POSTPARTUM DOULA CERTIFICATION – REQUIREMENTS

STEP ONE – PREREQUISITES

Complete the following postpartum doula workshop prerequisites (A and B) **PRIOR** to attending your DONA approved postpartum doula workshop:

A. Read the DONA International Position Papers:
   o The Postpartum Doula's Role in Maternity Care
   o The Birth Doula's Contribution to Modern Maternity Care

B. Read at least one book from each of the following three categories from the Postpartum Doula Required Reading List:
   o *Becoming a Mother*
   o *The Newborn*
   o *Breastfeeding*

Contact your DONA approved postpartum doula trainer with any questions or to discuss any special circumstances.

STEP TWO

- Attend a DONA approved postpartum doula workshop.

   o The workshop is valid for four (4) years.

   o Submit a copy of your Certificate of Attendance from that workshop with your application.

   o The completed certification application must be submitted and postmarked within four (4) years of attending the postpartum doula workshop.

- Purchase a DONA International Postpartum Doula Certification Packet.

   o Packet must be purchased **prior** to starting support experiences submitted for certification. These support experiences have to take place **after** attending the workshop.

   o Packet is valid for two (2) years from the date of purchase.

      ▪ Certification packet includes all the information and forms required for certification.

      ▪ Submit a copy of your DONA Boutique order confirmation for the packet purchase with your application

         ◆ One six (6) month extension may be purchased in the DONA Boutique, if necessary. This would extend the packet expiration date by exactly six (6) months.

- Read and sign the following documents:

  - DONA International Postpartum Doula Code of Ethics

  - DONA International Postpartum Doula Standards of Practice (initial page 1, sign on page 2)

- Complete the INITIAL Self-Assessment Checklist.

  - Use this initial assessment as a guide to identify areas you will need to address while you work on meeting all certification requirements.

  - You will need to complete a final self-assessment checklist just prior to submitting your application for certification.

- Complete the required reading from the Postpartum Doula Required Reading List.

  - Sign the verification of completion of reading requirements and include it with your application.

- Basics of Breastfeeding Requirement - Submit ONE (1) of the following (A, B or C):

  A. Proof of completion of one of the approved online breastfeeding study programs listed on the website. Please note: these programs are not DONA International products. You are responsible for following the program's instructions. Do not contact the DONA International office for assistance.

  B. Completed and signed Breastfeeding Class Attendance Verification Form confirming:

      - Attendance at a breastfeeding class or workshop of at least three (3) hours, covering the basics of breastfeeding.

      - Ideally this class or workshop is targeted to birth and postpartum related professionals (preferred), such as may be offered in conjunction with a DONA approved workshop.

      - The class or workshop must be taught by an educator with recognized breastfeeding credentials (IBCLC, CLE or CLC).

  C. Proof of completion of lactation consultant, breastfeeding peer counselor or community breastfeeding educator training. We will also accept documentation showing that you are currently an approved La Leche League Leader.

- View one (1) DONA International webinar with a business theme and submit a printed copy of your certificate of completion. You may choose any of the webinars on the *Every Doula Everywhere & Anytime* virtual education site at http://www.vconferenceonline.com/dona/ that are marked with an asterisk (*) to satisfy this requirement.

- Develop a list of *at least* forty-five (45) local resources in *at least* thirty (30) different categories. Submit the list sorted into categories in a logical way, and in a paper-saving format (e.g., as spreadsheet or in columns), in a small but legible font size.

  The listed categories are suggestions to get you started. The **boldface** categories should be researched and contain listings (if possible), the other categories may or may not apply to your area. You may add additional categories relevant to your area or clientele.

- Provide postpartum doula support to several clients and their families.

  Choose three (3) support experiences for certification. All three (3) of these support experiences must take place AFTER attending the DONA approved postpartum doula workshop and AFTER purchasing the postpartum doula certification packet.

  o Additionally, these three (3) support experiences need to meet the following criteria:

    ▪ You must have provided a minimum of twelve (12) hours of postpartum support in at least three (3) separate visits to each family.

    ▪ At least eight (8) hours of postpartum support for each family needs to have been provided during day time hours (between 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.).

    ▪ The support you provided must have *concluded* within the fourth trimester (12 weeks after the birth of the baby) and be in accordance with the scope of a postpartum doula.

    ▪ Support must have been provided to another adult in the household besides the primary client (mother of the newborn(s)). In support situations where the other adult is frequently at work or away during doula services, the doula must schedule some of her time when that support person is available.

    ▪ At least two (2) of the mothers must be breastfeeding at the time you are working with them.

  o For EACH of the three (3) qualifying support experiences, submit:

    ▪ DONA International Client Confidentiality Release Form signed by the primary client (mother of the newborn).

    ▪ Postpartum Doula Support Record Sheet with requested details. Please write legibly; if you need more space, insert an additional page clearly indicating the question(s) being responded to on the page.

    ▪ Good (no less than 3s) Evaluation by the Mother, your primary client.

    ▪ Good (no less than 3s) Evaluation by the Supporting Adult.

- The doula must have interacted enough with the partner/other supporting adult for them to feel comfortable filling out the evaluation form. Situations in which the doula does not interact with the partner at all, due to providing support while the partner is away, will NOT count toward certification.

- If there was no other adult in the household, the doula needs to document the following, noting that no more than two (2) such support experiences will be accepted for certification:

  □ How s/he interacted with the partner / another adult support person who was not in the household at the time (e.g., deployment, sick, out of town) and what kind of support s/he offered.

  □ What s/he did to help the client identify and connect with outside support.

  – OR –

  □ For a single mother who has no support inside or outside the home, how s/he helped the client to reach out and connect with support and resources in her community.

- Submit a typewritten essay (500-1,000 words) on the value of postpartum support.

  o Imagine yourself addressing someone who has never heard of a postpartum doula, and explain, *in your own words*, the value of postpartum doula support to the mother, her partner and the family.

  o Be sure to include the roles, limitations, boundaries and responsibilities of a postpartum doula, include some specific examples.

  o Your goal is to give, in your own words, a good overview and introduction to the role of the postpartum doula, so someone who has never heard of the role, or has a misconception about it, will get a good sense of what a postpartum doula does and does not do.

  o Review the Position Paper, the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, and refer to research in your essay.

- Meet with a perinatal healthcare provider, explain the role and scope of a postpartum doula, and request completion of the Written Reference from Perinatal Healthcare Provider Form. The healthcare provider may be contacted during the review process.

- Identify a client who is willing to complete the Client Reference Form. Collect the completed document from this client in a sealed envelope and include it with your application.

- Complete the FINAL Self-Assessment Checklist.

- o Perform this assessment just before submitting the completed application.

- o Indicate how you plan to gain any skills or techniques you may not yet be confident in.

- Sign the *Website Content Release* Form

  - o Complete and sign this form and submit it along with your certification application, *even if you do not wish to be listed on the website at this time*.
  - o Let your reviewer know at the time of certification what your listing preference is at that time.

  - o After your certification, you may edit and change your contact and listing information through the DONA Login at www.DONA.org at any time, if your certification and membership are in good standing.

- Confirm that your membership with DONA International is current.

  - o If not, join or renew prior to submitting your application and include a copy of the DONA Boutique order confirmation from that transaction.

- Pay the certification application fee online through the DONA Login and include a copy of the order confirmation from that transaction.

- Complete the Application for DONA International Postpartum Doula Certification

  - o Complete the entire document carefully, fill in all the blanks.

  - o Indicate your name as you wish for it to appear on the certificate.

  - o Indicate your current mailing address and contact information. Be sure to write legibly, so the reviewer will be able to contact you.

- Use the Certification Requirement Checklist to ensure your application is complete:

  - ▪ Place the documentation *in the order listed* on the checklist. Do *not* use staples, clips, binders or folders. Simply place the individual documents and forms in order into the envelope.

  - ▪ Submit ORIGINALS of all DONA International forms with your application.

    - ▪ Exception: Submit a COPY of your certificate of attendance at the DONA approved postpartum doula workshop and the breastfeeding class, if applicable), and keep the originals.

    - ▪ Do not include the checklist.

- Make and keep a copy, for your own records, of **everything** you submit for certification.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

- Mail the entire application to DONA International, Attn: Certification.

  o   Confirm the current mailing address by checking www.DONA.org.

  o   Consider sending it with a tracking option.

- Your application needs to be postmarked by the expiration date of your certification packet (or the extended date, if you purchased an extension) and while the workshop is still valid within four (4) years of the workshop dates.

What to Expect During the Review Process

- Allow a minimum of three (3) months for the Home Office to process your application and assign it to be reviewed. Please contact the Home Office at Certification@DONA.org if you have not heard from a member of the Certification Committee after three (3) months.

- You will be notified by a reviewer once s/he has received the application.

- Respond to your reviewer and share when and how you can best be reached.

- Locate the copy of the certification materials you submitted, as well as your original notes for the support experiences you submitted, so you can refer to them when talking with or responding to the reviewer.

- You will be notified by email, phone or letter if there are concerns with your application or additional information or documentation may be needed.

- You will be given a deadline for submission of the requested information.

- Communication is important. You are expected to keep in contact with your reviewer and to provide clarification or additional information, if needed.

- If you are unable to submit any requested information by the deadline, you should contact your reviewer before that date to discuss the situation and suggest an extended submission deadline.
- Your certification will remain on hold until all requirements have been met.

- Certification cannot be completed if your membership is not current.

- You are expected to act in a polite and professional manner when discussing concerns with the Certification Committee, in accordance with the DONA International Code of Ethics.

- You should be aware that an incomplete packet may be returned to you for completion at the discretion of the Certification Committee, in which case the application fee is non-refundable.

Denial of Certification

- Certification may be denied to an applicant who falsifies information, does not meet or complete all requirements or does not adhere to DONA International's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Certification may be denied at the discretion of the Certification Committee.

Refund Policies

- No refunds will be provided for membership fees, certification packets, extensions, or certification application fees, even if certification is denied or you withdraw during the application process.

Certification Packet Extensions

- One (1) extension of six (6) months may be purchased for the certification packet for $10 (US funds) through the DONA Login at www.DONA.org.

  o Include a copy of the purchase receipt with your application for certification.

- If necessary, a second certification packet may be purchased to complete certification.

  o Your application must be postmarked by the four (4) year anniversary of your postpartum doula workshop, independent of the expiration date on the packet.

  o The certification requirements in your second packet must be met.

    ▪ Any requirements that were completed in accordance with the first packet that meet the criteria of the second packet may be used and submitted with the application.

    ▪ Include the email(s) that accompanied delivery of the packet(s) and/or dated proof of purchase from DONA International **for both packets** with your application.

- *An extension is* **not** *available for the workshop itself*. Your application must be postmarked by the four (4) year anniversary of attendance at your DONA approved postpartum doula workshop.

Replacement fee

- A $15 (US funds) fee will be charged for a one (1) time replacement of this Postpartum Doula Certification Packet before its expiration. The replacement packet will have the same expiration date as the original packet.

- A replacement packet may be ordered online through the DONA Login at www.DONA.org.

Forms in Languages Other than English

- Clients should be able to read and comprehend the Client Confidentiality Release Form and the Evaluation forms.

- Please contact the DONA International Home Office at 888-788-DONA (3662) or email Certification@DONA.org to inquire about documents, such as the Client Confidentiality Release Form and the Evaluation forms, in languages other than English (e.g., Spanish and others).

Oral Interviews

- For applicants who are unable to write, an oral interview may be used for certification. Please email Certification@DONA.org to discuss this option and make initial arrangements BEFORE submitting your application.

DONA International Postpartum Doula Data Collection Form

DONA International encourages all members, certification candidates and certified doulas to complete a Postpartum Doula Data Collection Form for each completed support experience and to submit these forms to the Home Office on a regular basis. This is not a requirement for certification, but we encourage everyone to participate by submitting the data from all support experiences. This data is used for statistical purposes and research.