

Initiatives and Programs

NJMIHIA Community-Based Doula Training Program

About

In October 2024, NJMIHIA launched a New Jersey-specific doula training program to build a culturally responsive, professional, and scalable workforce.

NJMIHIA, in partnership with Rutgers Institute for Families, established a steering team of twelve expert doulas to assist in the development of a New Jersey-specific doula curriculum that will serve as a standardized model for culturally-responsive doula training.

Designed by “doulas for doulas,” the program prepares professionals with deep community roots, culturally aligned care approaches, and the skills to support birthing families across New Jersey.

Expansion

To grow this workforce, NJMIHIA launched a “Train-the-Trainer” pilot in January 2026.

The Train-the-Trainer pilot trained doulas from maternal and infant health organizations across the state to facilitate NJMIHIA’s community-based doula training.

This cohort aims to continue growing the community doula workforce serving NJ FamilyCare members and to build a sustainable, statewide pipeline of support professionals.

This initiative advances NJMIHIA’s strategy to expand access to high-quality, culturally competent doula care for NJ FamilyCare members. By investing in community-based training and mentorship, NJMIHIA is building a workforce that reflects New Jersey’s diverse maternal health needs.

Program Launch and Structure

The initial cohort of the NJMIHIA Community-Based Doula Training pilot began training in September 2025 and concluded in December 2025.

Training included:

- 70 seat hours of NJMIHIA’s Community-Based Doula Curriculum
- CPR and HIPAA certification
- NJDOH Cultural Competency training
- Three hands-on birth experience sessions

Trainees received ongoing mentorship from experienced NJMIHIA doulas.

Mentorship included:

- Connections to families, birthing centers, and hospitals
- Emotional support throughout training

Graduates are eligible and supported to enroll as NJ FamilyCare (Medicaid) providers



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Doula Town Hall Series

NJMIHIA launched a Doula Town Hall Series, a collaborative and welcoming space for doulas, birth workers, and other stakeholders to share resources, strengthen connections, and build a supportive perinatal community.

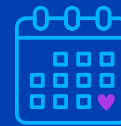
The January 2026 Doula Town Hall focused on spreading awareness of the NJ FamilyCare Training Approval Packet, which seeks to expand the list of Approved Doula Trainings eligible for NJ FamilyCare enrollment.

The town hall was attended by nearly 100 community partners from across the state.

Future Town Halls

Future town halls will focus on topics identified by doulas and maternal health partners as priorities for strengthening collaboration, workforce development, and support for families across the state.

- > Doula Reimbursement & Medicaid Support**
Policy advocacy, research, and technical assistance
- > Hospital Partnerships & Equity Initiatives**
Reducing bias and improving collaboration between hospitals and doulas
- > Business & Career Development**
Grants, mentorship, and billing support for doulas and birth workers
- > Workforce Education & Growth**
Scholarships, training opportunities, and continuing education
- > Data & Impact Measurement**
Tracking outcomes, publishing best practices, and informing policy



2026 Meeting Schedule

The Doula Town Hall Series will continue quarterly in 2026.

January 8, 2026

April 9, 2026

July 9, 2026

October 8, 2026



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NJ Doula Learning Collaborative

NJMIHIA serves as the coordinating body for the New Jersey Doula Learning Collaborative (NJDLC). The NJDLC is the state’s professional home for community doulas, creating a dedicated space for connection, collaboration, and shared learning across the maternal health ecosystem.

Supported by funding through NJDOH, the NJDLC brings together doulas from across New Jersey to strengthen professional development, elevate community-informed practices, and ensure doulas are meaningfully integrated into maternal and infant health initiatives statewide.

The NJDLC is committed to:

- Addressing maternal and child health disparities
- Empowering maternal health advocates
- Consciously including doulas in the conversation
- Working to create systemic change for babies, families, and communities throughout New Jersey.

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“At NJMIHIA, we know doulas are instrumental in creating environments where positive birth experiences are possible. As the convener of the NJDLC, NJMIHIA serves as the connective tissue that brings together doulas and birth workers across the state.”

Lisa A. Asare
President & CEO



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G.L.O.W. Program and NJMIHIA Academy

In February 2026, NJMIHIA launched the G.L.O.W. (Grant for Lasting Outcomes in Women’s Health) Program and the NJMIHIA Academy, a new grant opportunity to empower small community-based organizations and businesses that provide birth support training services throughout New Jersey.

Grantees can receive up to \$50,000 to support projects that advance NJMIHIA’s strategic initiatives. Grantees will also be required to participate in the NJMIHIA Academy, a mentorship program designed to strengthen programmatic efforts and overall operational capacity.

Through this grant program, organizations will be able to expand their capacity and deliver impactful maternal and infant health solutions across New Jersey.

Priority Investment Areas

The G.L.O.W. Program supports projects in four strategic areas:

Community Engagement



Development and dissemination of a standardized community engagement toolkit for maternal and infant health programs

Innovation



Promotion of technology-based solutions that support informed patient decision-making

Mental Health Support



Expanded access to perinatal mental health programming for both clinical and non-clinical professionals

Workforce Engagement



Broadening professional development and training opportunities for midwives, doulas, community health workers, and lactation professionals.

