



The Community-Based Doula Initiative reduces the number of low birth-weight babies and pre-term births through trained doulas who serve within their communities.

### THE ISSUE

In Greater Atlanta, one in every 11 babies is born at a low birth-weight. These babies are more likely to suffer severe health problems, which may continue into adulthood. But providing mothers with education and support from trained doulas helps to ensure that babies are born healthy, creating a lasting positive impact on their community.

### UNITED WAY'S ROLE

The Doula Initiative is one of four main strategies in our Babies Born Healthy Community Action Plan. The Community-Based Doula Program Model connects underserved women to specially trained women in their community who provide support during the critical months of pregnancy, birth and early months of parenting. Focusing on this sensitive period, when intervention makes the most difference, creates long-term linkages to support networks. The Model succeeds because doulas are from the same community as their clients and are able to bridge language and cultural barriers in order to meet health needs.

### THE RESULTS

In 2015, the Doula Initiative resulted in:

- 541 families served
- 218 home visits
- 189 children who received at least one health care visit in the last 12 months

Among the 139 women enrolled during 2015:

- 94 percent had babies of healthy weight ? 5.5 lbs.
- 96 percent had full-term births ? 37 weeks gestation
- Average birth weight was 6.33 lbs

