

DOULA VOLUNTEER FAQs

What does a Birth for Humankind (BFH) doula do?

The role of a BFH doula is to provide BFH clients with practical, social and emotional (non-clinical) support and education relating to pregnancy and birth and/or the postnatal and early parenting periods.

When a BFH doula provides Pregnancy and Birth Support, they will typically provide:

- 2-3 visits before the birth, preferably one at a clinical antenatal appointment. This might include support accessing interpreters, understanding or setting birth preferences and supporting service navigation or engagement.
- 1-2 visits after the birth. This might include support at home or in hospital and cover birth debrief or postnatal care education.
- 24/7 on-call availability from 38 weeks of pregnancy until birth (note: we aim to provide BFH doulas with a backup doula during the on-call period).

We estimate that a BFH doula would offer ~22 hours of Pregnancy and Birth support per client (e.g. 2 x 2-hour pregnancy visits, up to 12 hours attending labour/birth, and 1-2 x 2-hour postnatal visit). Additional volunteer time will include travel to and from client sessions and completing administrative tasks (client reports, scheduling meetings, etc).

When a BFH doula provides Extended Postnatal Support (EPS), they will typically provide:

- 1 meeting during the pregnancy (in person or over the phone).
- Up to 12 hours of postnatal support during the first 6-8 weeks following birth. The timing, frequency, and length of these visits will be determined between the client and doula. This will include tailored support for parent and baby (e.g. breastfeeding support, linking to community or other services, and encouraging self-care).
- Additional volunteer time will include travel to and from client sessions and completing administrative tasks (client reports, scheduling meetings, etc).

When a BFH doula provides Backup Support (to another doula), they will typically provide:

- Additional coverage during on-call periods and more flexibility to the primary doula, as needed.
- A meeting with the client during the pregnancy (in person or over the phone) to establish a relationship.
- 24/7 on-call availability from 38 weeks of pregnancy until the client has birthed –timing of support managed alongside the primary doula and programs team.

What support will I receive from BFH as a volunteer doula?

Birth for Humankind provides:

- Access to volunteer onboarding online learning modules.
- In-person orientation training day.
- Ongoing professional developmental opportunities that relate to doula practice and the specific needs of our clients.
- Professional support and mentoring from the programs team, during business hours Monday-Thursday. With 24/7 communication plans for critical incidents.
- Practice debriefing with a program supervisor, as required.
- Expense allowances for each client you support. Currently, allowances are \$250 for primary doula support, \$100 for backup doula support, and \$250 for extended postnatal doula support.
- Access to childbirth education resources in English and other languages to use with your clients.
- Easy to use online platforms for accessing professional development and documenting client interactions.
- Opportunities to work supportively and collaboratively with other doulas, wherever appropriate, to meet the needs of the clients.
- Networking opportunities with Birth for Humankind doulas and staff (including our annual retreat and other gatherings).

What qualifications do I need to become a volunteer doula?

To become a BFH volunteer doula, you must have completed a comprehensive doula training program, have trained as a midwife or are a current student midwife. You must have also attended at least three births (if wanting to be a birth/backup doula) or offered three extended postnatal support services (if wanting to be an extended postnatal support doula) in a professional capacity.

What is a ‘comprehensive doula training program’?

As doula training is not regulated, the content of a doula course will depend on the provider. We do not recommend a particular provider. We recommend our doulas complete a course that provided an evidence-based and unbiased curriculum covering pregnancy, birth and early parenting and methods to provide physical, practical, and emotional support to clients during this journey. Doula training courses typically require the student to provide a doula service for a few clients as the practical component, and these clients count as having provided services in a professional capacity. Doula training course can be delivered online, in-person, or hybrid and typically take one year to complete.

What is the commitment BFH expects from volunteer doulas?

- It is expected that you will accept your first BFH client within 3 months of completing the volunteer onboarding process. This is to ensure you can apply your onboarding learnings effectively into your practice with BFH clients. It also helps us ensure we can meet continual demand for services.
- Ongoing, we request that volunteer doulas provide a minimum of 2 services (birth support, backup support, or extended postnatal support) in a 12-month period to remain an active volunteer.
- All BFH volunteer doulas are required to complete occasional and brief mandatory trainings to ensure a safe and high-quality service is delivered.
- We require client reports to be completed in a timely manner to ensure our programs team remains aware of the situation for each client that BFH supports.

We respect and value your time as a volunteer and we understand that it's not always easy to juggle client work with existing life commitments. If you are unable to provide support to our clients for a period, please just reach out to our programs team.

What is the process to become a BFH Volunteer Doula?

1. Check that you meet our eligibility criteria and can fulfil the commitments required to be BFH Volunteer Doula.
2. Submit an application through our website.
 - *NOTE: Clicking 'Apply Now' will open an external website, 'Better Impact'. Please create a profile and complete the application form as directed.*
3. A member of BFH's program team will contact you to arrange a telephone interview – this will help us understand more about you and allow us to answer any questions you might have.
4. If you meet all requirements, BFH will send you an email with the next steps to complete the onboarding process – including the details of the next in-person orientation day, which is mandatory to attend.

The onboarding process includes:

1. Completing the application process – as above.
2. Completing the online learning modules, at your own pace. These **MUST** be completed before the in-person orientation day.
3. Obtaining a working with children's check and national police check (arranged by Birth for Humankind at no cost to you).
4. Attending the in-person orientation day.