



Indigenous Birth Helpers Request For Proposal

The Alaska Native Birthworkers Community seeks proposals to provide Indigenous Birth Helper services in Anchorage from January through June 2022.

Organization Overview:

The Alaska Native Birthworkers Community (ANBC) is a grassroots group of volunteer Alaska Native reproductive justice advocates, full circle birth helpers (doulas), childbirth educators, breastfeeding counselors, healers, caregivers, public health researchers, scholars, parents, aunties, and a midwife organizing to reclaim Indigenous birth practices and support families from preconception through postpartum with culturally-matched care.

Our mission is to serve Alaska Native birthing families so that they feel supported, well cared for, and full of the information they need to make confident choices around reproductive health, birthing, and parenthood. In doing this, we seek to reclaim as well as create new ceremony to heal our ancestors, ourselves, and future generations who may have been harmed through the colonization of our bodies, healthcare, and birthing practices.

Services Description:

ANBC is requesting proposals for part-time and full-time Indigenous Birth Helpers with three month and six month time commitments. ANBC Birth Helpers will commit to attending hospital and community births as part of a pre-arranged match with a Native family requesting birth support, and will also take shifts to be on-call for unplanned requests for birth support for Native families in Anchorage.

The Indigenous Birth Helper, also known as a doula, a birth companion or labor support person, is someone who provides continuous physical, emotional, spiritual, and informational support to a birthing person before, during, and after childbirth. This is a valuable role within a birth team, which may also include the non-pregnant parent, other family and community members, nurse or birth assistant, midwife, and/or doctor.

In addition to providing labor and birth support, the Indigenous Birth Helper will provide prenatal and postpartum support. They may help facilitate a variety of ongoing learning opportunities as they arise including but not limited to: healthy pregnancy, childbirth preparation, postpartum care, breastfeeding and newborn care, coming of age, birthworker networking and support, and traditional knowledge and skills. There will also be opportunities for continuing education, and community outreach and organizing.

Responsibilities:

- Provide prenatal support by offering information and resources to help prepare for birth, postpartum, parenting

- Provide one-to-one support during labor as a continuous supportive presence: help to create a comfortable environment, provide reassurance, support birthing person's decisions, center birthing person's cultural practices, help with comfort techniques, share support to entire family
- Help with breastfeeding and postpartum support
- Offer peer support to help process experiences, fears, and opportunities for healing
- Maintain ethical practice and confidentiality
- What the Indigenous Birth Helper does NOT do: perform any clinical tasks; make any decisions for the birthing person or make plans of care with clinical staff on their behalf; access the birthing person's private health information

Requirements:

- Demonstrated commitment to serving Native communities
- Understanding and respect of Alaska Native cultures, peoples, regions, and traditional values
- Ability to offer culturally matched care with Native birthing families
- Experience with deep, active listening, and willingness to center and support the requests and preferences of the birthing person
- Knowledge of, or willingness to learn: basics of childbirth education, labor support and comfort measures, informed consent, postpartum and breastfeeding care, newborn development
- Availability for on-call work
 - *Call days are 24-hour periods where you may be requested to support someone, with an expectation that you are ready to be at the birth facility within 60 minutes of being called, including during the night, and remain with them until after the baby is born.*
- Self-directed, ability to organize tasks to complete deliverables without daily supervision
- Excellent communication and collaborative approach to team work using a trust and consensus based leadership model
- Strict adherence to COVID-19 and other safety protocols and infection control standards as defined by ANBC and partner institutions

Desired Qualifications:

- Doula / childbirth educator / breastfeeding counselor training and/or other experience surrounding labor and birth education and support
- Physical ability to sometimes lift up to 50 pounds, stand and sit as needed in support of a birthing person, and commit to sometimes long hours of emotional and physical support
- Awareness of how to safely work within hospital and community birthing environments

To Apply:

Please submit a cover letter of no more than two pages describing your community background, qualifications, and passion for this work, and a resume for yourself or any individuals who would provide services with two references, and a proposed fee for part-time or full-time services by **December 6, 2021** to nativebirthworker@gmail.com. This RFP is open until services are secured.

The Alaska Native Birthworkers Community is especially interested in contractors who have experience living in and/or working with Alaska Native communities, and Alaska Native people are strongly encouraged to apply.

To learn more about ANBC please visit www.nativebirthworkers.org or email nativebirthworker@gmail.com with any questions. ANBC is fiscally sponsored through a partnership with the [Alaska Venture Fund](#), a project of the New Venture Fund.