



IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND FACTS ABOUT DHS NO-FEE BIRTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE NO-FEE BIRTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM?

The DHS No-Fee Birth Certificate Program, in partnership with the DC Department of Health, is designed to reduce the barrier to obtaining a birth certificate for District-born residents who have or are experiencing homelessness. The program provides two related services:

- Brand new self-service kiosks at the Office of Vital Records provided by DOH make it easier for all District-born residents to verify their identity through advanced technology.
- An automated electronic form provided by DHS that Homeless Services Providers must complete on behalf of a client to request a no-fee birth certificate voucher. Once completed and submitted to DHS, the electronic form can be printed and given to the client in hard copy, which the client must present to the Department of Health (DOH) upon successful completion of DOH's identity verification process. The voucher is used to provide the birth certificate at no cost to the client.

HOW DOES THE NO-FEE BIRTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WORK?

1. **Educate Yourself:** The first thing to do is learn about the program by visiting the [DHS](#) and/or [DOH](#) websites. If you are a homeless services provider, which is a community organization that provides services within the District of Columbia Continuum of Care (CoC) and enters client-level data into the District's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), then you are eligible to initiate the process on behalf of District-born clients experiencing homelessness. A non-exhaustive list of homeless services providers is available [here](#). If you need help understanding how the District defines homelessness, [click here](#).
2. **Initiate the Application:** If you are ready to initiate the application for a No-Fee Birth Certificate Voucher on behalf of a client, then visit <http://www.coordinatedentry.com/forms.html> and click on the No-Fee Birth Certificate Form.
3. **Submit the Application Electronically:** There is no need to do anything by hand. The form is completely electronic, so please fill out all of the required information electronically, sign the form electronically, and submit the form electronically. But remember, the client's homelessness must be documented in HMIS in order for the application to be approved, so make sure a valid HMIS number is included before you submit the form.
4. **Wait for Approval.** DHS will review the application, upload it to the client's record in HMIS, and send you a signed approval if everything is in order - so until you receive an approved form (with signature) back from a DHS representative, then keep waiting. If you have not received an approval within 24-48 hours, email nofeebc@dc.gov so they can look into it.



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HOW DOES THE NO-FEE BIRTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WORK?

5. Prepare the Client:

- a. Once you receive notification that the voucher has been approved, you'll get a copy of the final document with DHS's signature on it. Please print that final copy and provide it to your client, so they can take it to the Department of Health Office of Vital Records. The client can use this voucher as a form of payment if they successfully verify their identity with DOH.
- b. Homeless Services Providers should thoroughly explain the DOH identity verification process to clients so they know what to expect and have the opportunity to compile applicable documents prior to their visit to DOH. While DOH staff will be onsite to assist customers, Homeless Services Provider staff should accompany clients that are particularly vulnerable, including those suffering from behavioral health disorders and individuals with limited English proficiency. **Note:** DOH is unable to provide appointments for the kiosk - it is a first-come, first-served basis. To learn more about DOH's identity verification requirements, [click here](#). When the individual arrives at DOH, they should proceed to the Registration Desk and let the DOH staff know that they have a voucher before using the kiosk. The client will then proceed with the identity verification process at a kiosk.

6. **Client Submits Voucher as Payment.** Upon successful completion of the identity verification process, DOH will determine whether a birth certificate can be issued. If so, the client should inform DOH staff that they have a voucher, so the fee can be waived. DOH staff will look up the client in HMIS Program 1829 - DHS-No-Fee Birth Certificates Program. If present, DOH staff will compare the client's HMIS record to the voucher presented in person and decide whether to accept the voucher as payment. If accepted, DOH staff will issue the birth certificate at no cost to the client and exit the client from the No-Fee Birth Certificates Program in HMIS. A client can only use a no-fee birth certificate voucher once per fiscal year.

7. **Client Picks Up Birth Certificate.** Clients that have successfully completed the identity verification process will receive a kiosk receipt. Birth certificates are generally available same day; however, some records require archive retrieval, which may take 4-6 weeks.