

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to doula workforce development;  
3       creating s. 456.65, F.S.; providing legislative  
4       findings and intent; establishing the Doula Workforce  
5       Development Support Program within the Department of  
6       Commerce for specified purposes; providing  
7       definitions; providing requirements for grant funding  
8       and the use of such funds; providing requirements for  
9       the department to administer the program; requiring  
10      the department to submit a certain report to the  
11      Governor and the Legislature by a specified date  
12      annually; authorizing the department to require grant  
13      recipients to submit certain data; authorizing the  
14      department to adopt certain rules; providing an  
15      appropriation; providing an effective date.

16  
17   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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19       **Section 1.   Section 456.65, Florida Statutes, is created to**  
20 **read:**

21       456.65   Doula Workforce Development Support Program.—

22       (1)   LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—

23       (a)   The Legislature finds that maternal health challenges  
24 are worsening in this state as it continues to see increased  
25 maternal mortality and morbidity rates. Minority families face

26 the highest disparities, with Black women experiencing death  
27 rates 2 to 3 times higher than their White counterparts.

28 (b) The Legislature finds that doulas have been shown to  
29 improve maternal and infant health outcomes, reduce preventable  
30 complications, increase prenatal care engagement, and strengthen  
31 postpartum recovery.

32 (c) The Legislature further finds that existing doula  
33 training organizations, community-based doula programs,  
34 nonprofit entities, and private educational institutions serve a  
35 critical role in building a maternal health workforce but are  
36 under-resourced. Supporting these entities through the state's  
37 workforce development infrastructure is essential to meeting  
38 regional maternal health needs, especially in urban high-  
39 disparity counties, rural maternity-care deserts, and regions  
40 experiencing hospital closures or obstetric service reductions.

41 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature to expand this  
42 state's doula workforce, especially in rural, minority, and  
43 other underserved communities, through strategic investment in  
44 the entities best positioned to train and deploy doulas.

45 (2) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM.—

46 (a) The Doula Workforce Development Support Program is  
47 established within the Department of Commerce to fund,  
48 strengthen, and expand existing doula training programs, doula  
49 organizations, and community-based birthing services providers.

50 (b) The program must prioritize support for entities

51 serving high-need regions, including:

52 1. Urban counties with high maternal morbidity  
53 disparities.

54 2. Rural areas with limited or no obstetric providers or  
55 maternity wards.

56 3. Communities affected by recent hospital closures or  
57 reductions in maternity services.

58 (3) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:

59 (a) "Department" means the Department of Economic  
60 Opportunity.

61 (b) "Doula" means a nonmedical birth support professional  
62 trained to give physical and emotional support in childbirth.

63 (c) "Doula training entity" means a nonprofit organization,  
64 community-based program, training collective, academic  
65 institution, or private educational provider that conducts doula  
66 training, mentoring, continuing education, or workforce  
67 placement activities.

68 (d) "Doula workforce support services" includes instructor  
69 compensation, curriculum development, program expansion,  
70 administrative support, business development training for  
71 doulas, mentoring, apprenticeship structures, evaluation and  
72 data activities, and related capacity-building functions.

73 (e) "High-need region" means a county or region identified  
74 by the department as having elevated maternal morbidity rates,  
75 limited maternity care providers, or insufficient doula

76 availability.

77 (4) GRANTS, ELIGIBILITY, USE OF FUNDS.—The department may  
78 award competitive or formula-based grants to eligible doula  
79 training entities to support doula workforce development.

80 (a) Grant funds may be used for:

81 1. Training, mentoring, or apprenticeship program  
82 expansion.

83 2. Instructor compensation and curriculum modernization.

84 3. Recruitment and support of trainees from high-need  
85 regions.

86 4. Program administration, evaluation, and outreach.

87 5. Business development training for doulas, including  
88 assistance with incorporation, insurance, marketing, and  
89 entrepreneurship.

90 6. Stipends or workforce support for newly trained doulas,  
91 administered through the eligible entity.

92 7. Partnership development with hospitals, Medicaid  
93 managed care plans, clinics, community health workers, Healthy  
94 Start Coalitions, or other maternal health providers.

95 (b) The department may not use funds to directly recruit,  
96 hire, or employ doulas as state employees or contractors  
97 providing clinical services.

98 (5) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.—The department shall establish  
99 application procedures, grant criteria, allowable costs,  
100 reporting requirements, and monitoring processes. In developing

101 grant criteria, the department shall consider all of the  
102 following:

103 (a) The demonstrated capacity of the entity to train or  
104 mentor doulas.

105 (b) The geographic areas served and the documented need  
106 for doula workforce expansion.

107 (c) The entity's experience serving culturally diverse and  
108 high-disparity populations.

109 (d) Partnerships with local workforce development boards  
110 or educational institutions.

111 (e) Plans for sustainability and long-term workforce  
112 placement.

113 (6) REPORTS.—

114 (a) By December 1 of each year, the department shall  
115 submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate,  
116 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives that includes  
117 all of the following information:

118 1. Grant recipients and award amounts.

119 2. The number of doulas trained, mentored, or supported by  
120 funded entities.

121 3. The geographic distribution of program activities.

122 4. Workforce outcomes, including business development  
123 successes and job placements.

124 5. Recommendations for program improvements.

125 (b) The department may require grant recipients to submit

126 data necessary to compile the report.

127 (7) RULES.—The department may adopt rules to implement  
128 this section.

129 **Section 2.** (1) For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the  
130 nonrecurring sum of \$7.5 million from the General Revenue Fund  
131 is appropriated to the Department of Economic Opportunity to  
132 implement s. 456.65, Florida Statutes, relating to the Doula  
133 Workforce Development Support Program.

134 (2) From the funds appropriated in subsection (1):

135 (a) Up to \$500,000 may be used by the department for  
136 administrative expenses, program management, technical  
137 assistance to grantees, and data collection and evaluation  
138 activities necessary to carry out the program.

139 (b) The remaining funds shall be placed in a grants and  
140 aids for doula workforce development support category and  
141 distributed as competitive or formula-based grants to eligible  
142 doula training entities in accordance with s. 456.65, Florida  
143 Statutes, with priority given to entities serving high-need  
144 regions as defined in that section.

145 (3) Any appropriated funds that have not been expended or  
146 encumbered by June 30, 2027, shall revert to the General Revenue  
147 Fund.

148 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.