

New York City Department of Correction

Doula Services Report

July 2024 – December 2024

Pursuant to Local Law 95 of 2021, the below report details the number of doula service hours provided, the types of services provided, and the number of individuals in custody served in the previous six-month period (i.e., July 2024 to December 2024).

Doulas serve individuals in the Department's custody with continuous emotional, physical, and informational support during pregnancy, labor, childbirth, and the postpartum period. During the reporting period, the Department procured a vendor to provide doula services on an on-going basis. The purchase order was finalized in December and doula services resumed, with 2 individuals in custody receiving a total of 6¹ hours of services. Beginning January 2025, doula services will be provided twice a week. These services are expected to include:

Prenatal Support and Education: Doulas educate and support people in custody during the prenatal period, addressing nutrition, exercise, common discomforts, overall health, and pregnancy complications. Participants receive personalized guidance to foster a healthy pregnancy.

Developing a Birth Plan: Doulas assist participants in developing birth plans, ensuring their preferences and priorities are understood by healthcare providers. They empower people in custody to advocate for their desired birthing experience and communicate effectively with their healthcare team.

Labor and Delivery Support: Doulas will provide continuous support during labor and delivery, whether the birth is vaginal or cesarean. They offer physical comfort measures, emotional reassurance, information about procedures, assistance with communication, and support for breastfeeding initiation and skin-to-skin contact.

Advocacy: The contracted doulas serve as advocates, ensuring that participants are informed, educated, and supported throughout their maternal health journey. They promote informed consent, decision-making, support, dignity, and non-discrimination, aligning with the NYC Standards for Respectful Care at Birth.

Evidence-Based Breastfeeding Education: Participants receive evidence-based breastfeeding education, covering benefits, techniques, challenges, and safe sleep practices for infants. Doulas equip individuals with the knowledge and confidence to establish successful breastfeeding relationships and create a nurturing environment for their newborns.

Postpartum Support/Newborn Care: Doulas offer comprehensive postpartum support, including assistance with diapering, bathing, feeding, soothing techniques, and emotional and physical recovery after birth. Participants receive guidance on newborn care, recognizing healthy development, coping with postpartum changes, and accessing support services.

Perinatal Bereavement Support: Doulas provide compassionate support to individuals experiencing pregnancy loss, offering emotional, informational, and physical assistance throughout the pregnancy, birth, and postpartum periods.

¹ These are the number of hours spent with participants and excludes time doulas were in the facility, but not with the participants.