



Examples of Economic Disadvantage

Birth for Humankind can only accept referrals for people who are experiencing economic disadvantage during their pregnancy and early postnatal period. Our doulas are volunteers who take time away from their paid work and other commitments to provide free birth and postnatal support to families who are experiencing economic and social disadvantages, and who could not afford to pay for doula services.

Every day, we receive referrals for people experiencing a variety of adverse circumstances during pregnancy. In order for us to meet the demand for our services, we ask that you assist us by only referring clients who have no capacity to pay for doula support services.

We understand that many people can be worried or concerned about their finances. This is not the same as experiencing disadvantage. Below are some examples of circumstances that do or do not meet our definitions of financial hardship and economic disadvantage. **Please note this list is not exhaustive.** You are welcome to contact us directly if you are unsure whether a referral to Birth for Humankind is appropriate.

Green Bottle Sliding Scale

Please refer to the sliding scale image below. Typically, clients of Birth for Humankind would identify with Bottle 4. Some clients who identify with Bottle 3 may meet our economic disadvantage criteria. We do not accept referrals for people whose circumstances align with Bottle 1 or Bottle 2.

The Green Bottle

Where do You Fall On The Sliding Scale?



*Basic needs – food, housing, bills, transport

**Expendable income – able to buy coffee out, dine out, go to the cinema/theatre/concerts, buy new clothes, books, and similar items each month

Examples of economic disadvantage that ARE appropriate for referral to Birth for Humankind:

- A person or family wholly reliant on Centrelink benefits for income, or mostly reliant on Centrelink with very limited/occasional low income from paid employment.
- A person or family in receipt of SRSS benefits because they are currently seeking asylum or living in community detention.
- An international student with no access to Centrelink or Medicare, and earning limited income from employment due to visa restrictions.
- A person or family with no income due to immigration issues and/or family violence; reliant on charitable and/or informal social supports for accommodation and basic needs.
- A young person under 18 years of age living with parents/guardians in a low-income household.
- A young person under 18 years of age living in foster care or children's residential care.
- A family experiencing financial hardship through under-employment. For example, only one adult in the household is employed, working part-time for a low wage, and is supporting the whole family on their income.
- A person or family struggling to pay for basic living costs such as rent, food and utilities.

Examples of financial circumstances that ARE NOT appropriate for referral to Birth for Humankind:

- Someone who is employed full-time and/or earning an Award salary for skilled/professional work, but is worried about how they'll manage financially during maternity leave.
- A person or family newly arrived to Australia under a skilled migration program, gainfully employed accordingly, but without access to Medicare and/or current access to obstetric care via their private health insurance.
- A person or family with reasonable income from employment, experiencing financial stress due to the costs of fertility treatment, or increased costs of living including rising mortgage interest rates. The economic disadvantage experienced by Birth for Humankind's clients typically prohibits them from property ownership, having savings or being able to pay for optional services.
- Someone who can afford to pay for private obstetric care, or to pay the up-front costs to birth in a public hospital while ineligible for Medicare.
- Someone who has no access to Medicare and cannot afford to pay any up-front fees for hospital maternity care, and is therefore seeking financial support from Birth for Humankind and/or requesting a Birth for Humankind Volunteer Doula to support them during a freebirth/unassisted birth (where no midwife or doctor is present). Birth for Humankind does not provide any financial assistance, and our doulas do not attend births where a qualified health professional will not be present.