

# Becoming a Doula

Continue reading for more details about the role of doulas, the benefits of having a doula, and the ways that you can get involved with this career path.



## What Is a Doula?



Doulas are trained professionals who provide **continuous** physical, emotional and informational **support** to their clients before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying birthing experience possible  
- DONA International

## Why Are Doulas Important?



Doulas offer various forms of support to a birthing person to provide a positive and safe birth experience. A source of support before, during, and after the birthing process could be a solution to reduce maternal mortality rates and other negative health outcomes.

## US Maternal Mortality Rates Are on the Rise





-  In 2021, the MMR was 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births
-  Black women face a rate 2.6 times higher than the national average

## Historical Significance

Although the term "doula" wasn't coined until the 1970s, historical doulas tended to be female relatives (grandmothers, aunts, cousins, etc) with childrearing and/or birthing experiences. Despite the prevalence of these support roles in practice, becoming a doula as a career only started to become popularized in the 1980s.

## Benefits of Having a Doula

A 2022 Retrospective Cohort Study of 298 Women Across 3 States Showed that Doula Care Resulted in:

-  52.9% decrease in the risk of cesarean surgery
-  57.5% decrease in rates of postpartum depression/anxiety
-  Babies being four times less likely to have a low birth weight
-  Babies and their mothers being two times less likely to experience a birth complication

# Doula State Certification Process

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In the United States, the doula industry is self-regulated, meaning there are **no standardized licensing requirements** and you can be a doula **without being certified**. However, in California, doulas can choose to pursue an **optional** certification process through the California Department of Health Care Services (CA DHCS). This certification can be obtained through either the **training pathway** or the **experience pathway**.

## Doula Training Programs

Certification Organizations:



[DONA International](#)



[Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association \(CAPPA\)](#)

Local Groups:



[Bini Birth](#)

[Other Programs](#)

Average Cost of Training in CA: \$550

# Two Optional Certification Processes in California

## 1. Training Pathway

Must apply to a CA DHCS-approved program, which involves:



Providing support at 3 births in the capacity of a doula



Completing a minimum of 16 hours of training on various support measures, such as lactation support, childbirth education, and nonmedical comfort practices

## 2. Experience Pathway



Must show proof of paid/volunteer experience for at least 5 years providing doula-like support



Provide 3 client testimonials and a letter of recommendation from a professional

**32% of doulas are certified via the experience pathway**



## Doula Scholarships

Listed below are various doula scholarships for people interested in becoming a doula but need financial assistance to get started:

[Doula Trainings International](#)

[Bebo Mia Inc.](#)

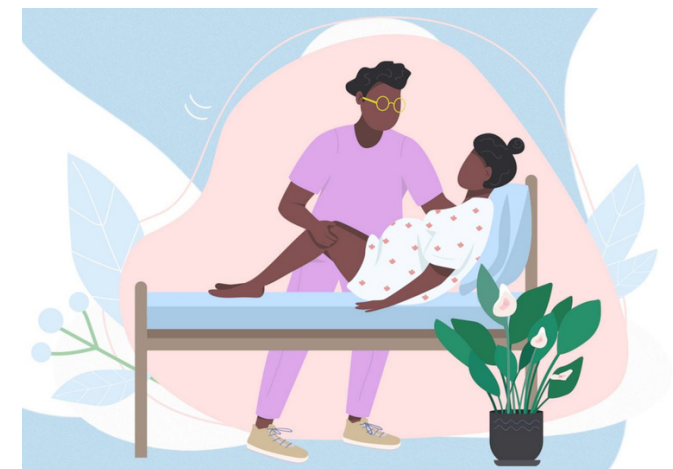
[The Doula Recruitment Program](#)

[Impact Scholarship Program - DONA](#)

Additionally, many doula training programs have opportunities and discounts for BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ individuals who wish to serve their communities!

## What is a Doula's Average Salary?

In Los Angeles, full-time doulas earn between \$60k-80k annually on average. With more experience, doulas are able to increase profits to reach 6 figures!



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