

**Chapter 18.47 RCW  
BIRTH DOULAS**

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**RCW 18.47.010 Definitions. (Effective October 1, 2023.)** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Department" means the department of health.

(2) "Birth doula" means a person that is a nonmedical birth coach or support person trained to provide physical, emotional, and informational support to birthing persons during pregnancy, antepartum, labor, birth, and the postpartum period. Birth doulas advocate for and support birthing people and families to self-advocate by helping them to know their rights and make informed decisions. Birth doulas do not provide medical care.

(3) "Postpartum period" means the 12-month period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy.

(4) "Secretary" means the secretary of health. [2022 c 217 § 1.]

**Effective date—2022 c 217 §§ 1-5:** "Sections 1 through 5 of this act take effect October 1, 2023." [2022 c 217 § 8.]

**RCW 18.47.020 Certification requirements. (Effective October 1, 2023.)** (1) A birth doula may voluntarily apply for certification from the department under this section.

(2) The department shall issue a certification to any applicant who has met the following requirements:

(a) Submitted a completed application as required by the department;

(b) Satisfactorily completed competencies that meet the requirements established by the secretary;

(c) Has not engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined in RCW 18.130.180;

(d) Is not currently subject to any disciplinary proceedings; and

(e) Paid a certification fee established by the secretary in rule.

(3) The uniform disciplinary act, chapter 18.130 RCW, governs the issuance and denial of certifications and the discipline of certified birth doulas under this chapter. [2022 c 217 § 2.]

**Effective date—2022 c 217 §§ 1-5:** See note following RCW 18.47.010.

**RCW 18.47.030 Competency-based requirements—Administration—Fees. (Effective October 1, 2023.)** (1) The secretary shall:

(a) In collaboration with community partners who advance equitable access to improve perinatal outcomes and care through

holistic services for black and brown communities, adopt rules establishing the competency-based requirements that a birth doula must meet to obtain certification. The rules must establish processes that allow for applicants to meet the competency-based requirements through the following pathways:

(i) Successful completion of training and education programs approved by the secretary; and

(ii) Submission of proof of successful completion of culturally congruent ancestral practices, training, and education that the secretary must review and determine whether the training and education meet the competency-based requirements;

(b) Establish certification and renewal fees, administrative procedures, continuing education, administrative requirements, and forms necessary to implement this chapter in accordance with RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280;

(c) Maintain a record of all applicants and certifications under this chapter; and

(d) Hire clerical, administrative, and investigative staff as needed to implement and administer this chapter.

(2) All fees collected under this chapter must be credited to the health professions account as required under RCW 43.70.320. [2022 c 217 § 3.]

**Effective date—2022 c 217 §§ 1-5:** See note following RCW 18.47.010.

**RCW 18.47.040 Birth doula without certification—Permitted.**

**(Effective October 1, 2023.)** (1) Nothing in this chapter prohibits a person from practicing as a birth doula without obtaining certification under this chapter.

(2) No person may use the title "state-certified birth doula" in connection with the person's name to indicate or imply, directly or indirectly, that the person is a state-certified birth doula without being certified in accordance with this chapter as a birth doula. [2022 c 217 § 4.]

**Effective date—2022 c 217 §§ 1-5:** See note following RCW 18.47.010.

**RCW 18.47.800 Rules.** The secretary may adopt any rules necessary to implement this chapter. [2022 c 217 § 6.]