



INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEER DOULAS

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer doula with Birth for Humankind

Here you will find some information to help you understand how the program runs and whether it will be a good fit for you to join our growing team of passionate, caring, professional volunteer doulas.

Who we are

Birth for Humankind is a Melbourne based not-for-profit organisation, we have a team of volunteer doulas providing support to pregnant people and families experiencing social and economic disadvantage. Our mission is foster healthy families and communities by providing our clients with pregnancy support, education and holistic care before, during and after birth.

Why we exist

We believe that our maternal health system and our society can be better.

Our clients experience a range of systemic social disadvantages that lead to significant disparities in maternal health outcomes. Almost 60% of our clients are from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and/or are young people aged under 25.

Many of our clients are also experiencing homelessness, issues related to mental health, substance misuse and/or a history of trauma and family violence.

Many clients are socially isolated, experiencing a lack of familial and emotional support. They will experience barriers to accessing information, interpreters and programs that provide continuity of care.

Guided by our values of trust, respect, equity, connection and celebration, we are committed to providing wholehearted free support, education and care to the people in our community who need it most.

Doula Support Program

In our doula support program, we match referred clients with a trained volunteer doula who provides free one-to-one support during pregnancy, birth and after the baby is born. We also offer extended postnatal support to clients.

We currently have a team of more than 50 active volunteer doulas, with a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds including health workers, social workers, student midwives, practicing or retired midwives and doulas who run their own private practices.

Supported by our Doula Program Supervisors, our doulas receive ongoing professional development opportunities so they can better respond to the needs of our clients.

What does volunteering with Birth for Humankind involve?

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply to volunteer with Birth for Humankind, you must:

- Live in Greater Melbourne, or the regional areas of Geelong and Ballarat;
- Have completed a comprehensive doula training program, be a midwife or student midwife (not in your first or final year of study);
- Have attended a minimum of three births in a professional capacity, unless you are applying solely as a postnatal doula, in which case you must have provided extended postnatal support to at least three families;
- Have a current Working with Children Check (it is free to apply for one as a volunteer);
- Be willing to undergo a National Police Check arranged by Birth for Humankind;
- Agree to abide by our policies and Code of Practice;
- Be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless medically exempt;
- Be committed to providing high quality, impartial support to people from diverse cultural backgrounds who are experiencing social and economic disadvantages;
- Be committed to providing primary doula support to a minimum of three clients (birth support and/or extended postnatal support) over an 18 month period.

Birth for Humankind is committed to child safety and wellbeing. All employees and volunteers must also abide by our Child Safe Commitment and Code of Conduct.

Once you have successfully completed your online application, phone interview and other recruitment processes, you will be required to complete Organisational Induction Training comprised of an online learning package and one full day of on-site training.

The role of the Birth for Humankind Doula

Birth Support

The role of the primary doula is to provide support to clients before, during and after the birth. Ideally we aim to provide:

- 2-3 visits before the birth
- 2 visits after the birth
- 24/7 on-call availability from 38 weeks of pregnancy until you have attended the birth

Extended Postnatal Support [EPS]

Volunteer Doulas providing EPS will offer clients a total of 12 hours of support over a six week period [to be negotiated between the client and the doula] after the birth of the baby. For example, this support might include 2 x 2 hour meetings in the first 2 weeks, then 1 hour per week for the next 4 weeks.



What support you will receive from Birth for Humankind

Birth for Humankind will provide:

- Induction training and professional development opportunities to meet Birth for Humankind requirements in working with specific client groups and specific environments, such as public hospitals;
- Supervision and debriefing;
- Opportunities to work supportively and collaboratively with other volunteer doulas wherever this is appropriate to the needs of the clients;
- Templates for all required reports, including meeting notes, birth report, EPS report;
- Access to childbirth education resources in English and other languages to use with your clients;
- A guided but flexible format for service delivery and respect for doulas' skills, knowledge and time;
- Networking opportunities for Birth for Humankind doulas and staff;
- Independent, confidential counselling and debriefing for any doulas who have faced challenging situations in their work with Birth for Humankind clients;
- Expense allowances for work with each client you have supported.

How much time do I have to commit?

We respect and value your time as a volunteer and we understand that it's not always easy to juggle supporting births with existing life commitments.

When you join Birth for Humankind you become part of our Birth for Humankind family. As a volunteer doula, you will be expected to provide primary doula support to a minimum of three women and backup support to a minimum of three women through their pregnancy and births over 18 months.

If you are providing extended postnatal support [EPS] only, you will be expected to support a minimum of three clients during the postnatal period.

From the time that you are informed that you have been accepted into our volunteer doula program, we make a financial investment in your training and professional development; it is therefore essential that you commit to the above expectations.

How are clients referred to Birth for Humankind?

Approximately 50% of our client referrals come from hospitals and healthcare providers, the remainder coming from a range of sources including community support services, migrant and refugee support agencies and self-referrals.

