

Governor Phil Murphy

First Lady Tammy Murphy Announces Efforts to Strengthen Doula Workforce and Streamline Access to Care

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TRENTON – First Lady Tammy Murphy today announced cross-government efforts to further bolster New Jersey’s doula workforce. This includes recent innovations – such as the NJ Doula Assistant Tool and the State Rubric Assessment Tool – to eliminate barriers to entry and enable more doulas to participate in NJ FamilyCare. The First Lady also highlighted new initiatives by the New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority to maximize the reach and impact of support for the state’s doula workforce.

Over the course of the Murphy Administration, New Jersey has made several critical advancements to uplift the doula profession. Notable prior milestones include:

- In 2019, led by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), the State created the [NJ Doula Learning Collaborative](https://www.nj.gov/health/doulas/) to provide doulas in New Jersey with billing support, education, training, and workplace development in service of birth equity. NJDOH has made substantial investments in New Jersey’s community doula workforce, funding the training of over 400 New Jerseyans to be trained as community doulas.
- In 2021, New Jersey became the third state in the nation to offer statewide Medicaid (NJ FamilyCare) [coverage for doula services](https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/doula.html). Annually, NJ FamilyCare – which is overseen by the New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJDOH) – covers approximately 30,000 births.
- In 2023, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to [establish a New Jersey Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority \(NJMIHIA\)](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/20230717a.shtml). NJMIHIA serves as the coordinating body for the State’s doula initiatives and policies.
- In 2024, the State enacted a requirement that each acute care hospital and birthing center must develop and maintain policies that [allow doulas to accompany patients](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/20240116i.shtml) before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

“Through Nurture NJ, we have embraced a whole-of-government approach to transforming our maternal and infant health care landscape. Parents in New Jersey deserve access to the best care our state has to offer and, since the beginning, we have explored every avenue at our disposal to bring about positive change,” **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. “By prioritizing innovation and out-of-the-box thinking, we are strengthening our state’s critical doula workforce and streamlining access to care for countless moms and babies. I commend our partners across government for continuing to build on our work to make New Jersey the gold standard in maternal and infant health care.”

NJ Doula Assistant

NJDHS, NJMIHIA, and NJDOH collaborated with the NJ Office of Innovation (OOI) to create the [NJ Doula Assistant \(https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/doulahelp/form/welcome\)](https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/doulahelp/form/welcome) online tool to help doulas complete the application paperwork to become fee-for-service providers of NJ FamilyCare (Medicaid) quickly and confidently. The NJ Doula Assistant is a simple, user-friendly tool that translates the legal and business requirements of New Jersey's Medicaid application into plain English and generates a near-complete application to help doulas with the submission process.

The tool features plain language questions and pre-population of data across the application packet, helping doulas sign up in only about 20 minutes. It asks only about 40 questions that populate more than 80 answers across the application. This is the first time an online tool of this kind has been developed for any state's Medicaid doula program.

NJ FamilyCare staff, along with prospective doulas, were involved in the design process to ensure the tool is accurate and user-friendly. In addition to this innovative resource, NJ FamilyCare continues to offer "Doula Guides" who provide support to doula applicants with questions or who need assistance completing the application.

State Rubric Assessment Tool

New Jersey is also introducing a new process to expand the number of NJ FamilyCare-approved doula trainings. NJDHS, NJDOH, and NJMIHIA have collaborated to standardize the minimum requirements and process to expand the

[current list of Approved Doula Trainings](https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/NJFC_Approved_Doula_Trainings.pdf)

[\(https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/NJFC_Approved_Doula_Trainings.pdf\)](https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/dmahs/info/NJFC_Approved_Doula_Trainings.pdf)

eligible for NJ FamilyCare enrollment, helping more trained doulas qualify to become NJ FamilyCare community doulas and serve NJ FamilyCare families.

Because training and experience backgrounds can differ significantly across the doula workforce, this process helps NJ FamilyCare clients understand the shared standards for NJ FamilyCare community doulas regarding their doula education, practice experience, and certification.

Many doula training organizations want their trained doulas to be able to serve Medicaid. The new approval process, and the accompanying Rubric Tool, make this possible. The NJ FamilyCare Rubric Tool will be used to compare the requirements of a doula training to NJ FamilyCare's minimum requirements. Regional and national doula organizations are encouraged to complete the approval packet (which includes the rubric tool) to seek NJ FamilyCare approval of their trainings. The approval paperwork is available on the

[NJMIHIA website \(https://nj.gov/njmihia/initiatives/rubric/index.shtml\)](https://nj.gov/njmihia/initiatives/rubric/index.shtml). NJMIHIA is providing technical assistance, in English and Spanish, to doula organizations that would like help completing the approval packet or the rubric tool. Approval packets received in January will be reviewed for NJ FamilyCare approval in early 2026.

"The Rubric Assessment Tool and the NJ Doula Assistant Tool represent significant strides to maintaining MIHIA's commitment to advancing, strengthening, and sustaining the perinatal workforce. By standardizing and streamlining the approval process for doula training programs, the Rubric Assessment Tool ensures a consistent and high-quality network of qualified doulas, essential for expanding access to NJ FamilyCare-covered services. This effort exemplifies our dedication to fostering a robust support system for families across New Jersey," **said Lisa Asare, President and CEO of the Maternal and Infant Health Innovation Authority**. "Moreover, our collaboration with the

Office of Innovation to develop the NJ Doula Assistant tool underscores the power of technology in unpacking complex processes by facilitating, simplifying, and streamlining Medicaid enrollment for doulas, enhancing efficiency and accessibility. Together, these initiatives not only empower doulas but strengthen the foundation of care for mothers and infants statewide."

"This tool streamlines the NJ FamilyCare provider application process to make it easier for doulas to serve NJ FamilyCare families," **said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. "NJ has been a leader in innovating ways to support doulas as Medicaid providers, and the launch of this new type of tool is another step we're taking to increase access to doula care. Community doulas provide essential support to mothers and babies before, during, and after childbirth, and can improve birth outcomes. I am grateful to the First Lady and every agency that collaborated on this ongoing work to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable state to deliver and raise a baby."

"Doulas are increasingly busy providing essential care in New Jersey. Due to the First Lady's leadership and vision to support doulas, we've worked across government to streamline the process to enroll doulas as Medicaid providers, making it quick and straightforward," **said New Jersey State Chief Innovation Officer Dave Cole**. "We look forward to seeing more doulas use this helpful tool to help expand doula access across the Garden State."

"Every parent in New Jersey navigating pregnancy, labor and delivery, and the post-partum period deserves access to robust and supportive care. Doulas provide invaluable guidance and advocacy during this critical and complex experience," **said Acting Health Commissioner Jeff Brown**. "I'm proud of the work we've done across State government to remove barriers for doulas to serve all families regardless of income, and to ensure this care reaches those who can benefit most."

The State is making great strides in implementing additional strategies to support New Jersey's doula workforce through efforts led by NJMIHIA, including:

GLOW Grant and GLOW Academy

At its November 19, 2025 Board Meeting, NJMIHIA voted to approve the creation of a new grant program available to eligible organizations providing birth support training services. The program consists of two key components for awardees:

- **GLOW Grant (Grant for Lasting Outcomes in Women's Health):** Provides funding to support projects that advance strategic initiatives of NJMIHIA, such as community engagement, innovation, mental health support, and workforce engagement; and
- **GLOW Academy:** A mentorship program designed to strengthen awardees' programmatic efforts and overall operational capacity.

Through this program, grants of \$50k will be awarded on a rolling basis until the fund is exhausted. The funding for the program comes from a \$1 million allocation in the Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget. More details regarding the application period will be made available in the coming weeks.

Doula Town Hall Series

NJMIHIA's launch of the Doula Town Hall convenings aims to strengthen collaboration and break down silos within New Jersey's perinatal workforce. Led and facilitated by doulas, these convenings will build community, provide a safe and supportive space for open dialogue, and encourage the exchange of valuable resources. NJMIHIA's first Town Hall will be held on Thursday, January 8th at 10:00 am. Those interested can register here:

[NJ Doula Town Hall RSVP \(https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=0cN2UAI4n0uzauCkG9ZCp7dITQQFpLZFpWJZRuub-JVUOVM0TVQyU00wNFZJWTFZMjc1UDBGRkk4Vy4u\)](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=0cN2UAI4n0uzauCkG9ZCp7dITQQFpLZFpWJZRuub-JVUOVM0TVQyU00wNFZJWTFZMjc1UDBGRkk4Vy4u)

Community-Based Doula Pilot Program

NJMIHIA recently trained its first doula cohort through the [Community-Based Doula Training Program \(https://nj.gov/njmihia/initiatives/doula.shtml\)](https://nj.gov/njmihia/initiatives/doula.shtml). The comprehensive eight-week program equipped individuals with the skills to support NJ FamilyCare clients throughout pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. NJMIHIA doulas also receive mentorship from experienced doulas on the team. Mentorship includes connecting doulas with families, birthing centers and hospitals, as well as providing social and emotional support.

For more information on NJMIHIA's upcoming doula training, please contact NJMIHIA at [doula@njmihia.gov \(mailto:doula@njmihia.gov\)](mailto:doula@njmihia.gov).

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