




# ARE YOU AFRICAN AMERICAN AND PREGNANT?

## YOU MAY BE ABLE TO RECEIVE FREE SUPPORT FROM A BIRTH DOULA!



### Your Doula will provide support throughout your pregnancy:

-  **3 prenatal visits**
-  **Continuous labor support**
-  **3 postpartum visits**
-  **Lactation support**

The LA County Department of Public Health is leading a broad African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Initiative to combat disproportionately high rates of Black/African American infant and maternal deaths countywide. Doulas are part of the solution. For more information, please go to: [blackinfantsandfamilies.org](https://blackinfantsandfamilies.org).

### What are Doulas?

Doulas are professional childbirth companions who provide emotional support, physical comfort, education and advocacy to women and persons during pregnancy, childbirth and the newborn period.

### Who is Eligible?

Black and African American pregnant people living in Los Angeles County are eligible for free doula services.

### Client Incentives

Participation in this program is voluntary and to show our gratitude for allowing us the opportunity to support you, we have some great incentives that will be offered during various stages of your time in our program, such as:

- Baby Items
- Safety/Childproofing Kits
- Books
- Gift Cards and more....

See frequently asked questions on the other side.

We welcome participants at any stage of pregnancy. It's not too late for you to add a doula to your support team.

### CONTACT US TO ENROLL

[AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov)

Phone: (213) 639-6448

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health



**AFRICAN AMERICAN INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY PREVENTION INITIATIVE**  
DOULA PROGRAM

AAIMM Steering Committee and Community Action Teams  
L.A. County African American Infant & Maternal Mortality Doula Advisory Committee

[BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org](https://BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org)

 @BlackInfantsAndFamiliesLA  @bif\_la  fb.com/BlackInfantsAndFamilies

## 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.

### **Why is this program for Black/African American pregnant persons?**

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). The AAIMM Initiative is focused on decreasing Black Infant and Maternal deaths 30% by 2023.

### **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, hours of continuous labor).

### **How can I refer someone?**

To make a referral please contact program staff at [AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov) or by phone at (213) 639-6448. Please include client name, phone number, zip code, and estimated due date (EDD). The AAIMM Doula Program offers free doula support for those who meet the following eligibility criteria: 18 or older (or foster youth), pregnant person, self-identifying as Black/African American and live in Los Angeles County.

### **I'm pregnant. How can I get a doula?**

Self-referrals are accepted. Please contact program staff at [AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:AAIMMDoulas@ph.lacounty.gov) or by phone at (213) 639-6448. Please include your name, phone number, zip code, and estimated due date (EDD). The AAIMM Doula Program offers free doula support for those who meet the following eligibility criteria: 18 or older (or foster youth), pregnant person, self-identifying as Black/African American and live in Los Angeles County.

### **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 are located in Antelope, San Fernando, and San Gabriel Valleys, as well as South LA/South Bay. Training slots are limited and involvement in CAT/Committee does not guarantee a space. Please contact: Adjoa Jones [Ajones@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Ajones@ph.lacounty.gov) or Tyla Jones [Tjones@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Tjones@ph.lacounty.gov) (South LA/South Bay AAIMM CAT), Aqueelah Russel [Arussell@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Arussell@ph.lacounty.gov) (San Fernando/Santa Clarita) Jordan Figueroa [Jfigueroa2@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Jfigueroa2@ph.lacounty.gov) (Antelope Valley AAIMM CAT), Vanessa Valenzuela [SPA3@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:SPA3@ph.lacounty.gov) (San Gabriel Valley), and Nakeisha Perkins-Robinson [Nperkins-Robinson@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Nperkins-Robinson@ph.lacounty.gov) (Doula Advisory Committee) to be added to each group.

### **Can pregnant teens participate/receive a doula?**

The AAIMM Doula Program is able to offer support to pregnant individuals 18 or older. Pregnant foster youth can be referred and receive AAIMM doula services on a case by case basis. Pregnant foster youth 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
- SBCC Thrive LA
- Kindred Space LA
- What Do Doulas Do – And How Can I Find One in LA – LAist: <https://bit.ly/2OGPUnK>