



# IMPACT REPORT



2023



# 2023, a year of expansion

## 1ST

In 2023, our doula organization became the first to receive Medicaid reimbursement in Texas.

## 70+

This year, we have had the pleasure of collaborating with 70 birthworkers, compensating them for their time and dedication to supporting families.

## 5

We have expanded our organizational capacity with five full-time staff members.



Picture from GALS PROM a 15th anniversary celebration

GALS made significant strides this year to enhance and broaden our programming, resulting in an unprecedented increase in the number of families we served.

Our team welcomed additional birthworkers, and we successfully transitioned all staff to full-time positions. Furthermore, our ongoing advocacy for reproductive justice through our partnerships within the MHEC continue to nourish the work and mission we strive to achieve. We also marked a significant milestone, celebrating our 15th anniversary with the support of our devoted community members and friends (in some pretty amazing costumes, we might add). As we look forward to the future, we are enthusiastic about the opportunities that 2024 will bring for GALS and the many families we serve.

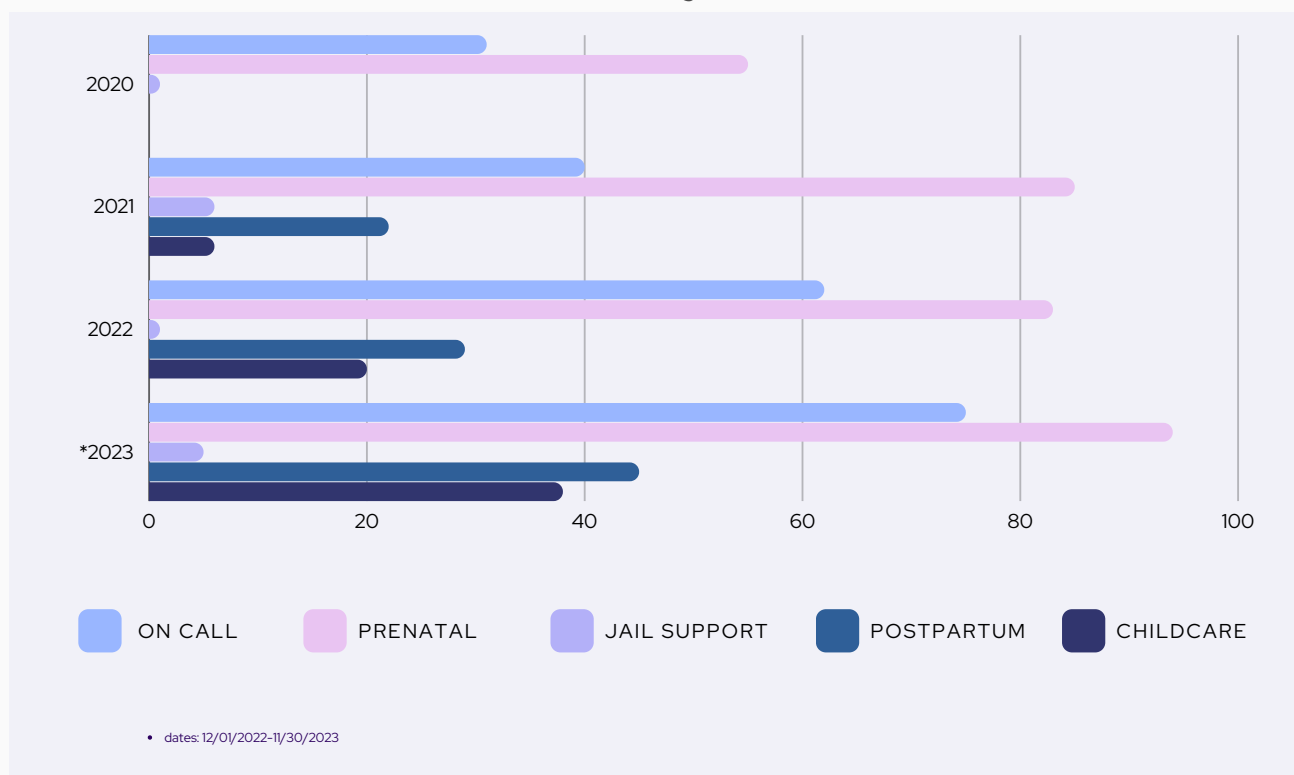
"GALS is here for the community,  
because of the community"  
-Morgan Miles, ED

# Program Enrollments

The enrollment of families in GALS has continued to grow each year, since 2008. This year we have recorded the highest number of families served in the Austin area to date.

The expansion of GALS programs would not be possible without the continued support of our valued staff, birthworkers, and community. Over 274 families were served under the GALS service umbrella, and we couldn't be more proud. Every year, our dispatch line rings more and more, and our applications for care continue to roll in as more and more families seek doula care in Austin.

Check out how much we've grown since 2020!



Over the last few years, we have introduced new programs to better support families and provide wrap-around care in the perinatal period. Our newest programs, the postpartum and Childcare for Black Parents programs, continue to grow and flourish. We can't wait to see what the next few years bring!

Through our expanded reach and programming, we've become an integral part of even more families' journeys.

As we celebrate this unprecedented growth, we are also excited for the continued journey of compassionate care, support, and positive impact on an even larger scale in the future.

Being able to provide doula support at no cost to families is SO important and we are so grateful that we can continue to reimagine and expand what we offer to families.

# GALS Support This Year

This year has marked an extraordinary milestone for our organization, witnessing the highest number of birth families served in our history! It's been pretty incredible to see the impact of our expanded support during the huge life transitions of pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. As we reflect on this remarkable achievement, we recognize the enduring impact it has had on the lives of countless individuals, reinforcing our dedication to fostering a supportive and empowering environment for all families in their unique journey to parenthood and ensuring that no one births alone.

Take a peek at the stats below! They're not just numbers; they tell the story of our commitment to supporting families through the journey to parenthood. Dive in for a closer look at the impact we've had on countless families – it's pretty cool, we promise!





# Improving Birth Outcomes



What captures the impact of doula support?

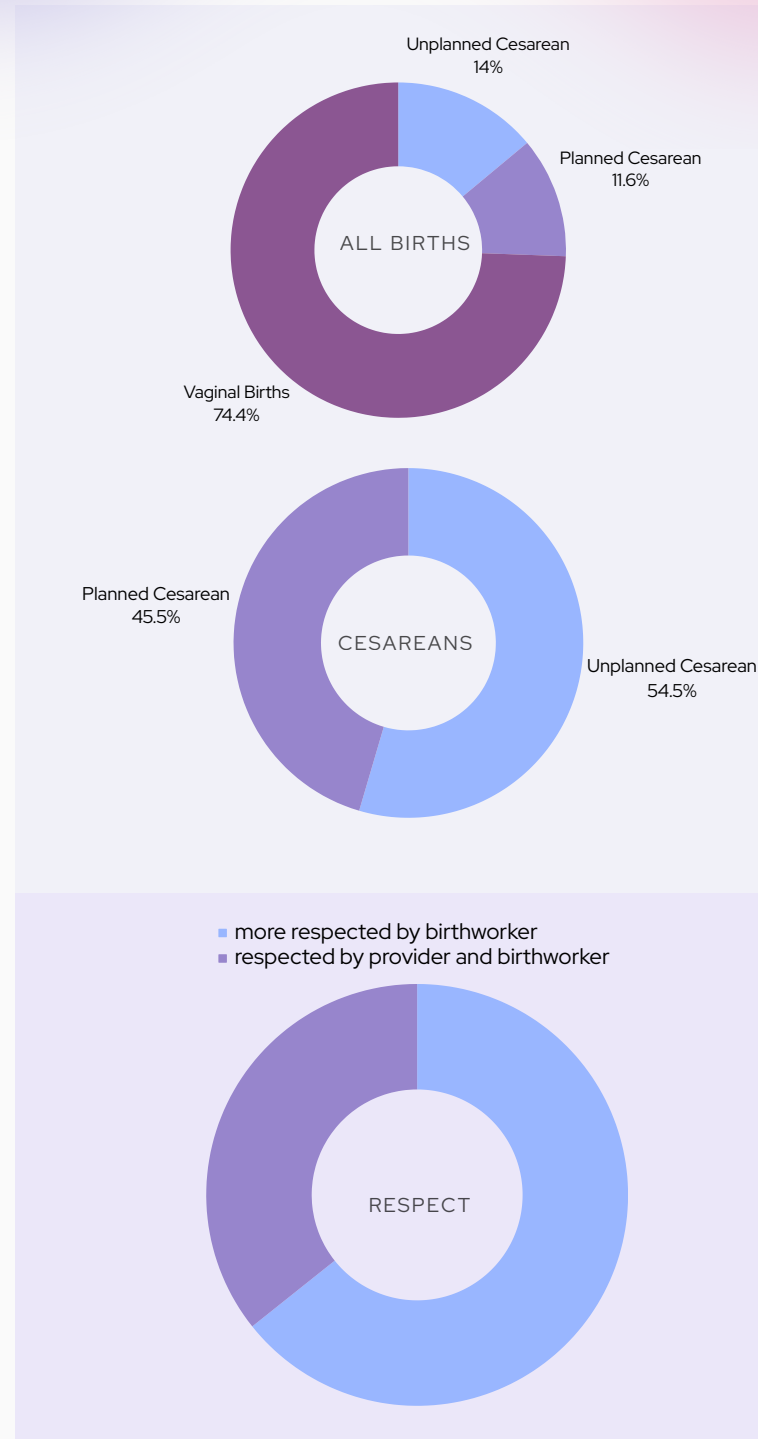
We don't think it's just cesarean rates.

Childbirth is an inherently human experience that deserves the utmost respect. By prioritizing respect and whole-person care, we can reduce the risk of birth trauma.

While the maternal healthcare system was designed to improve healthcare outcomes and efficiency for families, it continues to fail birthing people in the United States, resulting in trauma. Studies have shown that birthing people's subjective experiences during labor and delivery are strongly associated with the development of PTSD and trauma due to childbirth. Though the way in which the person gives birth can lend itself to a development of birth trauma, the birthing person's experience of the birth, no matter how they give birth, also plays a key role in the development of PTSD and traumas. Other risk factors include: history of psychological problems, anxiety, obstetric procedures, negative aspects in staff-birthing person contact, feelings of loss of control over the situation, and lack of partner support. It is important to note that this may differ from a medical provider's assessment of the childbirth experience. In other words, interpersonal treatment of the birthing person, or the birthing person's feelings of being treated with respect throughout the process plays a key role in whether the birthing person will experience birth trauma.\*\* Human-centered care means uplifting the wishes of the family and ensuring that they get the birth that they are hoping for. We have seen trauma unfold in all birth scenarios and all birth locations, and know that it is not dependent upon whether baby is born vaginally or surgically. To show the impact of doula care in reducing trauma, we measure feelings of respect by both parties, and we separate our counts for unplanned vs. planned cesareans.

Negative and disparate parental outcomes in the US can be attributed to a myriad of things including systemic racism, lack of trauma-informed and human-centered maternal care, and insufficient resources and community care during and after pregnancy. Birthworkers can mitigate systemic harm by providing safe and supported care during birth, after clinic appointments, or hospital discharge. A doula provides emotional and mental support, navigates complex medical systems and institutions, and advocates for and with the birthing person if they face discriminatory and dismissive medical care. GALS recently began tracking abusive and coercive care by providers, and is taking action to address, and hopefully eliminate, these occurrences.

Community doula organizations are crucial to a community's perinatal wellbeing. When striving to reduce birth trauma and improve birth outcomes, non-judgmental, respectful, and compassionate doula support is crucial.



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Eelco Olde, Onno van der Hart, Rolf Kleber, Maarten van Son, Posttraumatic stress following childbirth: A review, Clinical Psychology Review, Volume 26, Issue 1, 2006, Pages 1-16,

Reed, R., Sharman, R. & Inglis, C. Women's descriptions of childbirth trauma relating to care provider actions and interactions. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth 17, 21 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-016-1197-0>

Verreault N, Da Costa D, Marchand A, Ireland K, Banack H, Dritsa M, Khalifé S. PTSD following childbirth: a prospective study of incidence and risk factors in Canadian women. J Psychosom Res. 2012 Oct;73(4):257-63. doi: 10.1016/j.jpsychores.2012.07.010. Epub 2012 Sep 1. PMID: 22980529.

Wagner, Marsden. "Fish can't see water: the need to humanize birth." International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics 75 (2001): S25-S37.

# Real THE ^ IMPACT

"Fue grandioso tener un apoyo de GALS es como si tuviera un familiar cuidándome durante y después del nacimiento de mi bebé."

"She helped me advocate for myself and face my options and the unknown with complete confidence. She was very encouraging and made me feel very empowered and supported."

## "GALS IS A BLESSING..."

"The entire program and services you guys offer has been helpful to me and my newborn baby. Without you guys I would not have been able to have a natural birth and such a positive experience. To me one of the most help services gals offered me was my postpartum doula. After giving birth with a GALS doula I found out a few days later that my doctor left placenta membrane in my uterus and needed to have emergency surgery to remove it. GALS sent me a babysitter and help me by waiting with me during surgery with my newborn baby and helping me make it home safe. The fact that I could focus on my surgery knowing my son was being well taken care of was the most helpful because he was only 10 days on at the time... everything that gals offered me was needed and helpful. GALS is a blessing and I look forward to referring them to everyone I know."

## "SHE WAS OUR FRIEND, ADVOCATE, AND ADVISOR..."

"My husband and I are so happy that we heard about GALS and asked for your support. We are relatively new to the country so we have very little knowledge of how the medical system works in the US. Plus our past medical experience here hasn't been the best. And hence we were scared of my delivery process. One of my colleague told me about GALS and I jumped on the opportunity to have an experienced doula in the room with us. And we are so glad that I did. [birthworker] was amazing from the moment we started to interact with her. She was our friend, advocate and advisor... We felt a lot calmer with her in the room and we knew we were in safe hands. We also loved how she interacted with the hospital staff. There was no moment of discomfort between the staff and [birthworker]. They worked in tandem for mine and my husband's well being. Even after the delivery, [she] stayed with me throughout. Our baby was taken to the NICU and my husband went with him. I was so glad that [she] stayed back with me in the room and helped me remain positive. She also helped me pump my colostrum so I could send it to my baby. Even two months after my delivery she continues to keep in touch with me and has been offering me advice whenever I needed it. I am so thankful to [birthworker] and to GALS. You were a part of one of the most important and scary moments of my husband and my life. And your support made that moment so beautiful and memorable. For that we will always always be grateful to all of you. I have already let all my friends know about GALS and have encouraged them to make you a part of their delivery as well."

# 91%

OF CLIENTS SAY THAT GALS MADE A  
'VERY' OR 'EXTREMELY' POSITIVE  
IMPACT ON THEIR BIRTH.

\*NOT ALL CLIENTS RESPOND TO  
EVALUATION REQUESTS

Read and watch more GALS stories at  
<https://www.givingaustinlaborsupport.org/gals-impact>

# Childcare Program

## with the mhec

In recognizing the critical need for accessible and inclusive childcare for Black families, our organization takes great pride in the strides made by our childcare program with the MHEC. Through Safer Childbirth Cities funding, our childcare program has experienced significant growth, not just in numbers but in its capacity to provide a nurturing environment that fills a critical role in ensuring the mental and physical health of Black parents in Austin. We are proud to contribute to bridging the gap in childcare accessibility for pregnant and postpartum parents, fostering an environment where children can thrive and parents can access the care they need, from medical appointments to therapy to care during birth. As we reflect on the positive impact of our program, we remain dedicated to further expanding our reach and ensuring that quality childcare remains an empowering resource for Black families in Austin and Central Texas

OVER

1,140

HOURS OF CHILDCARE

4.38

AVG. HOURS PER SHIFT

17

CHILDCARE SPECIALISTS

40

FAMILIES

+110.5%

MORE CHILDCARE FAMILIES THIS YEAR THAN  
LAST YEAR

# 15 Years of GALS Support

Picture from GALS PROM a 15th anniversary celebration

GALS has supported  
1041+ families in  
Central Texas

and has surpassed  
9,442+ total hours of  
birth support

99%\* Satisfaction  
for 15 years.

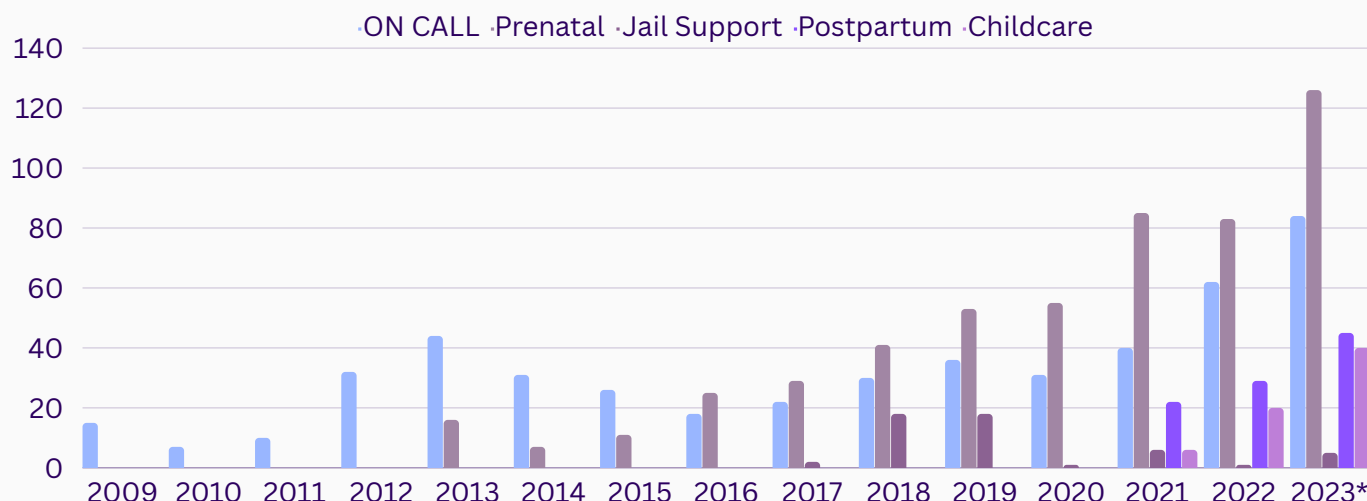
our families love their GALS birthworkers, and it shows. 98.9 is the average satisfaction score, and 97% say they would absolutely (and are extremely likely) to recommend gals to others.

Over 350  
birthworkers

making a difference in the lives of  
families in austin since 2008

Some have moved on, some stay for a season, and others have been involved in the long run. No matter how long you are with gals, you are always a part of our family.

READ MORE



As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of GALS, it's the perfect time to reflect on the incredible journey we've undertaken since our 'birth' in 2008. Over the past decade and a half, our organization has been steadfast in its commitment to supporting families during the transformative phases of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. Since our beginning as a network of friends and volunteers, we have evolved into a trusted resource, having served countless families with compassion, humanity, and unwavering dedication in order to improve birth outcomes and ensure no one births alone. This milestone not only signifies the longevity of our mission but also underscores the enduring impact we've had on the lives of individuals and communities. As we look forward to the years to come, we remain inspired by the families we support and look forward to what GALS will do in Central Texas.



# Next Year

One thing we know is true, families in Central Texas want access to a doula, and they are trusting GALS to support them in their birth journey.

GALS has seen our programs grow year over year, and we expect this trend to continue. While we aren't adding additional programs, we are deepening our programmatic impact, which will expand the number of people who have improved birth outcomes. We are continuing to invest in the community building of MHEC, and are excited at the possibilities that this partnership will create.

## 01 Prioritize Birthworker Learning

Launch GALS birthworker expanded training(s)

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## 02 Sustain Carework

Focus on EAP, pay, benefits, and time off policies

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## 03 Fee for Service Model

Continue to explore other payment models to better support our families and birthworkers

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## 04 MHEC Programs

Sustaining the childcare program and pushing into the next iteration of the work

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## 05 Deepen Services

Rather than expanding the number of programs, we will deepening our existing programs and look at who might need to be added to the team

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We'd like to thank all of our community members, friends, donors, and families for their generous support.

### *Sustainability Squad*

Alecia and Hayden Wall, Alysia Park and Bob Shaw, Angie Max, Brenda Marlin, Christina Martell, Hudson and Kaitlyn Doerge, Jessi Lee, Melissa Johnson

And thanks to Nicole McCharen, Christina Gorczynski and Brett Merfish, Andrew and Valerie Westmoreland for sustaining gifts.

### *Silent Auction Sponsors*

Austin Beerworks	CoCo-Coquette	Mama Mangos
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Austin Milk Bank	Guided Doula Care	Milk Grotto Lactation Services
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Barbara Northern - Reiki	Green Acres ATX	Origin Physical Therapy
Better Union	HappyPillar	Paige Jami LLC Body Art
Book People	Kendra Scott	Titos Handmade
Broad Studios Club House	Lady Bird Physical Therapy	Vodka
Cater to Mom	Layla and Stevie Photography	Toybrary
	Lost Draw Wines	William Chris Vinyards

### *Birthworker Sponsor*



### *Advocate Sponsors*



### *Supporting Sponsors*



### *Friend of GALs Sponsors*



### *Grant Partners*



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FOUNDATION



**EPISCOPAL HEALTH**  
FOUNDATION



**United Way for**  
**Greater Austin**




**Golden Rule**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION



# Thank you!

In this pivotal year, we express sincere thanks to our community members, dedicated funders, supportive friends, and loving families for their crucial role in GALS' success. Your unwavering support has propelled our mission forward, enabling us to provide compassionate care to families navigating the intricacies of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. Your contributions, whether financial or through your time and encouragement, have been instrumental in making this year one of growth and impact.

As we celebrate our 15th anniversary, we are profoundly grateful for the collective strength and unity that you have brought to GALS, shaping a future where our commitment to families continues to flourish. Thank you for being the driving force behind our success.

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