

To become a DONA International certified birth doula:

1. Attend a [DONA approved birth doula workshop](#) of sixteen (16) or more hours in length. The workshop is valid for four (4) years. The completed certification application must be submitted and postmarked within four (4) years of attending the birth doula workshop.
2. Read at least five (5) books from the [Birth Doula Required Reading List \(PDF\)](#) and the DONA International [Position Paper: The Birth Doula's Contribution to Modern Maternity Care](#).
3. Purchase a [birth doula certification packet](#). The packet expires within two (2) years of purchase. Packet must be purchased **prior** to attending births intended for certification. It is recommended that you time the purchase of your packet for receipt prior to the anticipated date of the first birth you wish to use for certification following attendance at the birth doula workshop.
4. Submit one (1) of the following:
 - A. [Childbirth Class Observation Form \(PDF\)](#) confirming observation of an entire series of comprehensive childbirth preparation classes, taught to a group of pregnant people (as observer, not as an expectant participant yourself).
 - Click here for [FAQs on the Childbirth Education Requirement \(PDF\)](#) for Birth Doula Certification.
 - B. Certificate of Attendance at an "Introduction to Childbirth for Doulas" class offered by a DONA approved trainer in conjunction with a DONA approved birth doula workshop.
 - C. Proof of training in midwifery or as childbirth educator.
 - D. Letter from your supervisor confirming recent or current work experience in labor and delivery as a registered nurse.
5. Submit at least one (1) of the following:
 - A. Proof of Completion of an approved on-line study program.
 - Lactation Education Resources – affordably-priced Complete Self-Learning Program. [Click here](#) to learn more.
 - Breastfeeding Basics – free on-line independent study program.
 - ***Update:*** *Breastfeeding Basics retired as of March 2016. If you completed the program and received your one-page results, which shows all seven modules and the percentage you earned in each module (at least a 75 percent score), DONA International will accept this as fulfilling the breastfeeding education requirement. Please DO NOT contact the DONA International Home Office regarding your test results, as DONA International does not receive a copy.*

- B. [Breastfeeding Class Observation Form \(PDF\)](#) confirming participation in a minimum three (3) hour breastfeeding workshop covering the **basics of breastfeeding** offered to birth and postpartum related professionals (preferred), such as those offered at conferences or in conjunction with DONA approved workshops. The 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.
- 6. Provide doula service to a minimum of three (3) clients. All births submitted for certification must take place AFTER attending the DONA approved birth doula workshop and AFTER purchasing the birth doula certification packet. The births documented must meet the criteria outlined in your certification packet, including, but not limited to:
 - A. Labor support must be provided continuously throughout all of active labor, i.e. support must begin before or at the onset of the active phase for labor. For certification purposes, active labor will be considered four (4) centimeters.
 - B. The number of labor support hours for all three (3) submitted births must total a minimum of fifteen (15) hours.
 - C. Your presence as the birth doula must be continuous.
 - D. You must remain for the birth of the baby to provide immediate postpartum support.
 - E. Every vaginal exam must be documented on the Birth Record Sheet's Labor Progression Chart (which form is available in your purchased certification packet).
 - F. Cesarean births may account for only one (1) of the three (3) required birth experiences.
- 7. For each of the three (3) births submitted for certification, include the following (samples are available here, but are also included in your purchased certification packet):
 - A. [Client Confidentiality Release Form \(PDF\)](#)
 - B. DONA International [Birth Record Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
 - C. Typewritten (500-700 word) account of each birth (refer to your purchased certification packet for details).
 - D. Good [evaluation](#) (no less than 3s) from your client, the laboring mother **(PDF)**
 - E. Good [evaluation](#) (no less than 3s) from the primary care provider; plus each physician evaluation must be accompanied by a nurse evaluation.**(PDF)**
- 8. Develop a list of at least forty-five (45) local resources in at least thirty (30) different categories. Refer to your purchased certification packet for suggestions.
- 9. Complete the Basic Knowledge Self-Assessment Tool.
- 10. Read and sign the DONA International [Code of Ethics](#) and the DONA International [Standards of Practice](#).
- 11. Provide current contact information (name, phone, e-mail and relationship) for one (1) client and one (1) birth professional who have agreed to serve as a phone reference for you. The references will be checked by the Certification Committee.

12. Submit a typewritten essay (500 – 1,000 words) on the value and purpose of labor support. Refer to your purchased certification packet for details.
13. Pay the certification application fee on-line in the [DONA Boutique](#) or by check or money order in US funds.
14. Verify that you are a current member of DONA International. [Join now](#) if you are not already a current member.
15. Mail the originals of all required documents to the DONA International Home Office and keep a copy of all submitted documentation for your own records.

Once certified, it is the DONA certified doula's responsibility to maintain continuous membership with DONA International and to recertify every three (3) years. Please see the [Membership Policy \(PDF\)](#) and the [Recertification Policy \(PDF\)](#) for more information.

For complete information, purchase the DONA International Birth Doula Certification Packet in the [DONA Boutique](#).

For answers to frequently-asked questions about the birth doula certification process, please visit the FAQs page on the [website](#).