

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Certification Committee of DONA International, I would like to welcome you as an applicant for the Advanced Birth and/or Postpartum Doula Credential.

The advanced doula credential is the highest certification honor bestowed to doulas in our organization. The AdvPCD(DONA) and AdvCD(DONA) credentials are awarded to recognized those doulas who have shown a commitment to the field of doula work, furthered their path through continued education, and made major contributions to the promotion and advancement of the mission and purpose of DONA International, the doula profession, and in the perinatal-infant field.

A committee of individuals who have previously been awarded the Advanced Doula Designation will review all applications received by September 15th. Applicants who meet all of the eligibility criteria and are selected to receive the Advanced Doula Designation will be notified of their acceptance no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> and announced at the annual DONA Summit, in DONA International publications and media.

If selected, you may proudly use the credentials, AdvCD(DONA) or AdvPCD(DONA). For those members who are also DONA approved trainers, their credentials will be AdvCD/BDT(DONA) or AdvPCD/PDT(DONA). Please note that this designation is valid with your continuous, uninterrupted membership and certification in good standing.

Please find the eligibility criteria, application, and frequently asked questions contained within this application packet. If you have questions about the Advanced Doula Designation that are not answered in this packet, you may call the DONA International Home Office at 888-788-DONA (3662) or email Certification@DONA.org.

In the doula spirit,



Teri Nava-Anderson, PhD, CD/PCD(DONA), ICCE, CLE  
DONA International Director of Certification

---

## Table of Contents

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DONA INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED DOULA DESIGNATION .....	3
APPLICATION PROCEDURE .....	3
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	4
ADVANCED DOULA DESIGNATION APPLICATION.....	7
CODE OF CONDUCT .....	10

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DONA INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED DOULA DESIGNATION

- DONA certified doula in good standing for a minimum of two (2) consecutive recertification periods (i.e., six (6) or more consecutive years).
- Pursued additional training, certification and/or licensure in a related field(s) during your tenure as a DONA certified doula.
- Outstanding achievement in the field during your tenure as a DONA certified doula by meeting one or more of the following criteria:
  - Published author of a book(s), book chapter, journal article or industry magazine article(s) (blog posts from your own personal or business website or the personal or business blog of a colleague do not meet this criteria) on the topic of doulas, birth, breastfeeding, parenting or postpartum issues written during your tenure as a DONA certified doula.
  - Presenting an educational session(s) on the topic of doulas, birth, breastfeeding, parenting or postpartum issues at a local, national or international conference(s), to which you applied to present, during your tenure as a DONA certified doula.
  - Other outstanding achievement not listed that the doula feels is equivalent in nature to those listed above.
- Made a major contribution(s) locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally during your tenure as a DONA certified doula to advance the mission and purpose of DONA International and/or the recognition of doulas and/or made a significant contribution to, or as a leader in, the maternal-child field, *other than that which promotes or supports your own personal or business endeavors.*

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Submit the following documentation in as a .pdf to certification@DONA.org or fill out the online form at <https://www.dona.org/advanced-doula-app/> no later than September 15, 2023. If you are applying for both the advanced birth doula designation and the advanced postpartum doula designation, separate documentation relevant to each role and application must be submitted, along with a fee for each application.

- The completed Application Form, including the details on how you meet all of the eligibility criteria listed above.
- Your resume or curriculum vitae.
- One (1) letter of reference from a person who has worked with you on your contribution(s) in some capacity or who has first-hand knowledge of such.
- Pay the \$100.00 non-refundable application fee in the DONA Online Member Center and submit evidence of payment (receipt or screen shot) along with your application.

No refunds of application fees are given if application is not accepted.

---

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are some frequently asked questions about the eligibility and application procedure for the Advanced Doula Designation. The questions are not exhaustive and the answers to most questions will be very individual to each applicant and dependent upon whether the doula meets the other criteria and to what extent. Additional questions can be directed to the Director of Certification, [CertificationDirector@DONA.org](mailto:CertificationDirector@DONA.org).

**Q:** Why did DONA International begin offering this advanced doula credential in 2015?

**A:** DONA International has long been aware that we have many certified doulas who have contributed greatly to the doula profession and in the perinatal-infant field. After considerable deliberation, DONA International leadership felt the time was right to acknowledge and appreciate those accomplishments and provide a mechanism for the general public and their peers to recognize these doulas and honor the many significant contributions that set them apart as leaders in the field.

**Q:** How will this new credential benefit me?

**A:** The advanced doula credential is the highest certification honor bestowed to doulas in our organization. The AdvPCD(DONA) and AdvCD(DONA) credentials indicate to other professionals, colleagues and clients that a doula has shown commitment to the field of doula work, furthered their career path through continued education and made significant contributions in the perinatal-infant field.

**Q:** Who reviews the applications?

**A:** An Advanced Doula Designation Committee is established each year to review all applications received by the stated deadline for the calendar year. The Committee is comprised of doulas who have previously been awarded the Advanced Doula Designation.

**Q:** I am uncertain if I qualify. Is there someone I can contact to inquire about my qualifications before I pay the non-refundable application fee?

**A:** You are encouraged to thoughtfully and objectively consider each individual criterion outlined on the document to evaluate whether or not you meet it. You might consider asking a trusted mentor or colleague to objectively evaluate your eligibility. Decisions will only be made by the Advanced Doula Designation Committee during the review process. Eligibility is based on the combination and quality of contributions made and qualifications earned during a doula's tenure as a DONA certified doula, and not before.

**Q:** Why does each eligibility criterion matter to DONA International and for this designation?

**A:** The Advanced Doula Designation Committee carefully considered the eligibility criteria for this credential, which was approved by the Board of Directors.

- Longevity as a DONA certified doula demonstrates a level of commitment to the profession and presumes a minimum amount of experience.
- Earning additional credentials in a related field establishes that the doula has an interest in expanding their knowledge and skill set.
- While writing is not a skill set required to be a doula, being published sets apart those exemplary doulas who have exhibited the ability to inform and share knowledge about the profession.

- While teaching is also not a skill set required to be a doula, presenting an educational session at an industry conference and creating original curriculum demonstrates the doula's ability to educate others about issues relevant to being a doula or an expectant parent.
- Contributing to the advancement of the doula profession and contributing to the perinatal-infant field in a significant way establishes the doula as a leader in the industry.

Q: What are some examples of meeting the criteria?

A: The following examples are not an exhaustive list, but only a representation:

- About being published:
  - In order for published work to qualify, there must be a submission/rejection process through the publishing organization.
  - It is acceptable to have published an article in recognized peer-reviewed childbirth, doula and lactation or other related industry books, magazines or journals or in professional blogs of respected organizations. Examples include but are not limited to: International Doula, The DONA Doula Chronicles, Journal of Perinatal Education, Science & Sensibility, etc.
  - Contributions to a book or other publication that has not yet been published do not meet the criteria for the current year's application.
  - Your business blog and/or blogs run by other doulas/colleagues will not qualify.
  - Being quoted in a book or other publication does not constitute being published.
  - Newspaper and online interviews as well as book/video reviews do not qualify.
  - Academic papers may or may not meet the criterion, dependent upon the level and content. An essay written as a class assignment will not qualify. A thesis for a degree or a research summary would be considered to have met that criterion.
- About being a conference presenter:
  - In order for a presentation to qualify, there must be a call for papers/submission-rejection process.
  - Organizations must be reputable and respected within our fields. Examples include but are not limited to DONA, Lamaze, and ILCA.
  - Presenting at a local event will only qualify if the conference was sponsored by an established organization and had an official call for papers. Presenting at a baby fair or event for expectant families to learn about local services will not meet this criterion.
  - Being asked to speak at an event or meeting will not meet this criterion.
- Regarding volunteering as having made a major contribution to the perinatal-infant field:
  - Volunteering/serving/chairing for several years on a local/national committee related to birth, lactation, parenting, health related, government sponsored will qualify. Examples include but are not limited to DONA, LLL, March of Dimes, Mother and Child Coalition, ICAN.
  - Other volunteer work includes lobbying for third-party reimbursement, birthing rights within one's own state or country, establishing programs for refugees.
  - Volunteering for a number of years to teach childbirth classes and/or provide doula support at a health department or through another established program meets this criterion.
  - Volunteer work that is not through an established program will not meet this criterion.
  - Establishing and/or running a local organization will qualify if the doula established a code of ethics/bylaws and received a 501c3 status.
  - Presenting to a group of providers with the intent of gaining referrals will not qualify, but presenting to a hospital board to start a doula program or lift a doula ban may qualify.

Q: Can I apply for both a birth and postpartum doula advanced credential?

A: If you believe you qualify for both a birth and postpartum doula advanced designation, then you may submit a separate application for each designation.

Q: What if my application isn't accepted this year? Can I apply again?

A: If your application isn't accepted this year, you will have the opportunity reevaluate your eligibility and take steps to meet whatever criteria may require additional substantiation. DONA International encourages our certified doulas to continue developing in their field and looks forward to acknowledging their accomplishments.

Q: Why is there a fee to apply for this credential?

A: The application fee covers the cost of administrative staff support, including receiving and processing applications, updating the database and technology revisions to add form fields to the online member center, among other standard operating costs.

Q: How can I pay the non-refundable \$100 application fee?

A: The non-refundable application fee for processing your application can be paid in the online member center under "DONA Boutique (Certifications and Brochures)" followed by clicking on either "Birth Doula Certification" or "Postpartum Doula Certification" and choosing "DONA Advanced Birth (or Postpartum) Doula Designation Application Fee."

Q: Must my application be "received" online by published deadline? Is there a grace period offered if I can't get my application in on time?

A: Applications must be submitted electronically to [certification@dona.org](mailto:certification@dona.org) and received no later than 11:59 p.m. CST on date established as the deadline. Applications are only accepted, and designations awarded, for a limited time each year.

Q: May I submit an application after designated deadline this year for consideration the following year?

A: The application window for applications for the Advanced Doula Designation is only for the current year. DONA International will neither accept, nor keep on file, any applications received after the application deadline.

Q: If I have more questions, who should I contact?

A: For the application period, you are welcome to email your questions to the Director of Certification at [CertificationDirector@DONA.org](mailto:CertificationDirector@DONA.org).

## ADVANCED DOULA DESIGNATION APPLICATION

I am applying for:		Advanced Birth Doula Credential	Advanced Postpartum Doula Credential
Name:			
Address:			
City:		State/Province:	
Country:		Zip/Postal Code:	
Phone:		Email:	
Website:			
DONA International Membership #:		Membership Expiration Date:	
Please complete the following applicable birth or postpartum information:			
Birth Doula Certification Identification #:			
Original Birth Doula Certification Date (mm/yy):		Birth Doula Certification Expiration Date (mm/yy):	
Postpartum Doula Certification Identification #:			
Original Postpartum Doula Certification Date (mm/yy):		Postpartum Doula Certification Expiration Date (mm/yy):	
Please use the following checklist to ensure that you have included all the application documents:			
	The completed descriptions of how I meet the eligibility criteria, included on pages 8 and 9 of this Packet.		
	My resume or curriculum vitae, highlighting any additional training, certification and/or licensure in a related field(s) during my tenure as a DONA certified doula.		
	One (1) letter of reference from a person who has worked with me on my contribution(s) in some capacity or who has first-hand knowledge of such.		
	Evidence of payment of the \$100.00 non-refundable application fee <i>per application</i> in the DONA Online Member Center.		
	I will submit this completed application and all documentation to certification@DONA.org no later than 11:59 p.m. CST on the date specified in the cover letter. I acknowledge that if I fail to submit a complete and legible application, my application may not be accepted.		
Do you agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct of Advanced Doulas, included on page 10 of this Packet?			
	Yes, I agree.		No, I do not agree.
My typed signature hereon verifies that the information provided in and with this Application is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.			
Signature:			
Date:			

Please use the following format to describe how you meet the eligibility criteria. Use additional paper, if necessary, but please keep your answers brief (i.e., bullet points, lists, succinct statements, etc.).

List any book(s), journal articles, or industry magazine article(s) online or print (blog posts from your own personal or business website or the personal or business blog of a colleague do not meet this criteria) on the topic of doulas, birth, lactation, parenting or postpartum issues that you authored during your tenure as a DONA certified doula. Include the title, name of the publication, publisher (if any) and date of publication. Include a web address if available.

List any presentation(s) of an educational session(s) on the topic of doulas, birth, lactation, parenting or postpartum issues at a national or international conference(s) (not a local event) during your tenure as a DONA certified doula. Include the title and objectives of the session, the name(s) of any co-presenter(s), and the name of the organization, title of the conference, conference date(s) and conference location.



List any outstanding achievement(s) you have been awarded and describe why you feel they meet this criterion. Volunteer work or awards should not be included here. Outstanding professional achievements show your desire to excel in your field and take personal initiative to be a leader.

List the major contribution(s) you made locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally to advance the mission and purpose of DONA International and/or the recognition of doulas and/or made a significant contribution to, or as a leader in, the perinatal-infant field, other than that which promotes or supports your own personal or business endeavors. Include details that will help the committee understand the extent of your contribution(s), including the date(s) and timeframe, those who were affected by those contribution(s) and how, and the effect your contributions had on the community(ies).

---

## CODE OF CONDUCT

To assume quality and ethical practice, DONA International has established a Code of Conduct for Advanced Certified Doulas and Advanced Certified Postpartum Doulas, and a process by which unethical or other objectionable practice may be addressed. Advanced Certified Doulas and Advanced Postpartum Certified Doulas (hereafter abbreviated AdvCD and AdvPCD respectively) who do not adhere to the Code of Conduct may have their approval revoked.

DONA reserves the right to approve, in its best judgment, those doulas who best represent DONA; uphold and value DONA's Mission, Vision, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice; and have made a major contribution(s) in the perinatal-child health care field and/or the recognition of doulas locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally during their tenure as a DONA-certified doula.

### Code of Ethics

The AdvCD/AdvPCD participates in the efforts of the doula profession and uphold DONA's Mission, Standards of Practice, and Code of Ethics to improve the care of childbearing people and families.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD is a consumer advocate who promotes informed decision-making, the independence and competence of clients, and the collaboration of clients in the health care team.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD demonstrates respect of clients in the way the discussion occurs around client's circumstances, needs, and difficulties.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD protects the privacy of clients, doulas, and caregivers by demonstrating confidentiality in the anecdotes used in their teaching/instruction.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD should, at all times, be fair, honest, respectful, and courteous to DONA's members, trainers, volunteers, Board of Directors, and to the contractors, consultants, and management company employees that work with the organization. This standard must be upheld in public, on social media, and in person.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD will not take action or make public statements that are negative and erode the DONA International brand without first following the steps to feedback and resolution as outlined in the Feedback Policy.

The AdvCD/AdvPCD assumes responsibility and accountability for their individual judgments and actions which could result in loss of AdvCD/AdvPCD status if the Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Practice of DONA International are violated.