

Labor Doula Program

Overview

A labor doula or birth companion is a person who is knowledgeable about and experienced in the birth process. A labor doula provides emotional, physical, and informational support to a mother before, during, and just after childbirth.

Birthingway has a variety of options for supporting students in our Labor Doula Program. We offer a mentoring opportunity for labor doulas in our practicum program who want to work with a more experienced doula before attending births alone. In addition, we encourage practicum student labor doulas to attend births in pairs while in the program. Finally, the Specialized Programs Coordinator (SPC) is an experienced doula and is available for phone support.

Labor Doula Program Objectives

- To train students in labor doula skills.
- To assist students in acquiring labor doula work experience.
- To train students with competence in basic research and information literacy skills.
- To provide students with labor doula applications for a variety of therapeutic modalities.
- To prepare students to provide individualized doula care.
- To provide clarity around scope of practice of a labor doula.
- To teach and promote biodynamic birth principles.
- To use diverse methodologies based on biodynamic educational principles that encourage integration of intellect, senses, intuition, and judgment in learning situations.
- To support students with reaching their educational and professional goals.
- To encourage an evolved awareness of professional ethics and relationships with peers, preceptors, clients, and others as articulated in the *MANA Statement of Values and Ethics*.
- To encourage and support students to be change agents in their communities.

Technical Standards for Doulas

A certified labor or postpartum doula from Birthingway signifies that the holder is a doula prepared for entry into active practice. They must have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment to function in a broad variety of situations and to render a wide spectrum of client support. Therefore, the following abilities and expectations must be met and maintained through certification and re-certification. Failure to maintain Technical Standards may result in dismissal from the program. Students or applicants who have questions regarding standards are encouraged to contact the SPC.

- You must be able to observe demonstrations in the biodynamic model of care
- You must have sufficient use of the sensory, visual, hearing and/or motor systems to support women in birth and families in the immediate postpartum period.
- You must be able to communicate in English with accuracy, clarity, efficiency, and sensitivity, both verbally and in writing.
- You must have the skills to analyze and synthesize information, solve problems (within scope), and reach therapeutic judgments.
- You must be able to acknowledge evaluation and respond appropriately.
- You must possess the interpersonal skills to develop rapport and positive relationships with clients, care providers, hospital staff, and colleagues.
- You must have perseverance, diligence, and consistency to complete the practicum. Therefore, you must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads; to function effectively under stress; to adapt to changing environments/family structures; to display flexibility and to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the problems and needs of many clients.

Labor Doula Certification

To complete Birthingway's Labor Doula Certificate Program, you must do the following:

- Apply to the Labor Doula Program.
- Enroll in the Labor Doula Program.
- Attend and successfully complete Birthingway's workshop, *The Labor Doula: Assisting Women with Birth*.
- Complete the Labor Doula Practicum program.
- Complete the Labor Doula Exam.
- Submit all required forms and documentation.
- Provide payment for all required program costs.

Application to the Labor Doula Program

There are no prerequisite requirements for this program.

If you are interested certifying as a Labor Doula, you must:

1. apply to and be accepted to the program;
2. enroll;
3. complete the workshop; and then
4. begin the practicum.

You may alternately apply to and enroll in the program *after* you take the workshop. Please contact the Specialized Programs Coordinator (SPC) for more details.

Labor Doula Workshop

The 27-hour labor doula workshop is offered several times a year. It may be taken as a stand-alone course, as a step toward labor doula certification, and/or as a prerequisite for admission into the Midwifery Program. The workshop is offered evenings or weekends to fit a variety of schedules. Topics include:

- biodynamic approaches to the labor and birth process;
- tools for emotional and physical support;
- providing continuity of care;
- supporting mom's process of telling her birth story;
- supporting breastfeeding;
- running a doula business.

Labor doulas in our scholarship program have additional requirements. Inquire with the SPC if you are interested in our scholarship program.

Practicum Requirements for Certification

Once you have completed the workshop, you must submit the *Labor Doula Practicum* form to the SPC. You will be required to pay registration and technology fees each term while you are in the practicum.

You must set up an appointment to have an introductory meeting with the SPC. During this meeting you will review practicum policies and paperwork, and will be able to decide whether you would like to work with a mentor. Additionally, the SPC will discuss how Birthingway can support you individually on your journey to becoming a labor doula. The SPC has the right to deny admission to any applicant based on the application process, reference checks, or the introductory meeting. During the introductory meeting, you will read the *Birthingway Labor Doula Program Policy and Procedure* document and sign that you agree to adhere to the policies within.

The *Labor Doula Practicum* form requests information that we will use to list you as a student labor doula on Birthingway's website. The website is one way that Birthingway helps you network with potential clients during both the practicum period and once you have certified. Throughout the duration of your practicum, it is your

responsibility to provide the SPC with any new contact information, to communicate any times you are unavailable, and inform Birthingway of any preferences you may have for doula partners, types of clients, etc.

You are required to attend and document a minimum of five births to meet your practicum requirements. See the Specialized Programs Coordinator (SPC) for specific information about these requirements. All required documentation forms will be provided to you by the College.

We recognize that it is not always possible to get the optimal number of prenatal and postpartum contacts with each client, particularly if a client requests a doula late in pregnancy or is difficult to contact. Therefore, you are not required to document continuity of care with every client. However, we do recommend that you attempt to cultivate a relationship of trust developed through frequent contact with every client.

In addition to the above requirements, you will be required to do independent work during your practicum. Independent work includes attending at least two doula support meetings each year. Attendance will be monitored by the SPC and is required for certification. Once you are certified, each of these meetings will count as one hour of Continuing Education Unit (CEU) for a fee of \$10.00 per meeting. See SPC for dates and times of current doula support meetings.

You will also be required to create a community resource binder.

All enrolled student labor doulas must take and pass a final labor doula exam with a score of 80% or better. A study guide will be provided and students will have opportunities to remediate the test if they do not pass the first time. The test will be given near the end of their certification process. Please see the SPC for details.

Length of the Labor Doula Program

If pursuing a Labor Doula Certificate, you have two years from the time you complete the workshop to begin the practicum and one year from the start of the practicum to complete the work and apply for certification. If more time is needed, you may submit a *Petition for Exception to Policy* form to the SPC. The petition will be reviewed by a small committee of faculty and staff.

Certification

Upon successful completion of the practicum, you may request certification by filling out the *Labor Doula Certification Request* form. You must submit this form along with the certification fee.

An evaluation conference will be scheduled with the SPC before you receive your certification. This provides you with an opportunity to go over the practicum, review the evaluation forms, analyze the program, and discuss whether it met your academic and professional needs. After the evaluation conference, your certification request will be processed and, if all requirements have been met, a Labor Doula Certificate will be issued.

Certification is valid for two years. Re-certification requires documentation of two labor assists and documentation of 10 contact hours of continuing education (lectures, workshops, etc.) during those two years. Documentation forms for re-certification will be provided to you from the College in the packet with your Labor Doula Certificate. A re-certification fee applies.

You must re-certify every two years without lapse for as long as you want to maintain your Birthingway certification. If your Birthingway certification is lapsed, you will need to retake the entire labor doula training. We only consider exceptions to this through the *Petition for Exception to Policy* process.

Labor Doula Program Cost

Application Fee	\$25.00
Enrollment Fee	\$50.00
Labor Doula Workshop Fee [^]	\$485.00
Registration Fee	\$55.00 per term
Technology Fee	\$35.00 per term
Certification Fee	\$50.00
Re-certification Fee	\$50.00

[^]Students are also required to purchase a course-pack. Please see registration materials for current course-

pack fees.

Labor Doula Scholarship Program

The Labor Doula Scholarship is open to students from communities where access to that population is difficult for someone outside that community. Examples of such populations include:

- bilingual (native language and English) students;
- women of color;
- students who work with or are a part of the incarcerated-women's community;
- students who work with or are a part of the homeless women's population.

Students must show both enthusiasm for doula work and the ability to bring this work back to their specific communities.

This scholarship covers half of the tuition and application, enrollment, registration, and technology fees for the Labor Doula Workshop. Recipients are required to purchase necessary texts, coursepacks, and equipment, and to pay other required fees, including late registration fees if enrolling after the registration deadline.

If the scholarship student finishes the practicum in one year, Birthingway will waive the certification fee. If more time is needed beyond one year, the student will need to fill out a *Petition for Exception to Policy* form for an extension and pay the fee when ready to certify.

There will be one designated scholarship spot in the Labor Doula workshop each term; more spots can be filled if available. Birthingway strives to provide diversity and multi-vocal trainings by not being redundant in our awards of scholarships. Applications are evaluated based on the population they are planning to work with, and the level of need in the community population. If not immediately awarded, scholarship applications will be held for one year based on the date of receipt. The student will have to re-apply after one year to continue to be considered for the scholarship.

Excerpt from *2014-15 Student Handbook and Catalog*, pages 119-122