



Suggested Timeline for Birth Doula Certification

This 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.

Step One – Required Reading

Cost – \$75 – 100

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. Continue the required reading throughout your certification process until you complete the five (5) 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

Cost¹ – \$50 (1 year)

\$85 9 (2 years)

\$125 (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 on-line newsletter, the *eDoula*, and discounts on both certification packets and conference fees. 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 Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics in your role as a DONA member and as a certified birth doula.

Step Four – Complete a Resource List

Cost – None

Your resource list serves as a helpful tool when making referrals to other professionals in your community and as an opportunity for you to network with those professionals. It is a good idea to begin compiling names and phone numbers throughout your certification process since you must submit at least 45 listings in at least 30 categories. Keep your resources local; list individual practitioners whenever possible; compile thorough contact information; and add informative notes and additional details, which will help you tailor your referrals. *Tip: Take note of everything you learn as you research childbirth classes and breastfeeding classes for the certification process; that information will be a great starting point for your list.*

Step Five – Attend a Childbirth Education Series (taught by an educator certified by one of the approved organizations) Cost – Approx. \$100

One of the components to certification is to attend an entire series of prepared childbirth classes (of at least 12 hours of instruction time) as an observer, not as a participant. You can find the DONA International list of [approved childbirth organizations](#) on the web site under Birth Doula Certification. The form you need for this requirement can be found in the birth doula certification packet. If you are a labor and delivery nurse or you have completed training as a childbirth educator through one of our approved organizations, to meet this requirement you can supply a letter verifying your nursing experience or a certificate of completion of childbirth educator training.

While you may take this course at any time, many doulas find it helpful to complete this observation prior to attending the birth doula workshop; and some DONA approved birth doula trainers may require completion before 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. \$200 – 400

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 [Find a Doula Workshop](#) page on the web site.

You must complete the workshop prior to attending the 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 Seven – Purchase a Birth Doula Certification Packet Cost – \$35 for members
\$45 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 six month extension or a new packet.

Step Eight – Attend a Breastfeeding Class Cost – None – Approx. \$50

You may complete the breastfeeding course 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 breastfeeding class taught by an instructor with a recognized breastfeeding credential that is at least three (3) hours in length or completing one of two approved on-line breastfeeding courses.

Step Nine – Attend Births Required for Certification 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 fill out several forms that are included in your birth doula certification packet for each birth you submit, including a birth record sheet, labor progress chart and client confidentiality release statement. For each birth, you will write an essay following the guidelines indicated in your packet. Each submitted birth will require an evaluation from the mother and primary care provider. If the primary care provider is a doctor, an additional nurse's evaluation is required. Because each birth

must meet a number of requirements (such as continuous support and the doula's presence at the onset of active labor) you may actually have to attend five, six or more births in order to have three (3) that meet all of the necessary requirements. While there are no direct costs to the doula to attend births, you may have expenses such as parking, child care and gas.

Step Ten – Write an Essay (500-1,000 words) 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 Eleven – 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 Twelve – Provide Two References

Cost – None

You must provide the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for two (2) references on your certification application form. One reference should be a doula client and the other a birth professional; both should have agreed to be contacted.

Step Thirteen – Pay Your Certification Processing Fee

Cost¹ – \$60

In order to process your application for certification, you must include a check for \$60 USD with your certification application; or you may pay this processing fee on-line at the [DONA Boutique](#) and include a copy of your order confirmation with your certification application.

Do not forget to make a copy of all of your paperwork for your own records before you send in your completed certification application in the event that it is lost or damaged during shipping.

Be sure to look over the list of [requirements for birth doula certification](#) on the DONA International web site.

¹ 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