

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why should a pregnant person have a doula?**
 - ✓ *Evidence shows that continuous support can decrease the risk of Cesarean, the use of medications for pain relief. Labor support also increases breastfeeding initiation/retention rates; satisfaction with the birth experience; and the chance of a spontaneous vaginal birth. Continuous support may also shorten labor and decrease the use of Pitocin. Access to continuous labor support from a doula is especially vital for birthing people of color. Black women experience higher rates of poor birth outcomes, including higher rates of Cesarean, preterm birth, low birth weight, and infant death (Thomas et al., 2017).*
- **Are doulas the same as midwives?**
 - ✓ *A birth doula is a companion who supports a birthing person during labor and birth. Birth doulas are trained to provide continuous, one-on-one care, as well as information, physical support, and emotional support to birthing persons and their partners.*
 - ✓ *Doulas are not medical professionals. They do not: perform clinical tasks such as vaginal exams or fetal heart monitoring; give medical advice or diagnosis conditions; make decisions for the client (medical or otherwise); pressure the birthing person into certain choices just because that is what they prefer; take over the role of the partner, support person, or family member; catch the baby; or change shifts (although some doulas may call in their back up after several, several hours of continuous labor).*
- **How can I refer someone?**
 - ✓ *To make a referral please contact program staff Michelle Sanders msanders@ph.lacounty.gov or Ariana White awhite@ph.lacounty.gov or by phone at (213) 639-6448. Please include client name, phone number, zip code, and estimated due date (EDD).*
- **I'm pregnant. How can I get a doula?**
 - ✓ *Self referrals are accepted. Please contact program staff Michelle Sanders msanders@ph.lacounty.gov or Ariana White awhite@ph.lacounty.gov or by phone at (213) 639-6448. Please include your name, phone number, zip code, and estimated due date (EDD).*
- **Do I get to choose my own doula?**
 - ✓ *Clients are assigned an AAIMM doula by program staff. Geographic location, doula availability, and/or client needs are factors to assist program staff in client assignments. Clients do have an option to request a doula. Program Staff will do their best to accommodate a client request, but cannot guarantee specific requests.*
- **I want to be an AAIMM Doula, what do I do?**
 - ✓ *The AAIMM Doula cohort is currently full. We are not currently accepting applications.*
- **How can I participate in the trainings offered by AAIMM Doula?**
 - ✓ *Get involved! Join one of the AAIMM Community Action Teams or our Doula Advisory Committee listservs. The AAIMM CATs and Advisory Committee receive and share information across the AAIMM network on trainings and other opportunities available to community residents. Our AAIMM CATs located in Antelope, San Fernando, and San Gabriel Valleys, as well as South LA/South Bay. Training slots is limited and involvement in CAT/Committee does not guarantee a space. Please contact: Adjoa Jones AJones@dhs.lacounty.gov (South LA/South Bay AAIMM CAT), Cesar Sanchez*

CeSanchez@ph.lacounty.gov (Antelope Valley AAIMM CAT), and Michelle Sanders MSanders@ph.lacounty.gov (Doula Advisory Committee) to be added to each group.

- **Can pregnant teens participate/receive a doula?**
 - ✓ *Pregnant teens can be referred and receive AAIMM doula services on a case by case basis. Teens must meet eligibility criteria of self-identifying as Black/African American, pregnant, and reside in one of the geographic regions of the program. If teen does not meet program eligibility, program staff will do their best to locate and/or refer. Please contact program staff directly to make referral.*
- **When are postpartum visits scheduled?**
 - ✓ *Clients receive 3 postpartum visits. These visits occur within 1 week postpartum, 2 weeks postpartum, and 6 weeks postpartum. Doulas are also available to support clients outside of scheduled appointments (phone, text, etc.)*
- **What is the time frame when clients finish program?**
 - ✓ *Clients exit the program after the completion of their third postpartum visit. The AAIMM Doula program is voluntary, therefore clients may also exit the program at any time.*
- **Can moms in DCFS be referred?**
 - ✓ *Yes. Clients with Department of Children and Family Services involvement may be referred for doula services on a case by case basis. Please contact program staff directly to make referral.*
- **How many clients can each doula have on their caseload?**
 - ✓ *Doulas carry a caseload of 2 births per month.*
- **Is a doula a mandated reporter?**
 - ✓ *Within the doula scope of work, doulas are not mandated reporters.*
- **Can participants be enrolled in multiple programs (e.g. Black Infant Health (BIH); Nurse Family Partnership (NFP); Welcome Baby, etc.)?**
 - ✓ *Clients participating in programs such as BIH, NFP, or Welcome Baby can absolutely receive AAIMM doula services, if eligible."*
- **I am not eligible for AAIMM, can I still get a doula?**
 - ✓ *Pregnant individuals that do not identify as Black/African American are not eligible to participate in the AAIMM Doula program, but there are other programs that provide free or low-cost doula support:*
 - *Joy In Birthing Foundation*
 - *Birthworkers of Color Collective Long Beach*
 - *SBCC Thrive LA*
 - *What Do Doulas Do – And How Can I Find One in LA – LAist:*
<https://bit.ly/2OGPUUnK>