

# Birth Doula Competencies, Scope of Work, and Service Provision for NCB Certified Doulas

A minimum of

- One prenatal visit
- Attendance at the birth
- One postpartum visit within the first two weeks of life

Doula services improve outcomes for birthing parents and infants. Doulas offer support, guidance, evidence-based education, practical support during childbirth, and linkages to community-based resources. Doula services include personal, non-medical support to birthing families throughout an individual's pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum experience. This includes emotional and physical support, provided during pregnancy, labor, birth and the postpartum period. A doula's scope of practice includes the following:

1. Provides prenatal counseling and assists the woman in preparing for and carrying out her plans for birth;
2. Provides evidence-based information on general health practices pertaining to pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, newborn health, and family dynamics;
3. Has a general understanding of complications that can arise during pregnancy, labor, and delivery;
4. Provides emotional support, physical comfort measures, and helps the woman get the information she needs to make informed decisions pertaining to childbirth and postpartum;
5. Provides support for the whole birth team including a woman's partner and family members and hospital staff;
6. Provides non-medical labor support and immediate postpartum support;
7. Provides evidence-based information on infant feeding;
8. Provides general breastfeeding guidance and resources;
9. Provides infant soothing and coping skills for the new parents;
10. Honors cultural and family traditions;
11. Facilitates and assures access to resources that can improve birth-related outcomes including transportation, housing, Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug cessation, WIC, SNAP, and intimate partner violence resources.

*Adapted from Oregon, New Jersey, and Virginia Medicaid documents*