

How to choose a doula

Pick two or three doulas or programs, talk to each one, compare what they offer and what they charge. Trust how the first conversation feels.

Updated October 20, 2026

A doula supports you and your family through birth, the postpartum weeks or the end of life. Choosing the right doula matters because this person will be with you during an important time. Work through these steps and you will find someone who fits.

Know what you need

First, decide which kind of support you want. A birth doula helps during pregnancy and labour. A postpartum doula helps after the baby arrives. An end-of-life doula supports a dying person and their family. Some doulas offer more than one type. Look at the type of doula on the listing before you call.

Find doulas near you

Browse the site by city. Each listing can show the doula type, the price range and whether the doula accepts insurance or Medicaid. A blank field means the fact is not stated, so ask. Filter by free or low-cost support to see community doula programs. In the United States, 26 states plus Washington, DC reimburse doula services through Medicaid as of March 2026, according to the NASHP state tracker. Use the Medicaid doula coverage checker for your state.

Compare what they offer

Contact two or three doulas or programs. Ask each one the same questions:

- What training and certifications do you hold?
- What does your package include? How many prenatal visits? Do you stay through the whole labour? Do you offer a postpartum visit?
- What is your fee and what is not included?
- Do you offer a free first call to see if we are a good fit?
- Are you available around my due date?

A listing can show certifications, languages and price range when the doula states them. Use the doula cost estimator to see the typical published range for a birth package or postpartum support. The median published flat-rate birth package is \$1,100, with a typical range of \$450 to \$1,800, based on 11,583 package prices from 4,289 providers. Postpartum support is usually billed by the hour at a median of \$45.

Check logistics

Ask whether the doula offers virtual support, works in your area and is available on your dates. Look at the languages they speak. If you need care in a language that is not English, check that

they speak it.

Trust the conversation

A short introductory call is normal. How the doula talks to you on that call is how they will treat you. You want someone who listens, explains things in plain words and makes you feel calm. If the conversation feels rushed or pressured, it is fine to talk to someone else.

Free and low-cost options

Community doula programs provide free or low-cost support. Look for the community doula programs category on this site. Check each provider page for current terms. Several programs in the directory state that their doula support is free. Ask each program about its training and who it serves. The facts on a listing come from the program's own site and are not yet owner-reviewed.

Frequently asked questions

How many doulas should I contact before I decide?

Two or three is enough for most people. You want to compare their approach and their price, not interview the whole city.

Should I meet a doula before I book?

Yes. A short video call or an in-person meeting is normal. Use it to ask about their training, their experience and what their package includes.

Can I change my doula after I book?

Ask the doula about this before you commit. Ask what happens to your fee if you change your mind. Check the provider page or ask the programme about its terms.

Sources

[Bornbir - How Much Does a Doula Cost? \(2026 Prices\)](https://www.bornbir.com/doula-cost) — <https://www.bornbir.com/doula-cost>

[DONA International - What is a doula](https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula-2/) — <https://www.dona.org/what-is-a-doula-2/>

[International End of Life Doula Association \(INELDA\)](https://inelda.org/) — <https://inelda.org/>