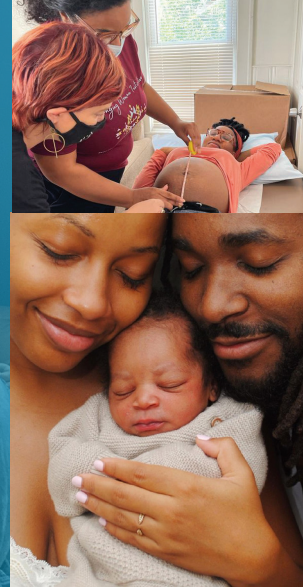




# Birth Detroit BIRTH CENTER FAQ'S



## What is a birth center?

A birth center is a home-like place where midwives provide prenatal, birth, and postpartum care. Birth centers are freestanding and not in hospitals. Community birth centers provide safe, culturally-reverent, midwifery-led healthcare for all.<sup>(1)</sup>

## Are birth centers safe?

Research shows that 80% of people giving birth in the United States could safely give birth in a birth center.<sup>(2)</sup> Birth centers are a safe choice for low risk pregnancy and an essential part of an integrated health system.

## How are adverse outcomes avoided?

Birth Detroit is committed to safety, accountability and best practice. Adverse outcomes are avoided by ongoing risk assessment and adherence to eligibility criteria, as well as the use of evidence-based protocols for comprehensive perinatal care and strong transfer partnerships. Clients requiring interventions not appropriate in a birth center are transferred to the appropriate level of care in a timely manner.<sup>(2)</sup>

## How do birth centers advance racial justice?

Community birth centers, especially those led by Black, Indigenous, people of color provide safe, culturally-relevant care to meet the needs of communities of color facing high maternal and infant mortality rates and perinatal clinic and hospital closures nationwide. Community birth centers like Birth Detroit are designed to honor cultural and spiritual traditions, reflect stories and dreams, and heal the frustrations and traumas of people and families who are not usually centered in the design of healthcare spaces.<sup>(1)</sup>

## How do birth centers improve public health?

Birth centers can improve public health outcomes. Birth center care improves birth outcomes, increases satisfaction; and, if it is culturally responsive, can make a life or death difference for people of color by reducing disparities in care. A 2022 study suggests that culturally affirming care provided by Black, Indigenous, people of color led birth centers benefits all birthing people – regardless of race and can be protective for Black birthing people.<sup>(11)</sup> The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid study also found that birth center participants achieved better birth outcomes at a 21% lower overall cost.<sup>(9)</sup>



## How do birth centers enhance health systems?

“Collaboration within an integrated maternity care system is essential for optimal mother-baby outcomes.”<sup>(12)</sup> Community birth center care offers options not typically available in other settings such as longer perinatal visits, extensive comfort measures, companions of choice, earlier discharge and home visits that provide birthing people with more freedom and autonomy over their birth care.<sup>(13)</sup> Birth center care provided by certified nurse midwives (CNMs) and licensed midwives (LMs) also helps address the increasing shortage of maternity care providers in the U.S.<sup>(5)</sup>

## How do birth centers work with hospitals?

Freestanding birth centers are partners in integrated health care systems. The Birth Settings in America report states that “integration creates a single, coordinated, high-functioning system and is an important driver of safety,” and that the integration of midwifery into a state’s maternal care system can improve maternal and newborn health outcomes.<sup>(6)</sup> Birth Detroit will provide community-based prenatal and postpartum care with the option of a birth center birth, and will work to partner with local hospitals to uphold birthing people’s right to “respectful, safe, and seamless consultation, referral, transport and transfer of care when necessary”.<sup>(12)</sup> Birth Detroit estimates seeing up to 500 birthing people annually for perinatal care, with potentially 100 birthing people choosing the option of birth center birth.

## How do birth centers work with insurance providers?

Most major private insurance companies contract with birth centers.<sup>(7)</sup> Medicaid is required to cover birth center care in states that license birth centers<sup>(8)</sup>. The state of Michigan is 1 of only 9 states that currently do not license birth centers. Birth Detroit is working to build relationships with all Michigan payors.

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