

# A DOULA'S IMPACT: ENGAGING AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY



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# What is a Community-Based Doula?

**Community** - a group of people living in the vicinity or having a particular characteristic in common; a feeling of fellowship with others as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, goals, and culture.

**Based** -Rooted in culture and to have as the foundation for (something)

**Doula** - a person trained to provide empowerment, information, emotional support, and physical comfort to a mother before, during, and just after childbirth

**Community-Based Doula** - a trained peer well-versed in the community that they serve, who provides physical, emotional, and educational support in a culturally sensitive way.



#DoulasAreALifeLine



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# Independent Doulas

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# Community-Based Doulas

## Independent doulas:

- **May** have their own practice
- **May** not provide culturally congruent care
- **May** not connect you with resource
- Often viewed as a "luxury"
  - not everyone can afford a doula

## Community-based doulas:

- May work with an organization
- Provide culturally congruent care
- May provide you with community resources
- May have 20-plus prenatal touches
- Often from the same communities they are serving

# What else is different about community-based doulas?

- Community-based doulas provide continuous support to mothers during labor and delivery, helping them cope with the physical and mental demands of giving birth.
- Drawing on their specialized training and lived experience to guide birthing persons through labor and delivery, community-based doulas provide emotional support and physical comfort that enhance the childbirth experience for the entire family.
- They also work with medical staff, including doctors, midwives, and nurses, to provide informational support to all birthing people they serve and help transition to parenthood.
- Community-based doulas have at least one commonality with the birthing person, which improves outcomes for under-resourced communities.
- They remove barriers by meeting families prenatally and postpartum in the home. In addition, community-based doulas address maternal health inequities and help create positive childbirth experiences and work towards improved birth and infant health outcomes.
- Community-based doula services are long-term, starting early pregnancy and continuing until six months postpartum.
- The pay source is also often different for community-based doulas. Funders invest in organizations that pay community-based doulas for the services. In some states, doula reimbursement covers the cost of community-based doula services.

# Black women need doulas!



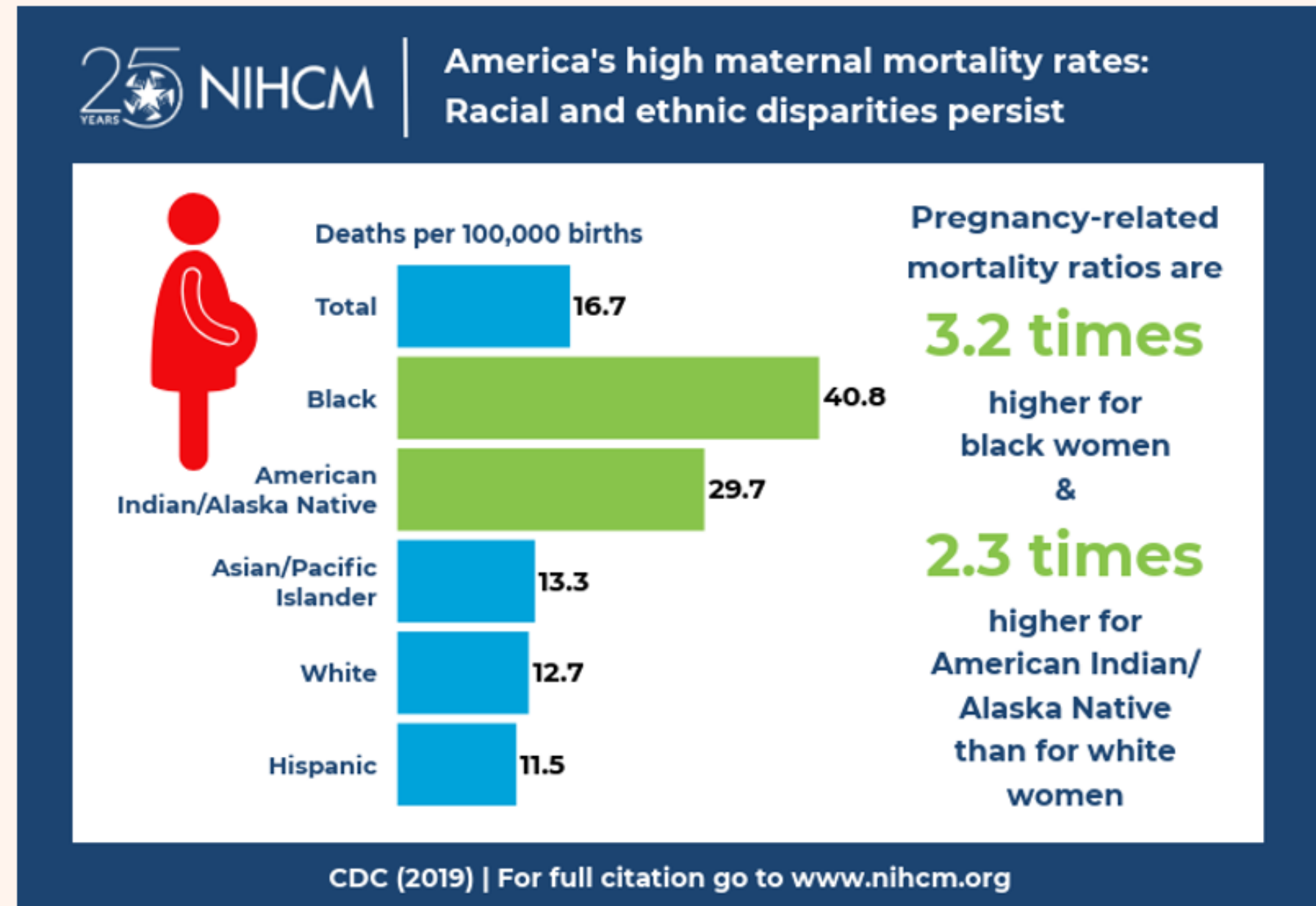
Across the United States, maternal health inequities and mortality rates continue to increase, particularly for Black and Brown birthing people and infants. This is a national health crisis that must be addressed immediately. We believe that community-based doulas are a lifeline for these families and the missing link to addressing this critical issue.



"Doctors are the experts on medicine. You are the expert on your body."

# The Why of BirthMatters in SC

- We want to reduce health/ racial disparities.
- Infant mortality for black babies is 2x higher than for white babies.
- Black babies are 1.5x more likely to be low birth weight than white babies.
- Mothers of color at 2-3X's more likely to die in childbirth or birth-related complications.



# BirthMatters Results

- Fewer cesarean sections
- Fewer neonatal intensive care admissions
- Increased breastfeeding
- No infant mortality
- No maternal mortality



Our 2022-2023 numbers:

Total families served: 188

90% identify as Black American

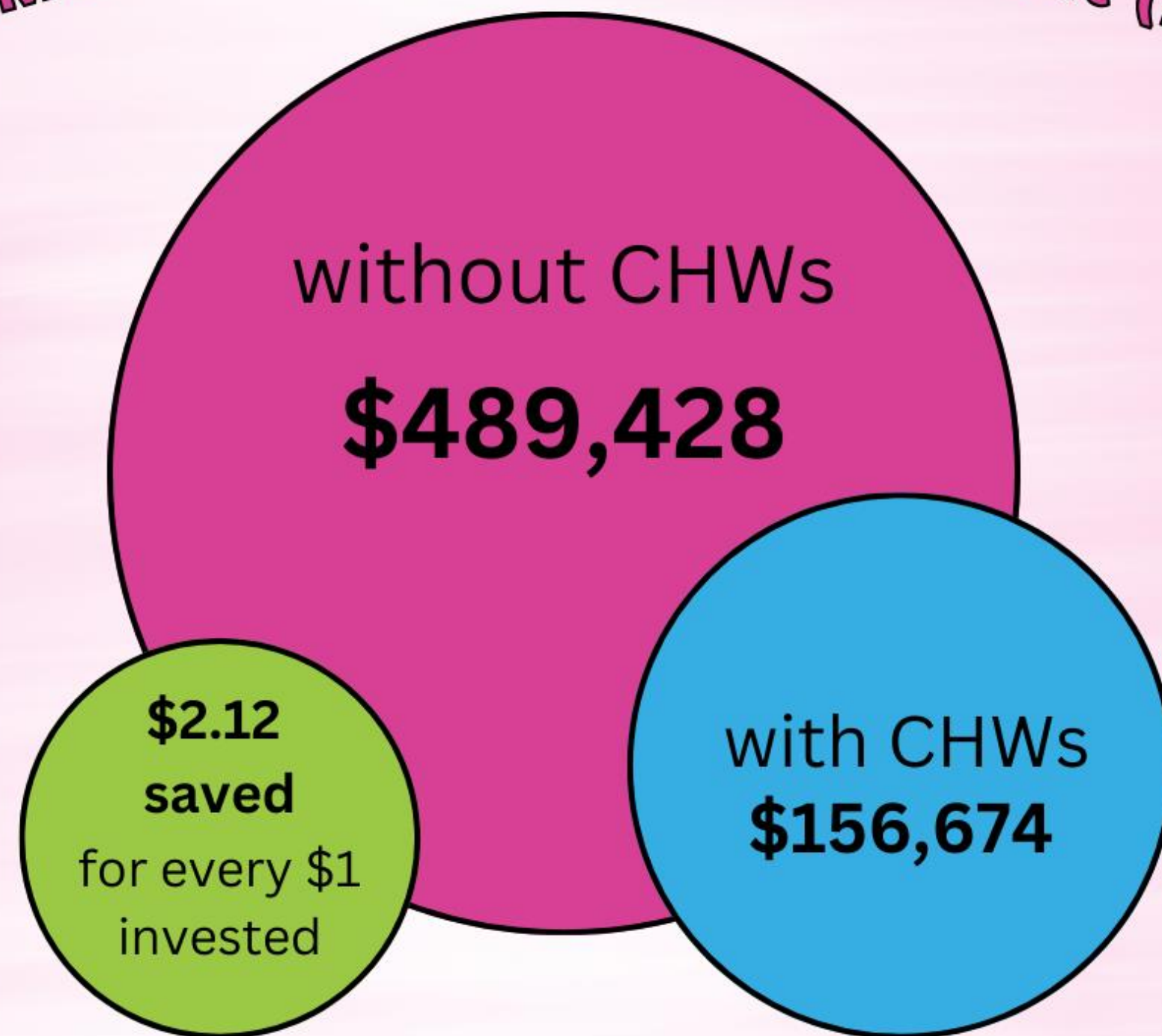
83% breastfeed at birth (AA SC 75%)

14% (LBW) Low Birth Weight

30% C-section births (SC 33%)



# BirthMatters Return on Investment (ROI)



CENTER FOR  
**COMMUNITY HEALTH**  
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## OUR MISSION

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BirthMatters reduces teen pregnancy through reproductive health education and empowers expectant young adults to raise healthy families through doulas utilizing the community health worker model.