

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

The following list summarizes District government services that support access to reproductive health care.

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Health Care Services

D.C. Health Care Alliance

D.C. Health Care Alliance (Alliance) is a locally funded program designed to provide medical assistance to low-income District residents who are not otherwise eligible to enroll in either Medicaid or Medicare.ⁱ To be eligible, an applicant must be a District resident, at least 21 years old, earn no more than 210 percent Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (plus a 5 percent income disregard), and not have any other health or medical health coverage. All four Alliance plan providers only cover abortions in cases involving rape, incest, or when the life of the pregnant individual is in danger.^{i,ii}

Agency: D.C. Health Care Finance
Website: <https://dhcf.dc.gov/service/health-care-alliance>

D.C. Health and Wellness Center

D.C. Health and Wellness Center offers affordable sexual health care, including reproductive health services, health screenings, and sexual health counseling and education, among other services.ⁱⁱⁱ

Agency: D.C. Health
Website: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/node/1214106>

¹ The current Fiscal Year 2022 congressional budget rider prohibits D.C. from spending any funds on abortion, except in cases involving life endangerment, rape, or incest.

D.C. Medicaid

Medicaid is a joint federal and state health insurance program that provides health insurance to low-income and/or disabled individuals and families.^{iv} Most doctor visits, hospitalizations, vision care, prescriptions, mental services, dental services, medical equipment, medically necessary transportation, and other health care costs are covered under Medicaid.^v Abortion procedures are not covered under Medicaid due to the Dornan and Hyde Amendments, which prohibit Medicaid funds and locally-raised dollars from being used to cover such procedures.^{2,vi} However, there are exceptions in cases of rape, incest, or when it is necessary to save the pregnant individual's life.^{vii} Enrollees must be D.C. residents and meet household income requirements.³

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 allowed D.C. and the 50 states to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months.^{viii} This extension took effect in April 2022 and will be available for five years. D.C. passed the "Postpartum Coverage Expansion Amendment Act of 2020" prior to this, in July 2020, and funded the expansion in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget.^{ix} This act extends postpartum inpatient and outpatient benefits and newborn care to at least a year after birth.⁴

Doula Services

As of October 1, 2022, D.C. requires doula services to be covered by Medicaid, the D.C. Health Care Alliance Program, and the Immigrant Children's Program.^x Up to 12 doula visits are covered during the prenatal, childbirth, and postpartum periods.⁵ Reimbursement for these visits is on a per visit basis. There is also a flat rate for labor and delivery.

Agency: D.C. Department of Health Care Finance

Website: <https://dhcf.dc.gov/service/how-qualify-dc-medicaid>

D.C. Healthy Start

The D.C. Healthy Start program addresses the health and social service needs of women, parents, and infants up to 18 months.^{xi} The program is intended to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy and to reduce racial and ethnic differences in rates of infant mortality and adverse perinatal outcomes. Healthy Start offers case management to help individuals navigate the health system and link participants to community resources, care coordination, and perinatal health support services, including group prenatal care and doula support. It is limited to residents of Wards 5, 7, and 8.

Agency: D.C. Health

Website: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/dc-healthy-start>

² The Hyde Amendment, which was established in September 1976, prevents Medicaid funds from being used for abortions, except in cases of rape or incest, or if the person's life is in danger. The Dornan Amendment, which was created in 1989, prohibits the District from using any locally-raised tax dollars to cover abortion care for people enrolled in D.C. Medicaid.

³ Income requirements and other eligibility criteria differ depending on the individual's specific situation. More information about the Medicaid eligibility categories can be found [here](#).

⁴ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved these changes in June 2022.

⁵ Services covered during the perinatal and birthing period include: perinatal counseling and education, including infant care, to prevent adverse outcomes; labor support, including the development of a birth plan; coordination with community-based services, to improve beneficiary outcomes; and other nonclinical activities to support the beneficiary, consistent with District Law. Services covered during the postpartum period include: visits to provide basic infant care; accompanying the beneficiary to a clinician visit; lactation support; emotional and physical support; selfcare; and other nonclinical activities to support the beneficiary, consistent with District Law.

Medical Respite Services

Medical Respite Services offer individuals who are experiencing homelessness time-limited acute and post-acute medical care in a residential medical facility or shelter.^{xii} There are two facilities in D.C. that offer medical respite services to women: [Patricia Handy Place for Women](#) and [Joseph's House](#).

Access to Reproductive Health Items

Access to Contraceptives

Licensed pharmacists are allowed to dispense a 12-month supply of self-administered hormonal contraceptives⁶ to patients without a prescription.^{xiii} Patients must use a self-screening tool developed by the Board of Pharmacy and Board of Medicine and receive counseling from a pharmacist on the dosage, effectiveness, potential side effects, and safety before they can receive the contraceptives.

The Pregnancy Program

The Pregnancy Program offers free pregnancy tests to D.C. residents by calling (800) MOM-BABY or (800) 666-2229.^{xiv}

Agency: D.C. Health

Website: <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/pregnancy-program>

Period Products

District high schools, middle schools, the University of the District of Columbia, and private post-secondary schools must provide free period products in all women's and gender-neutral bathrooms.^{7,xv} The Office of the State Superintendent of Education is required to develop and implement comprehensive health education standards on menstruation designed for all students in D.C. Public Schools and D.C. Public Charter Schools, beginning in grade 4 regardless of gender.

Additionally, feminine hygiene products, including tampons and other menstrual products, sold in D.C. are exempt from the general 6.0 percent sales tax.^{8,xvi}

Protections for Health Care Facilities and Providers

Reproductive Health Protections

The District government is prohibited from denying access to, interfering with, or restricting reproductive health decisions.^{xvii} It is also not permitted to punish or penalize individuals based on their reproductive health decisions. Discrimination by health care providers against health care professionals that are willing to participate in abortion or sterilization procedures is also prohibited.

⁶ Self-administered hormonal contraceptive are contraceptives approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that are administered orally, transdermally, or vaginally.

⁷ Period products include tampons, sanitary pads, or liners. If an institution does not have a gender-neutral bathroom, it is required to provide free period products in at least one men's bathroom.

⁸ Feminine hygiene products include sanitary napkins, sanitary towels, tampons, menstrual cups and sanitary pads. The law also exempts diapers, both for infants and adults, from sales tax.

Individuals who assist with an abortion and people who provide, dispense, administer, or transfer self-managed abortion products are also protected in D.C.^{9,xviii} The District affirms the right of individuals to choose or refuse contraception and sterilization and decide how to manage their pregnancy, and it prohibits the District government from interfering with or restricting these rights either directly or indirectly. The District government is also prohibited from interfering or restricting health care professionals or providers from acting within the scope of their license to participate in a patient's use of contraception, prenatal care, labor, delivery, or abortion. Individuals seeking, inducing, or attempting to induce their own abortion and those assisting others cannot be penalized.¹⁰ Providing, dispensing, administering, or transferring possession of self-managed abortion products with the consent of the recipient is also protected.

Access to Health Care Facilities

The federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act prohibits intentional property damage and use of force or threat of force or physical obstruction to injure, intimidate, or interfere with someone entering a health care facility.^{xix}

Paid and Unpaid Leave and Other Workplace Protections

Universal Paid Leave (Private Sector Employees)

Universal Paid Leave is a public benefit program for private sector workers in D.C. It allows workers employed in the District to take paid leave from work to care for an employee's health or pregnancy, bond with a new child, or care for a family member suffering from a medical condition.^{xx} Eligible employees are able to take up to 12 weeks to care for their own serious health condition¹¹, to bond with a new child, or care for a family member with a serious health condition. Covered workers can also qualify for up to two weeks of paid leave for prenatal care. Workers receive up to 90 percent of their average weekly wage, with the maximum weekly benefit capped at \$1,049.^{xxi} The program is supported by an employer-paid 0.26 percent tax on covered employees' wages.^{12,xxii}

⁹ A self-managed abortion product is a medication that is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use, either alone or in combination with other approved medication, in terminating a pregnancy, and that is made available to one or more pregnant individuals other than through the licensed operation of a health care provider or health care professional.

¹⁰ This only includes services or procedures by a licensed health care provider or professional acting within the scope of their license.

¹¹ A serious health condition is a physical or mental illness, injury, or impairment that requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility, or continuing treatment or supervision at home by a health care provider or other competent individual.

¹² An eligible employee who earns an average weekly wage that is equal to or less than 150 percent of the District's minimum wage multiplied by 40 is entitled to weekly paid-leave benefits equal to 90 percent of their average weekly wage. An eligible employee who earns an average weekly wage that is greater than 150 percent of the District's minimum wage multiplied by 40 is entitled to weekly paid-leave benefits equal to 90 percent of 150 percent of the District's minimum wage multiplied by 40; plus 50 percent of the amount by which the eligible employee's average weekly wage exceeds 150 percent of the District's minimum wage multiplied by 40.

An employee is eligible if they spend more than 50 percent of time working for a covered employer¹³ located in D.C..^{14,xxiii} A covered employer includes any employer that is required to pay unemployment insurance for its employees. Self-employed individuals are also eligible if they opted into Universal Paid Leave.¹⁵ The program is not open to the federal government, the District government, or any employer that D.C. is not authorized to tax.

Agency: Office of Paid Family Leave
Website: <https://dcpaidfamilyleave.dc.gov/>

Paid Sick Leave

Under D.C. Official Code § 32–531.01, all employers in D.C. must provide paid sick leave to their employees, with certain exceptions.¹⁶ This leave can be used for a physical or mental illness, injury, or medical condition, professional medical diagnosis or care, or preventive medical care, among other reasons. The number of days an employer must provide is based on the number of employees and the number of hours the employee works.^{xxiv} Provided the employee has worked the required number of hours, the minimum amount of leave they must receive is three days.¹⁷

Paid Family and Medical Leave for District Government Employees

Employees of the District Government are able to take up to 8 weeks of paid family leave or 2 weeks of paid medical leave every 12 months.^{xxv} Qualifying events include the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child, caring for a family member with a serious health condition, or a serious health condition that prevents an employee from performing their duties.¹⁸

In 2022, the Council funded a new type of leave, personal medical leave, and expanded bereavement leave to cover two weeks of paid leave after the death of a minor child or stillbirth.^{xxvi} While the Council approved personal medical leave for up to 12 weeks, only two weeks have been funded. The Council also voted to increase the leave benefits from 8 to 12 weeks for family caregiving and parental leave and added another new type of leave: two weeks of prenatal leave. However, the 10 additional weeks of medical benefits, four

¹³ A covered employer includes any employer that is required to pay unemployment insurance for its employees. Self-employed individuals are also eligible if they opt into the program and earned income for work performed more than 50 percent of the time in D.C. during the 52 weeks immediately preceding the qualifying event. It does not include the federal government, District government, or any employer that D.C. is not authorized to tax.

¹⁴ An employee may also be eligible if their work for a covered employer is based in the District and they regularly spend a substantial amount of their work time for that covered employer in D.C. and not more than 50 percent of their work time for that covered employer in another jurisdiction.

¹⁵ The employee must also have earned income for work performed more than 50 percent of the time in D.C. during the 52 weeks immediately preceding the qualifying event.

¹⁶ These exceptions include an individual who volunteers to engage in the activities of an educational, charitable, religious, or nonprofit organization for no payment; works as a casual babysitter; is an independent contractor; is a student; works as a health care worker who chose to participate in a premium pay program; works as a substitute teacher or aide employed by D.C. Public Schools for 30 days or less; or is a lay member elected or appointed to office within a religious organization.

¹⁷ An employer with 24 or fewer employees must provide at least one hour of paid leave for every 87 hours worked. Employers with at least 25 employees but less than 100, must offer each employee not less than one hour of paid leave for every 43 hours worked. Employers with 100 or more employees must provide each employee at least one hour of paid leave for every 37 hours worked.

¹⁸ A serious health condition includes inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; continuing treatment by a health care provider; incapacity; pregnancy and prenatal care; chronic serious health conditions; treatment related to an incapacity; treatment to prevent incapacity; and restorative surgery following an injury.

additional weeks of parental and family care leave, and two additional weeks of parental leave were passed subject to appropriation. As of January 2023, this had not been funded and therefore had not taken effect.

Agency: Department of Human Resources

Website: <https://edpm.dc.gov/issuances/family-and-medical-leave/>

Unpaid Leave

Eligible workers are guaranteed up to 12 weeks of unpaid family or medical leave (FML) in any 12-month period, or 16 weeks in any 24-month period.^{xxvii} This leave runs concurrently with leave taken under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act. To be eligible, an individual must have worked for the same employer¹⁹ for at least 12 consecutive or non-consecutive months in the 7 years prior to taking leave.^{xxviii} They must have also worked at least 1,000 hours for the employer during this time. Employees who exercise their rights under this act are legally protected against losing their position or benefits due to taking leave.^{xxix}

Pregnant Worker Protections

District employers must provide reasonable workplace accommodations for employees whose ability to perform job duties is limited because of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or a related medical condition.^{xxx} If an employee feels that they have been denied a reasonable accommodation, they are able to file a complaint. If an employer is found to have violated the act, it may be required to monetarily compensate the employee. Typical reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- More frequent or longer breaks;
- Time off to recover from childbirth;
- Temporarily transferring the employee to a less strenuous or hazardous position;
- Purchasing or modifying work equipment, such as chairs;
- Temporarily restructuring the employee's position to provide light duty or a modified work schedule;
- Permitting the employee to refrain from heavy lifting;
- Relocating the employee's work area; and/or
- Providing private (non-bathroom) space for expressing breast milk.

Agency: Office of Human Rights

Website: <https://ohr.dc.gov/page/pregnantworkers>

Child Care Services

Child Care Subsidy Program

The Child Care Subsidy Program, also called the Child Care Voucher Program, helps low-income District families pay for child care services. Enrollees can select from level I and II child development center-based providers, child development home-based providers, relative care providers, or in-home care providers.^{xxxi}

The portion of child care costs a household is expected to pay is based on their income and number of children enrolled using [this](#) sliding scale. For instance, a household earning 100 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or less would have the full cost covered by the subsidy, whereas those earning between

¹⁹ An employer must employ at least 20 individuals. Employer includes any individual, firm, association, or corporation, any receiver or trustee of any individual firm, association, or corporation, or the legal representative of a deceased employer, including the District government, who uses the services of another individual for pay in the District.

301 and 350 percent of FPL would be expected to pay \$19.82 per day per child. To qualify for fully subsidized childcare, households must earn no more than 250 percent of the FPL or 85 percent of the D.C. median income, whichever is lower, and have household assets of no more than \$1 million.^{20,xxxii}

Agency: Department of Human Services

Website: <https://dhs.dc.gov/service/child-care-services>

Non-Traditional Child Care²¹

The Non-Traditional Child Care program reduces the cost for eligible individuals seeking child care at non-traditional hours.^{xxxiii} These hours include those other than from 7am to 6pm, Monday through Friday. Care can be provided on weekends, evenings, and nights. Eligibility is determined by the applicant's employment or training schedule. Applicants must meet the same qualifications as the Child Care Subsidy.

Agency: Department of Human Services

Website: <https://dhs.dc.gov/service/non-traditional-child-care>

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services

D.C. Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)

SART is a multidisciplinary group of agencies and organizations that provide services to victims in the aftermath of a sexual assault.^{xxxiv} SART ensures consistent services for survivors of sexual assault, identifies gaps in services, and provides other services.

Agency: Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants

Website: <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/service/district-columbia-sexual-assault-response-team-sart>

D.C. Victim Hotline

The D.C. Victim Hotline (844-443-5732) provides comprehensive information, resources, and referrals to support victims of crime in D.C.^{xxxv} Some of the services and resources provided by the Hotline include emotional support, information on victims' rights, help reporting a crime, legal and financial resources, and connections to relevant services.^{xxxvi} It also connects individuals to domestic violence shelters and sexual assault services. These services can be accessed by calling, texting, or via the online chat feature: <https://chat.victimsofcrime.org/dcvictim/>.

Agency: Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants

Website: <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/service/dc-victim-hotline>

²⁰ Additionally, the child must be under 13 years old or 19 years old if they have special needs; live with a legal guardian or parent who is working, training, in an education program, or seeking employment; be a U.S. citizen or have lawful permanent residence status; be a District resident; or receive protective services or is considered a vulnerable child. A child can also qualify if their parent or legal guardian receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits and is participating in education and training in line with their Individual Responsibility Plan; or if the child is a parent seeking a high school degree or equivalent, so long as the child and household meet the income, age, and residency requirements.

²¹ This is not a one-time child care service. To use these services for the purposes of attending a health care appointment, an individual must already have their child enrolled.

Victim Assistance Network

The Victim Assistance Network is a group of providers in D.C. that offer a variety of victim services. These include mental health, medical, and legal services.^{xxxvii}

Agency: Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants
Website: <https://ovsjg.dc.gov/service/victim-assistance-network>

Mental Health Resources

Access HelpLine

The Access HelpLine (1-888-793-4357) connects callers to Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) services and health care providers.^{xxxviii} The line operates 24-hours, seven-days-a-week and is staffed by behavioral health professionals who can refer a caller to immediate help or ongoing care.

Agency: Department of Behavioral Health
Website: <https://dbh.dc.gov/service/access-helpline>

Community-Based Private Providers

Community-based private providers²² offer behavioral health services to adults.^{xxxix} These services include diagnostic/assessment services, counseling, medication, intensive day treatment, and crisis/emergency services. Individualized behavioral health services are supported by rehabilitation programs, peer supports, supportive employment opportunities, housing assistance, and a range of community housing alternatives to facility-based care.

Agency: Department of Behavioral Health
Website: <https://dbh.dc.gov/service/adult-services>

Transportation

D.C. Neighborhood Connect

D.C. Neighborhood Connect is a shared-ride shuttle service that operates in parts of Wards 1, 4, 5, and 8.^{xl} Transportation is restricted to specific zones.²³ This service is currently free and operates seven days a week from 6:30am to 10pm Monday through Thursday; 6:30am to 12am on Friday; 8am to 12am on Saturday; and 8am to 10pm on Sunday. Riders can schedule a ride via a mobile application (DC Neighborhood Connect) or by calling (202) 398-0500.

Agency: Department of For-Hire Vehicles
Website: <https://dfhv.dc.gov/node/1401826> and <https://dcneighborhoodconnect.com/>

Medical Transportation Management (MTM)

MTM provides D.C. Medicaid and Alliance recipients free non-emergency medical transportation to appointments with healthcare providers enrolled in D.C. Medicaid or the Alliance.^{xli} To qualify, an individual must be enrolled in Medicaid or the Alliance, live in D.C., and have no other way of getting to the appointment. To book a ride, a patient must provide the medical reason they need a ride and the type of

²² A list of DBH certified providers can be found at <https://dbh.dc.gov/node/119532>.

²³ The map for the Northwest and Northeast zones is located [here](#) and the map for the Ward 8 zone is located [here](#).

appointment they have, among other information. MTM rides can be arranged by calling (866) 796-0601 for Medicaid enrollees. Those enrolled in a Medicaid Managed Health Care Program must contact MTM via their program's specific number.^{24,xlii}

Agency: Department of Health Care Finance
Website: https://www.mtm-inc.net/#section_2

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) provides free transportation for customers in non-emergency situations.^{xliii} NEMT operates 24 hours, seven days a week. Rides must be booked through the Fire and Emergency Medical Services' Nurse Triage Line.^{25,xliv}

Agency: Department of For-Hire Vehicles and Fire and Emergency Medical Services
Website: <https://dfhv.dc.gov/node/1519031>

VetsRide

VetsRide offers free transportation for veterans residing in the District to educational, health, employment, food distribution, or housing services.^{xlv} Riders must be D.C. residents and earn no more than \$45,000 or be recently unemployed. The service is available everyday between 6am and 10pm by calling (202) 724-4010.

Agency: Department of For-Hire Vehicles and the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs
Website: <https://dfhv.dc.gov/page/vetsride>

²⁴ AmeriHealth: 1-800-315-3485; Health Services for Children with Special Needs: 1-866-991-5433; MedStar Family Choice: 1-866-208-7357; Trusted Health Plan: 1-855-824-5693.

²⁵ The Nurse Triage Line is accessed when an individual calls 911 and it is determined that an individual's condition is not a medical emergency and they are transferred to the triage line.

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