

HOW TO WRITE A SERVICE AGREEMENT

IMPORTANT

When working with a new client, a solid and well-written service agreement can set a foundation for clear communication between doula and client. A service agreement as a communication tool shared at a first prenatal visit can ensure that clients know what to expect from their doula. This can address questions that potential clients may have before they occur, leading to more satisfied clients and to easier work for doulas.

As doulas, **use service agreements, rather than contracts**, because to be a legally binding document contracts must be attorney-reviewed. A service agreement that is mutually accepted by both parties is usually adequate for doulas and clients. In creating your own service agreement, consider the following points that may be practical to include.

[Doula Name], [Doula Business]

[Phone/Email/Other Contact]

[Address]

[Preferred Payment Information - PayPal, Venmo, CashApp, Handle, etc.]

How often will you meet, and at what point in pregnancy? How long will each meeting be? How are the meetings to be scheduled (phone, text, email, website)?

How often are you to remain in communication during pregnancy/postpartum? Do you offer consults outside of your regular appointments?

How can you be contacted in emergencies?

Where and when will you join people in labor? How long will you stay? At what point will backup be called if needed?

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Clarify Your Scope of Practice: *Clinical tasks, such as taking blood pressure or fetal heart checks, are only to be provided by medical caregivers. Doulas will not make decisions regarding care, or speak on a client's behalf to others regarding matters where medical decisions are being made. Doulas do not make recommendations in conflict with care providers regarding the medical care of parent or baby.*

Post-Birth: *How long will you stay? When will you provide a follow-up call? How many postpartum visits are offered with your services, and how are they scheduled?*

Insurance or FSA/MSA Reimbursement: *Do you provide documentation to assist in filing for insurance reimbursement? How long should clients allow for these upon request?*

Alternate Care: *If there are any dates that you may be unavailable for service, how will the backup be arranged? How can your backup be contacted?*

What will you do in the event of an illness or emergency? How will your backup be paid?

What are the Responsibilities of the Client? *Some to consider: 1) Inform caregiver that a doula will be present at birth. 2) Keep doula informed of the details of pregnancy and of conversations with provider. 3) Notify doula immediately by phone (no text or email).*

How are clients to notify you when labor is here? When will you join them in labor, and how long should they allow for you to arrive after the "come now" call?

Fees: *What will you charge? Do you charge a retainer, or have payment plans? By when is final payment due?*

Include a refund policy. How and under what circumstances will fees be refunded?

Include doula signature and client signature, partner's name, and due date.

And there you have it! A solid service agreement that keeps your clients informed, and ensures smooth communication from day one until the day you say "until next time!"