

**1. How would I know if the workshop I am taking is DONA International approved?**

Find DONA International approved workshops through our online locator at Find a DONA International Doula workshop.

**2. Do I have to be a member of DONA International to receive my Certification Packet?**

No, but you must be a member at the time you submit your packet for review in order to become certified, and later to maintain your certification.

**3. How do I register a Certification Packet I received at my training workshop?**

Visit the DONA International Boutique. You will need to register as a user before being able to register your certification packet. You will be asked to enter the name of your trainer and the date of completion of your workshop when registering the packet.

**4. I took my workshop before April 15, 2023 and do not yet have a Certification Packet. How can I get one?**

Contact the DONA approved trainer with whom you took your workshop to receive a packet.

**5. I took my workshop before April 15, 2023 and already have a Certification Packet. Can I get a refund and upgrade to the new packet?**

There are no refunds and no fees to upgrade. If you choose to upgrade, you will be beholden to the application process as outlined in the new packet. There is no requirement to upgrade if you prefer to stay with the packet and application process you already have.

**6. How long does a candidate have to complete the certification requirements?**

For candidates who completed their training before April 14, 2023: You have 4 years from the last day of your training to complete your packet.

For candidates who complete their training workshop on or after April 15, 2023: You have three years from the completion date of your workshop to submit your application for certification. If your packet expires, you may purchase a one-time, six-month extension for \$10. After the six-month extension, if you still did not complete the requirements, you will need to contact the Director of Certification to request approval to submit your application. If you are not sufficiently near completion of the packet, you may need to repeat a workshop.

**7. How many hours of training in a DONA International approved workshop do I need for certification?**

A DONA International approved birth doula workshop will be at least 16 hours of instruction time, and it may be longer. You will need to attend the entire workshop in order to receive a certificate of attendance and to be able to use it for your certification application.

**8. I noticed that some training workshops also offer an Introduction to Childbirth Education for Doulas (Intro). To be certified as a birth doula, am I required to attend an Intro along with the doula workshop?**

There is a childbirth education requirement for certification. A DONA International approved introduction to Childbirth Education class is a one (1) day class that satisfies this requirement. You do not need to complete an Intro along with the birth doula workshop, but it is highly recommended that you attend it if that is an option, especially if there are no,

or very limited options for, childbirth classes for expectant parents offered in your area. See the certification application for additional details and requirements.

**9. How many hours do I need to observe a childbirth education series?**

If you are not taking an Intro class with your workshop, you will need to observe an entire series of in-person childbirth classes taught to a group of expectant parents. You will want to look for a comprehensive series, if possible, which must be 8 hours or more of instruction time and include certain required elements. Refer to your certification packet for details.

**10. If I attend(ed) a childbirth education series for my own pregnancy, does that course qualify?**

No. Even if the course meets the required length and topic content, you must be participating as an observer, not as a student.

**11. I am a certified childbirth educator. Do I still need to take an Intro class?**

No. You will provide your certification documentation with your application.

**12. I noticed that some training workshops also offer a Lactation Support for Doulas. To be certified as a birth doula, am I required to attend a Lactation Support class along with the doula workshop?**

There is a lactation support education requirement for certification. A DONA International approved Lactation Support for Doulas class is a minimum 3-hour course that satisfies this requirement. You do not need to complete a Lactation Support class along with the birth doula workshop, but it is highly recommended that you attend it if that is an option, especially if there are no, or very limited options for, lactation support classes for perinatal professionals offered in your area. See the certification application for additional details and requirements.

**13. If I take a Lactation Education class for pregnant people, will it count for certification?**

No, the Lactation Support Education class must be taught by a certificated lactation education professional (see your application packet for the kinds of professionals who qualify), be a minimum of 3 hours, include certain required topics, and be specifically for an audience of doulas and other perinatal professionals.

**14. I am a certified lactation educator/accredited peer counselor. Do I still need to take a Lactation Support class?**

No. You will provide your certification/accreditation documentation with your application.

**15. How much does a DONA International approved doula workshop cost?**

Workshops are taught by DONA approved trainers who operate independent businesses. The cost of their workshops vary but tend to range from \$400-700, depending on the trainer and expenses involved in hosting a workshop. Fees also vary in what they include (tuition, books, additional classes like the Intro to Childbirth Education and Lactation Support for Doulas, etc.).

**16. I am having trouble finding clients and attending births to complete the certification. What can I do?**

Don't be discouraged if your business gets off to a slow start. As you gather information for your list of resources, network with other doulas, perinatal professionals and alternative and complementary care providers in your area and use that opportunity to introduce yourself and let them know the services you offer. Getting your name out there can be hard at first, but it is well worth the effort as you begin to see positive results.

**17. I am nervous about attending births by myself. May I take a doula buddy with me?**

It can be a wonderful opportunity to gain some experience and confidence to attend your very first births with another doula, for example, a doula who attended the same workshop as you did. You could also see if you can shadow and observe a DONA certified doula as they work with a client during a labor and birth. These can be wonderful learning opportunities. However, you will not be able to submit such births for certification. You must have been the primary doula providing all the labor support to your client and any family in the experiences you submit with your application.

**18. I am nervous about attending the birth by myself. What should I do?**

Remember that the most important quality in a doula is a warm heart. More than anything, a warm smile, encouraging words and a soft touch are what you need to take with you to the birth. You are there to provide emotional support, not medical assistance. Your skills and knowledge will continue to grow with every birth. With the skills you attained at your doula workshop, you are ready to assist in your first births. You can do it!

**19. Some of the births I attended were under 15 hours, but I did work with these clients during prenatal visits and during postpartum. Does that time count toward the 15 required hours?**

DONA International's requirement is that you provide continuous in-person labor support for a total of at least 15 hours over three births. Each labor support experience does not need to be 15 hours. Prenatal and postpartum contact and visits do not count as labor support hours. The labor support hours begin when you join your client in person, before or at the onset of active labor, and then stay continuously for the entire labor, birth and immediate postpartum period.

**20. I have attended 3 births, but the sum total of hours of labor support across these 3 births did not equal 15 hours. Can I stay longer in the immediate postpartum to increase the support hours?**

No, only 30 minutes of immediate postpartum per birth can be included in the sum total.

**21. One of the births I attended was a cesarean section. Can this birth still count for certification purposes?**

Yes, cesarean births whether planned or unplanned may be used for certification. You may only use one planned/scheduled cesarean in your application, however. See your application packet for further details.

**22. Am I required to attend a cesarean birth for certification?**

No, qualifying births for certification are outcome dependent.

**23. I did not get a Client Confidentiality Release Form signed by one of my clients. Can I still use this birth?**

To accept a birth for certification purposes, we must have a signature from the client/birthing person releasing the information. We cannot accept any paperwork without the signed release.

**24. At every birth, I leave evaluations for the doctors or midwives and nurses to fill out, but I never get them back. What can I do?**

Introduce yourself to them immediately and let them know you are working towards certification and require a very short evaluation and affidavit that they observed you with your client. Show them the form and the questions. That way they will know to pay attention to you as they do their own work, and they will also see it will take no more than a minute to answer the questions on the form. The professionals providing an evaluation will need to have been able to observe and interact with you repeatedly and/or for a period of time during the labor and birth in order to be able to provide an evaluation. If no one on the care team is able to complete this form, you may have another member of your client's support team present at the birth complete the form, such as a partner, family member or friend.

**25. May I use the same doctor, midwife, or nurse more than once for my evaluations?**

Yes, but we prefer to receive evaluations from different professionals for your three certification births, if possible.

**26. How do I verify my DONA International membership status?**

When you submit your application for certification, you must be a current member. You can check it on the Member Login on the DONA website. You do not have to call the home office to verify your membership if you know it is current.

**27. How do I pay the certification application fee?**

You may pay the fee online through the Member Login on the DONA International website and include a copy of your receipt with your application. If you prefer, you may also include a check or International Money Order payable to DONA International in U.S. funds for the correct amount.

**28. Where should I send my completed certification application?**

After paying for the Application Fee online through the DONA Boutique, you will receive an email with a link and instructions to submit your certification packet through the online submission process. Check your spam folders if it does not appear in your inbox.

You may also mail it to:

DONA International  
35 E. Wacker Dr., Ste 850  
Chicago, IL 60601

\*Please do not send it signature required on receipt.

**29. After I send in my completed certification application, when will I hear from DONA International?**

You may expect to hear within a month that your packet was received in the home office. It is difficult to predict when your packet will reach the hands of a reviewer, but do contact the DONA International home office if you have not heard from a reviewer within three months.

**30. Is there anything I can do while I wait to hear about my application?**

It is recommended that you still treat every birth you attend after you submit your application as a certification birth. Have your clients sign a Client Confidentiality Release Form, take detailed notes, complete the Birth Doula Support Record Sheets and request evaluations. That way you will have documentation for another birth, in case that is needed.

**31. Is there anything I can do to speed up the process?**

You can respond to your reviewer as soon as you are contacted. Respond to any questions or requests for more information promptly.