health department is the best place for information on vaccine distribution. However, the city of Chicago has their own website for [residents](#).

Q. I live in a different state than Illinois but work here. Can I still be vaccinated in Illinois?

A. You must access the vaccine based on where you live and not where you work. You may be asked to provide proof of your residence with a state ID, IL driver's license, or a utility bill showing your name and address.

Q. What if we hire somebody new after the first (or second) dose is administered. Is there any opportunity to get them in for a vaccine at the time of hire?

A. Regardless of when you become employed in priority group 1b, after January 25, 2021, you are eligible for group 1b if you are currently working in the field. There are an estimated 3.2 million people who qualify for priority group 1b, so we expect to be in this priority group for a few months.

Q. Once a staff person has received their second vaccination dose, will they still need to be screened at the door?

A. [All safety guidelines outlined by DCFS will remain in place](#). If you have created specific guidelines for your program in addition to those established by DCFS, it is up to you as to how long you maintain those practices. Be very clear, all safety guidelines established through the DCFS policy guide will remain in place for the foreseeable future, including masks, increased hand washing, social distancing, and limited access to [programs](#). Decisions regarding screening of employees at private workplaces are at the discretion of the employer.

Q. Do I need a vaccine if I have already previously contracted COVID-19 and recovered?

A. Yes, even if you have previously contracted COVID-19 and recovered, it is still recommended to get the vaccine.

Q. Is it mandatory that I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

A. Vaccination is not mandated by the State. If an individual program decides to make it mandatory for their staff, that is an independent business decision.

Q. If we have staff who qualify for a priority group based on another criteria, when should they get the vaccine?

A. Some early care and education personnel may qualify for priority group 1a if they are housed in a health care/public health facility. Others may qualify based on their age. It is recommended they get the vaccine as soon as any of their conditions qualify them for a vaccination.

Q. Would Respite & Waiver DSPs be in 1b as well?

A. Please consult the [IDHS Division of Rehabilitative Services \(DRS\)](#) for more information.

Q. Are substitutes included in the prioritization for child care providers?

A. Yes, if they are actively working in direct care of young children.

Q. My child care employees are part of a larger organization that is not child care. Will they be able to access the vaccine in their childcare role separate from the larger organization?

A. Yes. It is recommended that they bring any documents to demonstrate they care directly for children. However, proof of eligibility in priority group 1b is not required by the State of Illinois.

Q. Our preschool is located within a church building. Will the entire church staff, including maintenance that cleans/sanitizes our classrooms, be included in priority group 1b or are only the educators eligible?

A. Only those specifically working in and with the child care program are eligible for the vaccine in group 1b. If the custodial staff people clean the child care portion of the building, they are considered support staff and are eligible to access the vaccine in group 1b. General church employees are not eligible.

Q. Are school age and out of school time providers eligible for the vaccine in priority group 1b?

A. Yes. Regardless of the setting, out of school time providers are eligible for the vaccine.

Q. Is there any guidance for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding regarding the vaccine?

A. Consult the following websites for information on the vaccine if you are pregnant or breastfeeding:

www.bfmed.org

www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19

Q. Is the vaccine for ages 16 years and older?

A. Yes, ages 16 and up are eligible for the vaccine.

Q. If staff want to ‘wait and see’ before getting the vaccine, can they get it later?

A. Yes. The vaccine is proven safe and effective with minimal side effects, and we strongly encourage child care staff to get the vaccine as soon as possible to help protect themselves, their families, and the children and staff they work with.

Q. How is Illinois tracking who receives the vaccine?

A. Illinois is using the Illinois Comprehensive Automated Immunization Registry Exchange (I-CARE) system for vaccine management and operations. All administration of the COVID-19 vaccine will be documented in the [I-CARE system](#). You can also refer to the [IDPH website](#) or the [CDC website](#) for more information.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Q. Are we going to be able to apply for the December CCRG as we did the previous months?

A. No, there was no application for CCRG in the month of December. Licensed centers previously awarded a CCRG were notified of a December payment roughly 40% of their previous month awards.

Q. Do previous PPP Loan and federal grants count as income when determining the 25% revenue loss?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there any chance that license-exempt programs (e.g. Montessori preschool programs) can be eligible for CCRG in any upcoming rounds?

A. The design of the grants to be awarded under the new federal stimulus package has not yet been decided.

Q. Has there been any talk of providing funding to parents who do not qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) but have had to enroll in full time daycare for their school agers due to e-learning

A. Not currently.

Q. How do you know if the PPP loan received in the first round of federal relief is forgivable?

A. You would need to discuss that with your bank and/or directly with the office administering the PPP.

Q. If Illinois again provides the Child Care Restoration Grants, does accepting the PPP Loan affect a program's eligibility for the funding specific to child care?

A. The design of a new grants program is still under development. We will specifically address the receipt of PPP in the eligibility and reporting criteria.

Q. If the \$1.25 co-payments are only going through February, then why are receiving approvals with March included?

A. \$1.25 co-payments are for January and February. The approvals with March included are a result of a technical issue that we're working to resolve, and CCRRs are correcting the issue manually in the meantime.

Q. If we received a CCRG loan, can we still apply for second PPP?

A. You will need to check the criteria for eligibility requirements established by the federal government to determine your eligibility.

Q. Is the application for the grants available now?

A. No. We anticipate an application will be announced in February 2021.

Q. Is there going to be additional grants through CCR&R?

A. We do not anticipate any grants to be administered through the individual Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&R). However, we do anticipate working closely with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) in the administration of a new grant program.

Q. Will Montessori schools who are licensed for their 0-3 student population, but not for children older than 3, be included in the next round of grants? For most of us, this meant that 70% of our enrollment was not counted in figuring the size of our grant.

A. The next grant program is still being designed. We plan to announce the next grant program in February 2021.

Q. What is the best option for a small business: accepting a (newly designed) CCRG or going through the federal relief funding program for small business relief?

A. That is an individual business calculation and not something the State can answer for you. Consult with your tax advisor if you have one.

Q. Will there be any help for centers to purchase PPE and/ food sanitation supplies?

A. At this time, there is nothing available. However, the state is working to address the ongoing PPE needs of all providers. Please check with your local CCR&R for updates.

Q. Am I eligible for a PPP loan as an individual employee? I own a licensed home daycare and do not have any employees.

A. There is nothing in the federal relief bill that prohibits funds from going to license-exempt providers.

Q. Are license-exempt childcare providers included in the federal relief bill passed by Congress in December to support childcare providers during COVID-19 in 2021?

A. You will need to review the eligibility criteria and we advise you consult with your tax accountant.

Q. Are there any other grant or loan opportunities and where can we apply for them?

A. You should check with your local bank and/or tax accountant. You can also consult the Small Business Administration at www.sba.gov.

Q. Are CCRG grants counted as income/need to be reported like any other grant?

A. Yes. CCRG grants should be counted as income for the tax year 2020.

Q. If I received the CCRG in November and December, will the application automatically regenerate my information, or will I need to reapply?

A. The new grant program is still under design, but we do anticipate using the infrastructure INCCRRA created to administer the next grant program which relied on the Gateways Credential database. So, the standard information located in your registry profile will be used to populate basic information, but you will likely be asked to apply again and provide budget/financial information.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements for the federal relief funding and when will it be available?

A. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is still waiting on the federal guidance pertaining to the CCDBG relief funding for child care providers before we design a new grant application process. We hope to announce a new program in February 2021.

Q. Will receiving the PPP funds (or other federal funding program funds) result in ineligibility to receive any CCRG funds?

A. No, we do not anticipate receiving PPP will disqualify you for a future grant program for child care providers.

Q. Will there be financial support for providers who do not have a social security number or an ITN?

A. No. The state cannot issue payments to someone who does not have a social security number or an ITN.

PROGRAM CAPACITY & POLICY CLARIFICATION

Q. Can you clarify what the current DCFS ratios for licensed child care programs are currently?

A. Please consult the following link for more information on ratios in DCFS operated facilities:
https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/brighterfutures/healthy/Documents/Day_Care_Guidance.pdf

Q. At what threshold will the Early Intervention limit of 10 for in-person sessions be lifted?

A. No information on this is currently available.

Q. Has thought been given to a standardized test at the end of the year to allow parents/guardians the option of allowing their child to repeat their current grade if information taught remotely was not retained/understood?

A. This is a question for the Illinois State Board of Education to answer.

Q. When will capacity limits return to pre-COVID normal levels for childcare centers?

A. Family child care and group family child care homes were returned to full capacity in December 2020. Centers were returned to full capacity in January 2021.

Q. When will daycare centers be granted more flexibility in the of mixing children/classrooms?

A. The DCFS meets regularly with the IDPH to review data. No date has yet been established to change the [current policy guidelines](#).

Q. What is happening with the overpayment requests from unemployment?

A. You will need to consult with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

Q. What is the Gateways Registry Profile, who is it for and how do I register?

A. The Gateways to Opportunity Registry is an early care and education workforce registry for individuals who work with or on behalf of children and families in Illinois. Joining the Gateways Registry is a requirement for many groups, including those in licensed child care centers and family child care homes, paraprofessionals working in Preschool for All sites that do not have a professional educator license, home visitors and supervisors funded through MIECHV, and more. [Follow these steps to join the Gateways Registry.](#)

Q. Where would I find information about what percentage of providers stayed open and what percentage closed and where they are located in the state?

A. The only data the State has on program closures is collected through DCFS if/when a provider surrenders their license.

Q. I understand child care group size and ratios are back to normal, but is the social distancing '6 feet rule' still in place?

A. DCFS has increased capacity of programs to go back to a program's normal licensed capacity. However, all other safety guidelines remain in place, including masks, social distancing, meal service & preparation, etc. To review the guidelines visit:

https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/brighterfutures/healthy/Documents/Day_Care_Guidance.pdf