

# **Suggested Timeline for Birth Doula Certification**

This suggested timeline can help you stay organized as you complete all of the certification requirements within the four (4) year time frame beginning with attendance at a DONA approved birth doula workshop, as required by DONA International. The only steps that are required to be completed in the suggested order are to attend a DONA approved birth doula workshop and purchase a certification packet prior to providing labor support services to clients that you wish to use for certification purposes.

# Step One - Required Reading

Cost – Approx. \$75+

Many doulas begin reading as their first step to determine if being a doula is the path they wish to continue along. Books such as *The Doula Book* (Klaus, Kennell and Klaus) and *The Birth Partner* (Simkin) are excellent publications to get you started in your career as a doula. Some books may be available to borrow from public libraries. Just make sure to read the latest published editions. Continue the required reading throughout your certification process until you complete the seven (7) books required. However, you will benefit from reading more than the required minimum. Find the Required Reading List here.

Step Two – Become a Member of DONA International

Cost<sup>1</sup> – \$100 (1 year) \$190 (2 years) \$280 (3 years)

Even though you are not required to become a member of DONA International until you apply for certification, membership provides a number of benefits including a subscription to the *International Doula* quarterly magazine and our online enewsletter, the *eDoula*, and discounts on both certification packets and conference fees. Members also receive notifications of changes, updates or other news, some of which may be relevant to certification candidates. Continuous membership in DONA International is required to maintain your certification.

Step Three – Sign DONA International's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics Cost – None

Both of these forms are included in your birth doula certification packet. Your signature indicates that you will abide by DONA International's <u>Standards of Practice</u> and <u>Code of Ethics</u> in your role as a DONA member and as a certified birth doula.

#### **Step Four – Complete a Resource List**

Cost - None

The resource list you compile serves as an opportunity for you to network with local perinatal and complementary professionals for your own business and marketing goals and as a helpful tool when referring your clients to the professional services in your community. It is a good idea to begin compiling names and phone numbers early in your certification process since you must submit at least 45 listings in at least 30 categories. Detailed instructions are available in your certification packet.

#### Step Five – Complete the Childbirth Education Requirement

Cost – Approx. \$100

One way to meet this requirement is to attend an entire series of comprehensive prepared childbirth classes as an observer, not as a participant. Choose classes offered in your local area taught in person to a group of expectant people. The form you need for this observation can be found in the birth doula

certification packet or within the overview on the <u>Birth Doula Certification page</u>. If you are a labor and delivery nurse or midwife, or you have completed training as a childbirth educator, to meet this requirement you can supply a letter verifying your recent L&D nursing experience or a certificate of completion of childbirth educator or midwifery training.

While you may attend this course at any time, many doulas find it helpful to complete this observation prior to attending the birth doula workshop, as recommended by DONA International. Some DONA approved birth doula trainers may require completion prior to attendance at their workshop.

Another option is to attend a seven (7) hour (minimum) *Introduction to Childbirth for Doulas* that is offered by a DONA approved trainer in conjunction with a birth doula workshop.

# Step Six – Attend a DONA Approved Birth Doula Workshop

Cost – Approx. \$400 – 700

One of the main aspects of certification is to complete the sixteen (16) hour (minimum) birth doula workshop. The cost varies depending on the location of the workshop and what is included in the workshop (meals, lodging, materials, etc.). For a listing of workshops closest to you, visit the <a href="Find a Doula Workshop">Find a Doula Workshop</a> page on the web site. Verify that the workshop you plan to attend is DONA approved by checking <a href="https://www.DONA.org">www.DONA.org</a> or by calling (888) 788-DONA (3662).

You must complete the workshop prior to attending any births you wish to submit for certification. You will have **four (4) years from the date of your workshop** to complete all of your certification requirements and submit your application.

# **Step Six – Seven – Purchase a Birth Doula Certification Packet**

Cost<sup>1</sup> – \$40 for members \$50 for non-members

You must purchase your packet prior to attending any births you plan to submit for certification. Each certification packet **expires within two (2) years of purchase** so doulas who do not submit their certification application within two (2) years of purchase will have to either purchase one (1) six month extension for \$10 or a new packet.

#### Step Eight – View a Business Themed DONA International Webinar

Cost - \$20

You may choose any of the webinars on the Every Doula Everywhere & Anytime virtual education site at <a href="http://www.vconferenceonline.com/dona/">http://www.vconferenceonline.com/dona/</a> that are marked with an asterisk (\*) to satisfy this requirement. The selection of webinars will change over time. You may complete this requirement at any point prior to submitting your certification application.

### Step Nine – Complete the Breastfeeding Requirement

Cost – Approx. \$30 - 50

You may complete the breastfeeding requirement at any point prior to submitting your certification application. The form you need for this requirement can be found in your birth doula certification packet. There are several options that will satisfy this requirement, which include attending a basics of breastfeeding class taught by an instructor with a recognized breastfeeding credential that is at least three (3) hours in length, or completing one of the approved on-line breastfeeding courses.

# **Step Ten – Provide Labor Support Services to Multiple Clients**

**Cost – None - Expenses** 

Any time within four (4) years after completion of the birth doula workshop and after purchase of your birth doula certification packet, you may begin attending births for certification. You are required to submit several forms that are all included in your birth doula certification packet for each birth you submit. Because each birth must meet a number of requirements (such as continuous in-person support throughout all of active labor), be prepared to support five, six or more clients in order to have three (3) that meet all of the necessary requirements for certification. While there are no direct costs to the doula to attend births, you may incur expenses, such as child care and gas.

#### Step Eleven – Write an Essay on the Purpose and Value of Labor Support

Cost - None

This requirement can be written whenever you prefer after attending the workshop and prior to submitting your certification application. Some doulas may choose to write it as soon as they complete the workshop while their understanding of the doula's role is fresh. Others may choose to write it as the last step before submitting their application. Your certification packet will include some guidance for writing this essay.

# Step Twelve – Complete the Basic Knowledge Self-Assessment Tool

Cost - None

You may prefer to take this test after you have completed the birth doula workshop and the recommended reading since all of the questions pertain to childbirth and the role of the doula.

#### **Step Thirteen – Provide Two References**

Cost - None

You will need to request a written reference from a perinatal health professional and a written reference from a doula client. The forms for both references are in the certification packet.

# Step Fourteen - Pay Your Certification Processing Fee

Cost1 - \$110

In order to process your application for certification, pay the application processing fee on-line in the <u>DONA</u>
<u>Boutique</u> and include a copy of your order confirmation with your certification application, or include a check or International Money order for \$110 USD with your certification application.

# Step Fifteen - Mail your completed Certification Application

Cost - Postage

Mail your completed certification application as indicated in the certification packet to DONA International, Attn: Certification at the current mailing address indicated at <a href="www.DONA.org">www.DONA.org</a>. You may choose to mail it with some kind of tracking option. The amount of postage will vary with the mailing or shipping service you have chosen and will also depend on the postage rates in the country from which you send your paperwork.

Do not forget to make a copy of all of your paperwork before you send in your completed certification application for your own records, to be able to answer any questions during the review process, and in the event that it is lost or damaged during shipping.

Be sure to carefully follow the instructions and meet the requirements in your DONA International Birth Doula Certification Packet.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> DONA International fees are based on the International Fee Group Index according to country of residence. For current fees in countries other than the U.S., check the International Fee Group Index in the DONA Boutique at www.DONA.org or call the Home Office at 888-788-DONA (3662). All fees are payable in U.S. funds only.