



CERTIFICATION GUIDE



2021 Professional Certified Doula Program | rev. 11.23.2020



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Dear PALS Certification Candidate

The Board of Directors and the Certification Committee of Pacific Association of Labor Support Doulas (PALS) welcomes you as a candidate to the PALS Birth Doula Certification Program!

PALS is committed to growing and supporting a community of professional doulas that practice within our Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. PALS is an organization actively working to be anti-racist and decolonize certification to the extent we are able to create equitable, accessible pathways to certification and birth doula services for all communities. We are locally and nationally recognized as a leading organization in the birth doula field, and, as such, are actively partnering with other stakeholders to create a state-wide standard for certification and Medicaid reimbursement and partner with smaller entities to elevate doula standards. Certification is intended for doulas who value the process of peer evaluation, self-assessment, and who support the establishment of a minimum standard for essential birth support not under the supervision or oversight of other licensed healthcare providers. We are excited for you to take this step and look forward to helping you achieve your goals. The process is designed to be a growth experience that will benefit both new and seasoned doulas.

Please read this Guide thoroughly. You have 3 months from the date of purchase to complete the process. In the following pages you will find everything you need to complete your application. Benefits of certification with PALS includes becoming part of our member community, referrals from our inquiry line, listing in our website directory, and many more.

When your certification application is complete, email the indicated forms to certification@palsdoulas.org. At this time, you will have the option to select the individual reviewing your application. Together with your certification reviewer you will examine and discuss your experience and how it aligns with the PALS Doulas Competencies for Birth Doulas Certification. If there are competencies that need additional development, you will have the opportunity to create a plan for further learning and arrange a follow-up interview. Applications for PALS Certification are not complete until all elements have been finished.

When your application is complete, your reviewer will recommend you for certification to the PALS Doulas Board of Directors to complete the process. You will receive a welcome letter, numbered electronic Certificate of Certification, and a PALS nametag. Your name will be listed in the PALS Doulas directory and you will be able to use the credentialing format of FIRST NAME LAST NAME, CD(PALS), (Certified Doula). You may thereafter use CD(PALS) as a credential. Certification is valid for 12 months. Recertification is due before the end of each annual period.

If you have any questions about certification that are not answered in this packet, please contact certification@palsdoulas.org. We wish you the best as you begin this important step in your career as a professional doula!

Sincerely,

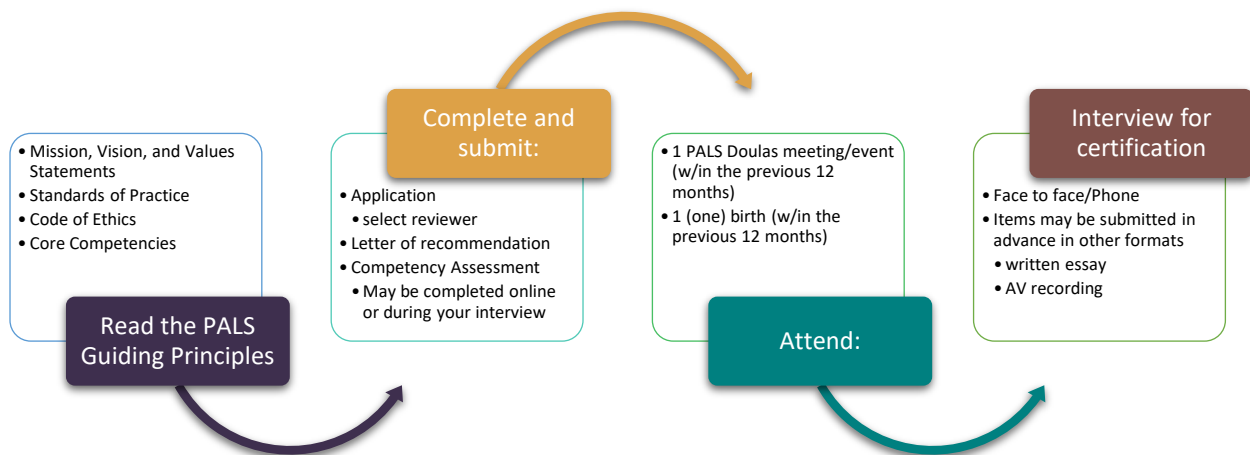
PALS Doulas Board of Directors



Certification Checklist

The following are items to be completed in application to be a Professional Certified PALS Doula (items in blue to be emailed to certification@palsdoulas.org) You have 3 months from the date of purchase to complete the checklist.

- 1. Read:
 - A. Vision, Mission, and Values Statements (see pg. 4)
 - B. Standards of Practice (see pg. 5-6)
 - C. Code of Ethics (see pg. 7-8)
 - D. Core Competency Guide/Assessment (see pg. 11-18)
- 2. Complete the:
 - Application for Certification* (see pg. 19-20) or [2021 Application for Certification](#)
 - Competency Assessment (pg. 11-18) or [Competency Assessment online](#)
- 3. Letter of Recommendation (choose one) (see pg. 18)
 - A. From a community perinatal professional
 - B. From a family you have supported through birth
- 4. Attend 1 (one) PALS Board Meeting, Community/Connection Event, or Monthly Meeting
- 5. Attend 1 (one) birth
- 6. Complete interview for certification





PALS Doulas Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

PALS Doulas envisions a future in which:

- The myriad ways of coming to doula work are honored; and
- Doulas are fairly and sustainably compensated for their work, including through Medicaid and insurance; and
- Doulas are valued as an essential part of the care team; and
- Doulas have access to clients in all birth spaces; and
- All birth care providers engage in respectful and productive conversations regarding client needs; and
- All families experience non-judgmental, unbiased, safe, and culturally congruent birth care.

Mission Statement

PALS Doulas works toward realizing our vision by providing the following services:

- Culturally inclusive certification processes, with a lens on removing barriers to entry; and
- Advocacy for doulas in all birth settings, especially hospitals; and
- Grievance process to support doulas who experience challenges with birth professionals; and
- Ongoing communication with birth locations and professionals to increase collaboration and professional respect; and
- Facilitating and promoting educational opportunities for doulas; and
- Building community for doulas to support one another and to actively support each other in practice settings; and
- The organization is actively engaged in social justice and anti-racism work.

Values Statement

PALS Doulas values:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| • Accessibility | • Inclusivity for people of all genders, sexualities, family structures, abilities, sizes, religions, ages, incomes, races |
| • Advocacy | • Professional relationship building |
| • Anti-racism | • Stewardship |
| • Community | • Sustainability |
| • Cultural Humility | |
| • Equity | |
| • Transparency | |
| • Ongoing Learning | |



PALS Doulas Standards of Practice

I. Scope

A. Services Rendered. The Doula accompanies their client continuously while in labor, gives emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and offers encouragement and suggestions for both the client and any other support people. Whenever possible, the doula delivers prenatal and postpartum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures throughout the course of service.

B. Limits to Practice: The Doula does not perform invasive clinical tasks such as cervical exams, injections, or intravenous (IV) care. Doulas who have received training may assist clients with performing non-invasive clinical care tasks, such as: blood pressure measurements, temperature checks, assessments of postpartum bleeding, and newborn weight checks. These tasks are conditionally appropriate when recommended by clients' medical care providers. The Doula does not initiate non-invasive clinical care tasks nor interpret the results.

C. Advocacy: The Doula supports each client's values and goals during prenatal conversations, intrapartum and postpartum discussions, and birth planning. The Doula supports clients' advocacy of those values and goals at all times. The Doula supports communication and shared decision-making between clients and their care providers by encouraging clients to ask questions, share values and goals, and incorporate changes in plans. Doulas who have received training, have demonstrated skill and experience, and/or have longer-term culturally congruent relationships of trust such as Community Based Doulas or Outreach Doulas, may speak on behalf of their clients. This is always conditional on the permission of the client with the goal of client empowerment, self-advocacy, autonomy, and agency to cultivate an equitable, safe environment. Doulas do not participate in activities that decrease clients' autonomy, agency, or ability to self-advocate, including speaking on behalf of the client without their permission or making decisions for the client.

II. Continuity of Care

A. Back-up. The Doula will provide a back-up doula to ensure continuous services to the client if the Doula is unavailable. This includes following up with the client and backup doula to make sure the client's needs are addressed.

B. Referrals. For client needs beyond the scope of the Doula's training or knowledge, referrals are offered to appropriate resources to the best of their ability.

C. Transfer of Care. If the Doula finds it necessary to discontinue service with an established client before labor, it is the Doula's responsibility to notify the client in writing and if appropriate, arrange for a replacement if the client so desires.



III. Certification and Recertification

A. Certification. Doulas certified by PALS will have the experience as set forth in the PALS Requirements for Certification. A vote of the Board of Directors finalizes certification.

B. Recertification. Doulas certified by PALS are required to recertify annually. Completion of a PALS Competency Assessment, submission of 6 continuing education credits (1 of which must be focused on social justice/equity/anti-racism work), review and renewal signature of the Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Values, Mission, and Vision statements, recertification interview, and birth data from the previous 12 months must be submitted.

IV. Record Keeping

A. Documentation. The Certified Doula maintains clear and accurate records of each client relationship and the birth. While not currently bound by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), PALS Doulas recommends adhering to the privacy practices set out in HIPAA¹.

B. Data Collection. The Doula will report data on each birth attended and submit that data to PALS. The data is used for doula advocacy, statistics, and marketing.²

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/index.html>

² Subject to change: Doulas are asked to submit a summary of information for births attended vs a Data Collection Form.



PALS Doulas Code of Ethics

I. Rules of Conduct

a. Propriety

The Certified Doula will maintain high standards of personal conduct in their labor support capacity and/or identity.

b. Competence and Professional Development

The Certified Doula will strive to become and remain proficient in the professional practice and performance of labor support functions through continuing education, affiliation with related organizations, and associations with other doulas.

c. Integrity

The Certified Doula will act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.

II. Ethical Responsibility to Clients

a. Primacy of Client's Interests

The Certified Doula's primary responsibility is to their clients.

b. Rights and Prerogatives of Clients

The Certified Doula will make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of their clients.

c. Confidentiality and Privacy

The Certified Doula will respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional services.

d. Obligation to Serve

The Certified Doula will assist each client seeking labor support either by providing services or making appropriate referrals.

e. Reliability

When the Certified Doula agrees to work with a particular client, the obligation is to do so reliably, without fail, for the term of the agreement. The agreement (verbal or written) will clearly state any limitations on the doula's availability and include clear backup plans for such situations when the doula is unavailable. (See Continuity of Care as outlined in Standards of Practice.)

f. Fees

When setting fees, the Certified Doula will ensure they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with service performed and with due regard for the client's ability to pay. The Certified Doula must clearly state their fees to the client and describe the services provided, terms of payment, and refund policies.

(Code of Ethics con'td next page)



II. Ethical Responsibility to Doula Colleagues

- a. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy.
The Certified Doula will treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
- b. Dealing with Colleagues' Clients.
The Certified Doula has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

III. Ethical Responsibilities to Health Care Providers of the Client

- a. Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy.
The Certified Doula will treat their client's caregivers with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
- b. Recognition of Clinical Responsibility.
The Certified Doula recognizes that responsibility for clinical management belongs to the Health Care Provider (nurse, midwife, physician) and the client. The Certified Doula does not interfere with clinical management beyond making suggestions to, or asking questions of, the Health Care Provider and client, based on their knowledge of the client's birth plan and preferences.

IV. Ethical Responsibility to the Doula Profession

- a. Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession.
The Certified Doula will uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.
- b. Community Service.
The Certified Doula is encouraged to assist the profession by making reduced cost or no cost labor support services available when possible.

V. Ethical Responsibility to Society

- a. Promotion of Maternal, Paternal, and Child Welfare.
The Certified Doula will promote the general health of laboring families and their babies, and whenever possible, that of their family and friends as well.



PALS Doulas Core Competencies



(Adapted from 2018 National End-of-Life Doula Alliance ³)

³ <https://www.nedalliance.org/>



Core Competencies – In-depth

- I. Communication
 - A. Active listening and critical thinking
 - B. Non-judgmental communication
 - C. Supporting client self-advocacy
 - D. Consent
 - E. Cultivating relationships
 - F. Conflict resolution
 - G. Creative problem solving
- II. Values & Ethics
 - A. Doula model of care
 - i. Standards of Practice
 - ii. Code of Ethics
 - B. Cultural humility
 - i. Race
 - ii. Privilege and power
 - iii. Gender identity
 - C. Personal integrity
 - i. Accountability
 - D. Boundaries and legalities
 - i. Knowing when to refer
- III. Knowledge
 - A. Client-centered care
 - i. Stages of labor
 - ii. Lactation assistance
 - iii. Newborn care
 - iv. Postpartum care
 - v. Perinatal mood disorders
 - B. Trauma informed care
 - i. Touch and permission
 - ii. Obstetrical violence
 - C. Caregiver interface
 - D. Planning needs
 - i. Unexpected events
 1. Induction
 2. Cesarean
 3. NICU transfer
 4. transfer from home/birth center
 5. parent/infant demise
 - E. Referrals and support systems
- IV. Professionalism
 - A. Self-care
 - i. Developing a supportive community
 - ii. Recognizing burnout
 - iii. Planning for sustainability
 - B. Scope of practice
 - C. Confidentiality
 - D. Professional development
 - E. Business skills and tools



Competency Assessment

The following are scenarios linking Core Competencies to PALS Doulas guiding principles (the Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Vision, Mission, and Values statements). **You can self-select to complete this [online](#) independently or with your certification reviewer, or complete it during your interview with your reviewer.**

Communication		Yes/No
1. Active listening and critical thinking	In a decision moment, the client states they "feel overwhelmed and can't think." The PALS certified doula says, "I hear you are overwhelmed. Would you like a few moments with your support person/partner to consider your options?" Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
2. Non-judgmental communication	A client tells the PALS certified doula they will be making a specific decision about their care. The doula is strongly opposed to this decision and lectures the client on how they are making the wrong decision. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
3. Supporting client self-advocacy	Your client tells you that their blood pressure is 150/100. They ask you if this means they have pre-eclampsia. You encourage your client to call their provider for more information. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
4. Consent	A provider says, "I am going to do this intervention now" to a client. The doula says, "Would you like to ask questions about this intervention before consenting to it?" Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
5. Cultivating relationships	The PALS certified doula contacts perinatal professionals to learn more about their practices with the goal of creating a robust referral list Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	*
6. Conflict resolution	The client expresses that they feel unsafe/unheard with their care providers. The PALS certified doula helps the client come up with ways to discuss this with the provider and/or process to request a new care provider/transfer of care to another location. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	



7. Creative problem solving	A PALS Certified doula offers virtual birth support during labor due to hospital restrictions placed during a global pandemic. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
Values & Ethics		
1. Doula model of care A. Standards of practice B. Code Of Ethics	<p>As a Community Based/Outreach Doula your client asks you to help them take their blood pressure. You have received additional training and agree to support this action. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>A life event occurs in which the PALS Certified doula is no longer able to practice as a doula. The doula stops answering calls/text/emails from clients and figures they will connect with another doula if they really need someone. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>A provider shares feedback that another PALS certified doula may have caused harm to a client and wants to file a grievance. You act shocked but tell them there is no such process/action available. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
2. Cultural humility A. Race B. Privilege and power C. Gender identity	<p>A PALS Certified doula’s social media post reads, “So excited to be supporting this strong, third-time momma-bear at <<NAME OF LOCAL HOSPITAL>> today! We are in active labor, wish us luck!” Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Feedback is received by PALS that the existing certification process is racist and poses barriers to entry for BIPOC communities. The process undergoes revision with input from BIPOC stakeholders. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	



	<p>Your client uses they/them pronouns. The PALS certified doula refers to the client using she/her, 'mamma' and laughs uncomfortably when the client asks them to use gender-affirming pronouns/language. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>An individual identifying as a member of the BIPOC community applies for a waiver to cover certification fees. A member of the board passes along a coupon code to some white friends to 'get them on board for free' and denies the other individual's application stating no more funds are available. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>A member of the Board of Directors posts to the PALS Doulas social media account that 'ALL LIVES MATTER' and that 'Racism is not a factor in Black maternal and infant mortality rates'. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>A birthing individual identifies as a person of color and emails PALS and asks to be connected to available BIPOC doulas and that they are able to pay market rate. The volunteer who receives the request only forwards the names of white/white-presenting doulas. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>3. Personal integrity</p>	<p>A support person wants you to convince your client to accept/deny a specific intervention. You state that you are there to support the birthing person's desires. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>4. Accountability</p>	<p>A provider offers to send referrals to you if you agree to act as they want you to vs the client's wishes. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>5. Boundaries and legalities</p>	<p>A client has inverted nipples. After grabbing the individual's tissue and trying to roll the nipples out,</p>	



<p>A. Knowing when to refer</p>	<p>the PALS Certified doula, who has no lactation credential or training, offers the client a nipple shield and states 'this is the only way you will ever breastfeed.' Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>Knowledge</p>		
<p>1. Client-centered care</p> <p>A. Stages of labor</p> <p>B. Lactation assistance</p> <p>C. Newborn care</p> <p>D. Postpartum care</p> <p>E. Perinatal mood disorders</p>	<p>The client requests in-person doula support when they are two (2) centimeters dilated. The PALS Certified doula states they begin their in-person support when the client is six (6) centimeters dilated and in active labor. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The client asks for assistance with initial latching. After asking if they may touch the breast/chest tissue and describing their actions in advance, the PALS Certified doula provides hands-on assistance. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Your client wants you to show them how to take a rectal temperature of their infant. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The client asks the doula to remove perineal/cesarean stitches that are itchy and annoying. The PALS Certified doula removes the stitches as requested. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Client shares they feel anxious, overwhelmed, <i>and have thoughts of harming their baby</i>. The PALS Certified doula supports the client in making contact with support systems (family, community, etc.) and other trusted perinatal professionals. Is this in keeping with the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Vision, Mission and Values statement?</p>	<p>*</p>



	<p>A client shares they have a history of depression and may be susceptible to postpartum mood and anxiety disorders. The PALS Certified doula offers to help the client make a postpartum plan with support systems (family, community, etc.) and other trusted perinatal professionals to connect with like resources. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>2. Trauma informed care</p> <p>A. Touch and permission</p> <p>B. Obstetrical violence</p>	<p>A client shares a personal history of abuse. The PALS Certified doula suggests ideas for communication with providers around touch and permission. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The PALS Certified doula discusses prenatally what to do if doula observes/hears the provider about to perform an intervention without client permission. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The client asks their provider repeatedly to stop an action (ex: vaginal/wet tissue exam, tissue repair, episiotomy, etc), says "OW!", "STOP", and is crying. The provider does not. The PALS Certified doula repeats the client's statement to the room (ex: My client said stop!). Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The client visibly jumps every time they are touched. The PALS certified doula reflects this to the client and asks questions, offers suggestions, regarding creating safety for the client. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>3. Care Giver Interface</p>	<p>A provider asks for your help in getting a client to consent to a specific intervention. The PALS Certified doula agrees with the intervention and speaks positively to the client about it even though the client has expressed their desire to avoid this intervention. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	



<p>4. Planning Needs</p>	<p>You have a vacation scheduled during a client's on-call window. You tell the client this during the interview and discovery process. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>5. Unexpected events</p> <p>A. Induction</p> <p>B. Cesarean</p> <p>C. NICU transfer</p> <p>D. Transfer from home/birth center</p> <p>E. Parent/ infant demise</p>	<p>The client informs doula of upcoming induction. The PALS Certified doula shares common induction methods and realistic induction timelines. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Prenatally, the PALS Certified doula discusses options and preferences for an unexpected cesarean birth. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The PALS Certified doula familiarizes themselves with facility NICU policies, visitor guidelines, and rooming-in practices. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Prenatally, the PALS Certified doula shares information about possible transfers and/or encourages clients to discuss transfer protocols with their provider. Doula also encourages the client to tour transfer locations and create a written transfer plan. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>Prenatally, the PALS Certified doula learns about the birthing person's spiritual practices, community, and/or family support structures if an unexpected outcome (fetal or birthing parent demise) were to occur. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>6. Referrals and support systems</p>	<p>The client asks for recommendations for another type of perinatal provider (pelvic floor therapist, massage, chiropractic, yoga, etc). The PALS Certified doula directs the client to do an internet search. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	



	<p>A client asks about the difference between a doula and a midwife. The PALS Certified doula answers that they are pretty much the same but the doula didn't have to go to midwifery school. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>Professionalism</p>		
<p>1. Self-care</p> <p>A. Developing a supportive community</p> <p>B. Recognizing burnout</p> <p>C. Planning for sustainability</p>	<p>A doula has several people they can contact to debrief a difficult birth client, brainstorm ideas to help with a challenging labor, and to provide backup. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The PALS Certified doula feels resentful of being called when clients are in labor, experiences anxiety around attending births, feels isolated from their communities, and recognizes these as signs of burnout. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The PALS Certified doula sets a rate that ensures they feel their time and emotional investment into a family are fairly compensated. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>The PALS Certified doula does not plan ahead for time away, continuing education, and/or backup. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	
<p>7. Scope of practice</p>	<p>A PALS Certified doula offers to check the client's cervix for progress. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>During labor, a provider asks the doula to start an IV on the client. The PALS Certified doula starts the IV. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	



	The client asks about the difference between a doula, midwife, family practitioner, and obstetrician. The PALS Certified doula says "The doula is the only one who cares about you." Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
8. Confidentiality	A client shares a traumatic incident that occurred in a previous birth. You meet a mutual friend for cake who asks you how your work with your client/their friend is going. You do not mention the event. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
9. Professional development	The PALS certified doula maintains certification and pursues continuing education opportunities. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?	
10. Business skills and tools	<p>The PALS certified doula has the necessary information regarding liability insurance, local/federal tax law, and establishing their practice model (ex. sole proprietorship, limited liability company, partnership, employee, contractor, etc.). Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p> <p>A client hires you. You provide a service agreement outlining the services you provide, fees, and commitment to supporting autonomy and agency for the birthing individual. Is this reflective of the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and/or Mission, Vision, and Values Statement?</p>	

The competency assessment may be completed online by clicking this link: [Online Competency Assessment](#).

Professional or Client Recommendation Form

As part of your application for certification, PALS Doulas requires a letter of recommendations from either a community birth professional who knows you in your capacity as a birth doula or from a family you have supported as a doula. Examples of birth professionals include other doulas, midwives, nurses, physicians, lactation educators or consultants, etc. If you are not sure if an individual you have in mind would be considered a birth professional, please contact your Certification Coordinator. They can help you determine if the recommender is appropriate for your certification needs. The letter must be from within the previous 12 months, be signed, and include contact information for the person writing it.



Application for Certification

You may also complete this form here: [2021 Application for Certification](#)

Candidate Information:

Name: _____

Gender pronouns: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip code: _____

Mailing address if different than above: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

preferred way to connect yes

preferred way to connect yes

Training

Have you completed a classroom online apprenticeship ancestral/tribal training?

Name of training: _____ Hours of training? _____

Competency Assessment

Your application includes a competency assessment, this can be completed online or during your interview. Do you wish to:

Complete online Complete during interview

Name & Date of PALS Meeting/PALS Event Attended: _____

Certification Review

You may select the individual to complete your interview. Please [click here](https://palsdoulas.org/pals-doula-profiles/) (<https://palsdoulas.org/pals-doula-profiles/> > Certification Review profiles) for available individuals and enter your top three choices below:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Doula Practice

How many client/families do you currently work with per month: 0 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-more

What is your goal for clients supported per month: 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-more

Solo | Partnership | Agency | Volunteer

Do you plan to offer support: full fee | sliding scale/barter | pro-bono

Are you interested in learning more about supporting families for reimbursement: yes | no

Do you wish to be connected to a mentor: yes | no

Volunteer Service

Are you interested in volunteering with PALS Doulas: yes | no

Are you willing to serve on the PALS Doulas Grievance Committee: yes | no

Are you willing to review certification packets: yes | no

Would you be interested in mentoring other doulas: yes | no



Referrals

Do you want to receive referrals for (please select all that apply):

- full fee | sliding scale/barter | pro-bono | teen parents | single parents | trauma survivors | Black, Indigenous, Families of Color | LGBTQIA+ families | Full spectrum
- Hospital | Birthing Center | Home Births | First time birthing individuals | VBAC | IVF | Birthing individual 35+yo | Twins/Multiples

Online Directory:

PALS has a certified member directory that pulls directly from DoulaMatch.net. All certified doulas are encouraged to set up a profile. Once certified you will receive a code to offset \$15 of the DoulaMatch fee.

Demographics

We ask all candidates to share the following to; hold our governing board accountable in meeting diversity and representation goals and match specific family referral requests appropriately.

Age: 18-25 | 26-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | over 56

Ethnicity (please select all that apply): Asian Black White Hispanic Native American/First Nation Pacific Islander Other: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Gender: Female Male Transgender Non-binary Other: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Have you given birth? yes | no

Languages spoken: _____

Additional services offered: _____

Service area: _____

I have read and agree to practice in accordance with the PALS Doulas:

Please sign or initial:

_____ Vision, Mission, and Values

_____ Standards of Practice

_____ Code of Conduct

Name

Date



Certification Interview

Once you are ready to submit your certification packet, the next step will be to email it to certification@palsdoulas.org and schedule your interview. Based on information provided in your application, your reviewer will contact you within 7 days to schedule the certification interview. Even if you submit the following information in an alternative format, the face-to-face interview is required.

During your interview you will:

- A. Meet with your certification reviewer (the preference is for face to face whether in person or via zoom), at which the following will be discussed. You can also submit your answers to the following as a pre-recorded video/audio, or in essay form.
 - i. You as a doula:
 1. How you came to this work.
 2. What has inspired you to become a doula?
 3. How have you prepared to practice and what is your intent for future work?
 4. Where do you see the value in being a PALS Certified Professional Doula?
 - ii. Birth Attendance/Supporting Families:
 1. Have you supported clients through birth?
 2. What do feel were specific challenges or successes in the support you provided?
 3. What was your plan for prenatal support?
 4. What was your plan for postpartum support?
 5. How did you center and elevate your client's voice during birth?
 6. How did take care of yourself afterwards?
 7. How do you feel this experience challenged you?
 8. Where did you feel confident?
 9. Where do you feel you could learn more to support families going forward?
 - iii. Practice and families supported
 1. How many years have you been practicing as a doula?
 2. To date, how many births have you supported?
 - iv. Anti-racism/cultural humility/awareness
 1. How would you describe the following: cultural humility, anti-racism, equity?
 2. How would you describe your relationship to anti-racism? Describe your ongoing learning and growth around anti-racism
 3. Do you acknowledge that we are part of an inherently racist system?
 4. Have you ever had a personal experience in which you have felt marginalized?
 5. If you are at a loss with these questions, are you willing and open to suggestions and recommendations around reading, viewing, and other learning/growth opportunities?
- B. Competency Assessment (may be conducted via online quiz, or together with interviewer) to evaluate how competencies are reinforced within the PALS Doulas guiding principles.
- C. Review of PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Vision, Mission, and Values.
- D. Feedback



Appendix

Additional information, forms, and guidance. The below are additional resources and NOT required elements of your certification packet

Certification Packet Submission

The following items are the required elements that must be submitted to certification@palsdoulas.org

- Competency Assessment (if not completed online/or deferred to completing with your interviewer) (pg. 11-18)
- Letter of Recommendation (see pg. 18)
- Certification Application (pg. 19-20)
- Receipt of Review Fee Payment (only if packet purchased prior to 10/1/2020)

Recertification

- Read, sign, and submit Vision, Mission, and Values, Standards of Practice, and Code of Ethics in the Certification Application (pg. 19-20)
- Complete the Competency Assessment (pg. 11-18)
- Submit Annual Report of births attended (pg. 29)
- Submit proof of Continuing Education hours (6 units per year/pg. 25)
- Complete work annually on anti-racism/social justice/equity (minimum 1 hr of your continuing ed requirement)

Fee Schedule

Certification is to be purchased/renewed annually. You can currently download this entire packet and complete all elements. The certification fee must be paid prior to your certifying interview. Certification is valid for 1 year from the time of completion. Recertification is due annually and cycles from your initial date of certification.

Costs for certification/recertification		
Supporter	\$225/yr	Both levels support the Community Certification Fund to increase access and decrease barriers to certification
Sustainer	\$150/yr	

Benefits of certification include: annual membership, mentorship/peer Support, 6 hours of continuing education included + discount on PALS Doulas sponsored continuing education, access to referrals received through the PALS website, community marketing and promotion, DoulaMatch profile voucher, directory listing, discount at Office Depot/Office Max, et al.



Definitions of Terms (Adapted from 2018 National End-of-Life Doula Alliance)

Doula: An individual who supports a person through a transition event or period.

Certification Guide: A guide designed to define and illustrate all components of a certification process. Includes process, rationale, and step-by-step expectations for completing the package.

Community Based Doula: A doula who has received training specifically to work within an identified community, frequently identifies or is of the community they serve/support to improve maternal/fetal outcomes over time.

Continuing Education: Additional work to development new skills and knowledge. May be a workshop, seminar, documentary, article/journal, book, or community meeting (only the element of time specifically focused on a topic may be counted towards hours).

Core Competencies: A competency model is a framework for defining the skills and knowledge requirements needed to demonstrate proficiency. Core competencies are a constellation of skills, both hard and soft, that together define areas of measurable knowledge and skill. Competency models are widely used in the business and academic sectors to assess knowledge bases and skill sets that ensure standards for consistent, successful job and personal performance.

Credentialing: Encompasses registration, certification, and licensing. Refers to the process by which there is an assessment of specific standards and a grievance process when unprofessional conduct is found.

Full Spectrum Doula: A doula who supports the full range of reproductive experiences (including but not limited to surrogacy, abortion, relinquish/adoption, and stillbirth/fetal demise support)

Grievance Process: A means of dispute resolution to address violations of PALS Doulas' Mission, Vision, Values Statements, Standards of Practice, and/or Code of Ethics against a PALS Certified Professional Doula ([Policy](#) and [Procedure](#) here | [Link to Grievance Form](#))
PALS will assist its members in grievances against other organizations/entities

NPI (National Provider Identifier): A 10-digit number that federal government assigns to health care providers. It is one of the simplifications of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) intended to reduce fraud and improve the efficiency of the health care system. Free registration: <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov/#/>

Professional Doula: A professional doula is one who: adheres to a standard of professional practice, has accountability through a grievance process, pursues continuing education, and supports family's preferences and goals in the perinatal period.

Professional Certified PALS Doula: The professional doula observes the above and has demonstrated minimum competency standards for PALS Doulas certification. PALS Doulas believe in the inherent value of certification as the establishment of a minimum standard for essential birth support.

PALS Doulas Certification Process: A series of steps intended to evaluate understanding of the contents of each core competency. Candidates may submit their application for certification in a written or recorded format. Certification application may also be conducted as an interview.



Release of Information

PALS Doulas requires that all certified doulas maintain clear and accurate client records. While not currently bound by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA⁴), PALS Doulas recommends adhering to the privacy practices set out in HIPAA.

The client can request a copy of this form once signed, and the doula should have their copy with them at all times to be able to show that they are in compliance with privacy requirements. Failure to comply with these confidentiality practices could result in penalties.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

I, _____, give my permission for _____
Your name the doula

to take notes about me, including information I choose to disclose to them as well as information regarding my labor, birth, postpartum, and the outcomes of the birth (including child/ren). I understand that this information is to be used for the purposes of certification/recertification and may be shared with the Certification Committee of PALS Doulas. In accordance with the PALS Doulas Standards of Practice, this information may also be shared with the doula providing backup support. I acknowledge that this information may also be used anonymously by the PALS Doulas Board of Directors for statistical purposes, and that my doula may use this information to provide me with a summary at my request.

⁴ <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html>



Resource List

We recommend building a resource list from within your community. Building personal connections aids a doula in knowing exactly with whom or where to send clients for additional resources.

An example of how to organize your list could include:

- Contact person
- Type of service
- name of organization (if applicable)
- Contact information (website, email, phone)
- Address (if applicable)
- Area of specialty

The categories listed below are suggestions to get you started. You may add additional categories relevant to your area or clientele. This list should contain resources as local to the doula's clients as possible. Please also consider how your clients may access resources. Would they be most likely to phone, email, use a website? Are addresses helpful?

Please always check that information for each listing is accurate and current before sharing it with clients.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence shelters and support groups • Addiction recovery services and support groups • Birth centers • Birth doulas • Breastfeeding pump and equipment suppliers (purchase and rental) • Breastfeeding support groups, clinics, classes • Childbirth educators • Childcare options • Children's Hospitals • Chiropractors, massage therapists, Reiki practitioners • Community services and programs • Cultural/multicultural resources • Early intervention programs for babies with special needs • Family doctors/pediatricians • Health Food stores • Hospitals/minor emergency services • Incest/sexual abuse support groups • Infant massage classes and services • Lactation consultants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries/infant programs • Maternity/nursing clothes • Midwives • Parent/child centers • Multiple birth groups/associations • Naturopathic/homeopathic services/stores and clinics • New parent groups • Obstetricians • Parenting classes • Perinatal loss support groups • Bereaved families support groups • Play groups • Postpartum exercise classes • Postpartum depression resources and support groups • Postpartum doulas • Single parenting groups • Support groups for parents of children with special needs • Teen parent support groups/educational services • VBAC support groups • Well baby clinic |
|---|---|



Sample letter to request recommendation

PALS Doulas
2524 16th Ave S #207B
Seattle, WA 98144
certification@palsdoulas.org

Dear fellow birth professional,

My name is _____. I am applying to be a Certified PALS Doulas Professional Birth Doula. Mentorship and creating professional relationships are an important part of being a successful professional doula. As you have had experience with me as a birth doula or in a related capacity, I am writing to ask if you would be willing to write a recommendation for me for certification.

Thank you for considering this request.

PALS Doulas Certification Candidate

<<your return contact information>>

Sample recommendation letter from a family/individual supported:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of my doula, <<Doula name>>. Doula supported my partner and me through the birth of our second child and helped us resolve the lingering trauma surrounding the birth of our first during that process. They demonstrated such compassion, concern, and genuine heart in helping us to prepare for this experience, and truly helped us be mindful that this was a different experience than our first. They were able to join us in person at our home and providing guidance and gentle reminders that helped my partner and I both be calm as things progressed pretty quickly! Once in the hospital, they also helped us remember to advocate for ourselves and to make decisions that were important to us. They was a phenomenal tool in helping to have meaningful conversations with our care team so that we truly felt supported.

I wish we had this doula's support for our first birth, and feel positive it would have helped us feel more positive. But her care and support for our daughter's birth made it a beautiful, healing, and life-affirming event.

Warmly,

Client name



Annual Birth Report Form or Birth Reporting

Beginning January 1, 2021 we will begin collecting data on each birth PALS Certified doula attend. This data will be critical to helping advocate the allocation of funds, lobby for doula rights to provide services, as well as the outcomes of births supported by PALS Doulas. Data submission will be required to recertify. Identifying information will NOT be linked with your name. More information will be sent in late 2020.