



# MINNESOTA 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.*

The **Minnesota Prison Doula Project** (MnPDP) provides doula-supported comprehensive pregnancy services to justice-involved, pregnant people and parents. The program aims to nurture healthy parent-child relationships, increase parenting confidence and skills, reduce the intergenerational trauma of incarceration, and increase access to opportunities that build health, healing, and change. MnPDP is a program of the Ostarra Initiative, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. **Contact:** [info@mnprisondoula.org](mailto:info@mnprisondoula.org).

## MnPDP offers the following services:

- Group prenatal programming
- One-on-one prenatal programming
- One-on-one support during labor and birth
- One-on-one postpartum programming
- Group postpartum programming
- Lactation support (started in 2021)

## GROUP CLASSES

- Offered prenatally through 12-months postpartum
- 12-week curriculum
- Approximately 12-20 participants per group
- 2-hour classes, 1x week
- Facilitated by trained doulas

## LACTATION

- Provides lactation support during immediate postpartum at the hospital
- Provides milk storage and ships milk to caregivers
- Educates and coaches clients on how to maintain milk supply

## ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORTS

- Offer at least 2 prenatal meetings
- Provide labor and birth support at hospital
- Provide support at the time of separation from infant at hospital
- Offer at least 2 postpartum meetings

## PROGRAM INFORMATION

- MnPDP employs 3 full-time staff members, 1 part-time staff member, and 10 independent contractors
- Programming began in 2010

## OTHER PROGRAMMING OFFERED

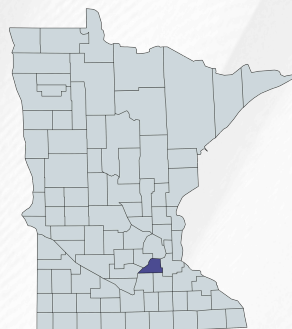
- Parenting classes at women's and men's prisons and jails across MN
- Supportive visitation between incarcerated parents and their children
- Abbreviated services offered in jails housed in eight counties across MN
- Re-entry programming for clients released under the MN Healthy Start Act

## NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Helped pass MN anti-shackling legislation in 2015
- Erica Gerrity, founder of MnPDP, featured in FORBES in 2018
- Helped pass the MN Healthy Start Act in 2021

## MINNESOTA CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - SHAKOPEE

- Minnesota's only women's state prison
- Located in Scott County, MN (shaded on map)
  - Scott County is 30 miles SW of the Twin Cities Metro Area
  - Founded in 1920
  - All security levels
  - Census: 500 bed facility



Learn more about MnPDP at:  
<https://www.mnprisondoula.org/>

