



CONNECTICUT PRISON DOULA PROJECT

A research site of **Enhanced Perinatal Programs for People in Prison (E4P):**
A multi-state project exploring pregnancy and postpartum support programs offered to incarcerated individuals

Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color are disproportionately represented in the criminal legal system. They are also at increased risk for adverse birth outcomes. E4P aims to reduce maternal health inequities in the criminal legal system by increasing our understanding of pregnant and postpartum people in prison and the programs that serve them.

Empowered from Within (EFW) aims to increase competence, parent child attachment, and community for pregnant and postpartum clients who are incarcerated. Our vision is to provide each family with a solid foundation of education and resources as well as a connection to parenting support in their community upon release. Birthing and postpartum clients are invited to engage in a variety of services to equip them to parent upon release. This program is supported and funded by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood's Family Support Division. **Contact:** ashley@beginwithashley.com

EFW offers the following services:

- > Group prenatal programming
- > One-on-one labor and birth attendance
- > Group postpartum programming
- > Lactation support
- > One-on-one visits to connect clients with home visiting upon release

PRENATAL SUPPORT

- Prenatal attachment classes
- Childbirth education
- Lactation education
- Postpartum education
- Classes are facilitated by doulas, lactation counselors, and childbirth educators

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORTS

- Provide labor and birth support at hospital
- Offer lactation visits before hospital discharge
- Connect clients with home visiting agencies to ease their transition post-release

OTHER PROGRAMMING OFFERED

- Re-entry supports for clients
- Provide photos of third trimester, birth, and newborn
- Doulas assist clients in completing *Goodbye, Love*; a book clients complete and send their babies
- Doulas provide caregivers with a diaper bag packed with newborn essentials

LACTATION SUPPORT

- Each client receives two breastpumps: a manual and a personal electric
- Clients have freezers in their rooms for storing expressed milk
- Weekly expressed milk transfer: infant caregiver picks it up from York or, when applicable, DCF ships it

PROGRAM INFORMATION

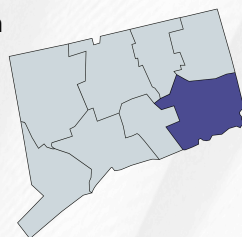
- One lead doula and 3 subcontracted doulas
- Programming began in 2021

NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Began a lactation task force
- Provided 40 pumps and thousands of bags
- Created a prenatal library
- Decorated the unit in educational posters
- Served 97 women during FY2023

YORK CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

- Connecticut has 1 women's state prison
- Located in New London County, CT (shaded on map)
- Opened in 1918
- Security level 2-5



Learn more about EFW at:
<https://empoweredbeginningsct.com/>

