

The Economics of a Doula...

People often think that doulas make a lot of money per hour, but they may not understand the expenses that go into running a doula business. Here is a brief breakdown in case you are curious. :)

Taxes!!! 20-25% of what I make goes *straight* to taxes. Federal, state, county taxes and business license.

Nothing is for Free. PayPal charges 1.9%+10¢ for each transaction. Website hosting, security, design, Zoom. Cost to maintain doula bags and equipment. All the little things needed to run a business- paper, ink, printer, computer, phone, phone bill, internet bill, cost of certification, etc.

Time Spent Behind the Scenes. Sanitizing the birth bags, printing workbooks, updating curriculum, maintaining resources on website, answering texts, emails, calls, and interviews.

Traveling Costs Money. Car upkeep and gas. Time spent traveling and sitting in traffic. Parking fees, bridge fees, and using FastTrak lanes when I need to get to a client in labor faster.

Vacation/Back Up Doula Pay. Doulas can not just take a week off to go on vacation. Since we are on call for 5 weeks for each client, we literally have to take a whole month off to get a one week vacation! If we want to pay our bills the month we take a vacation we better save some money. And if we get sick we still have to pay a back up doula and pay our bills.

Health Insurance. I have the privilege of being under my husbands health plan. However I know many doulas whom pay out of pocket for their health insurance.

Education. In order to be the best doula I can be, I need to keep learning. Every year I take continuing education classes, listen to educational podcasts, and read up on the current science.

Number of Clients. I feel that I serve my clients best when I take 3-4 clients a month. I'm less likely to need a back doula for overlapping births and get plenty of rest between births. Taking more clients means I can charge less per client, but quality of care drops.

On Call Life. My whole life (and my families) revolves around my clients. The moment you go into labor I am prepared to drop my plans and come to you. I never travel more than 2 hours away from home when on call. I never know when I will need to go to a birth, I never know how long I will be gone from home, I never know when my breaks will be, I don't know if I will get sleep that night, etc.