



Tech Executive Leadership Initiative

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project, please visit
aspentechpolicyhub.com/teli.



A Federal Vaccine Credential

Advocating for standardized federal guidance on vaccine credentials

BACKGROUND

As part of their 10-week technology policy training program, the leaders of the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative spent 6 weeks working on real-world government challenges. Three teams tackled whether states should develop digital COVID-19 vaccine credentials, tailoring their recommendations to a fictional “State of Outdoorsville.” Each team narrowed its focus to a specific part of the problem, conducted research, and developed solutions. Below is an overview of one team’s solution: A Federal Vaccine Credential.

FOCUS

As the State of Outdoorsville considers building a COVID-19 vaccine credential, it should especially assess: whether such a credential would actually expedite the reopening of businesses, schools, and other services; and whether the benefits of deploying a credential outweigh the financial outlay and ethical, privacy, and security concerns. This project argues that the federal government should establish a set of technical and equity standards for all vaccine credentials.



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ABOUT TELI

This project was completed as part of the Tech Executive Leadership Initiative (TELI), a 10-week skills-building initiative that prepares experienced technology leaders to engage effectively with public sector challenges. Learn more at aspentechpolicyhub.com/teli.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

This project recommends that the State of Outdoorsville [not develop or use a state-specific digital vaccine credential](#). Current research suggests that a vaccine credential will not necessarily accelerate the reopening of critical services. As numerous other public and private entities are researching and developing digital vaccine credentials, the State of Outdoorsville would also be spending taxpayer resources to replicate work that is already being done elsewhere. Additionally, Outdoorsville's constant influx of tourists would make it difficult to utilize a state vaccine credential with non-residents.

Instead, this project recommends that Outdoorsville [encourage the federal government](#) to establish standards that any vaccine credential system built by the public or private sectors would abide by. More specifically, Outdoorsville should advocate for technical and ethical requirements (described in more detail in the [attached standards document](#)) to ensure trust, privacy, and equity:

Technical Requirements

A vaccine credential should:

- Be interoperable and adhere to existing national and international health data standards;
- Include metadata about how and when a resident was vaccinated, in case this information becomes useful as more information is known about vaccine efficacy and new virus strains;
- Be open source such that anyone can scrutinize its code; and
- Store only the minimum amount of personal data necessary; be transparent about data collection practices; and be securely encrypted.

Ethical Requirements

A vaccine credential should also:

- Be opt-in, with no resident or organization forced to adopt it;
- Only be available where vaccines are universally accessible; and
- Be affordable; portable on- and off-line; and fair towards vulnerable or vaccine-hesitant groups.