



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Sheriff's Office Partners with Birth in Color Group for Female Individuals in Custody in Detention Facility**

**ARLINGTON, Va., March 28, 2024** — The Arlington County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) is pleased to announce a new partnership with Richmond-based organization Birth in Color. This collaboration, the first in the state of Virginia, aims to provide pregnant female individuals in our custody with options for doula support during their birth experiences and to train female inmates in becoming community-based doulas themselves, enhancing their skills and opportunities for the future. Doulas are non-medical professionals who support pregnant people before, during and after birth.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Arlington County Sheriff's Office to bring doula support to female individuals in our custody during their childbirth journey. Our mission at Birth in Color is to ensure every person, regardless of their circumstances, receives compassionate and empowering support during pregnancy and birth. By training inmates to become doulas, we not only provide them with valuable skills but also contribute to creating a more supportive and holistic environment within the correctional system," stated Founding Executive Director Kenda Sutton-El.

Birth in Color will train female individuals in our custody to understand and address race and culture-related issues such as understanding cultural practices, beliefs and traditions related to pregnancy and childbirth. They can assist with advocacy where there may be cultural or racial disparities in healthcare, helping clients navigate the healthcare system, asking questions, and ensuring their preferences are heard and respected. Birth in Color doulas can also provide a safe space for clients to express their feelings, fears and hopes regarding pregnancy and parenting, considering the impact of cultural and racial factors so clients can make informed decisions, access resources, and feel confident in their childbirth journey while honoring their cultural identities. They play a vital role in promoting equity, inclusivity, and respectful care within the maternity care system.

"This partnership with Birth in Color aligns with our commitment to providing comprehensive care and support to all individuals under our supervision," said Sheriff Jose Quiroz. "We recognize the importance of ensuring that female individuals in our custody have access to resources that promote positive birth experiences and empower them during this significant life event. The doula support and

training provided by Birth in Color will not only benefit the individuals directly involved but will also contribute to the overall well-being of our detention facility.”

The collaboration between the ACSO and Birth in Color represents a proactive step towards addressing the needs of pregnant female individuals in our custody, promoting a culture of support in the correctional system and giving them valuable skills when they reenter the community.

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### **About Arlington County Sheriff’s Office**

The Arlington County Sheriff’s Office (ACSO) is a Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency located in Northern Virginia. The ACSO has approximately 280 employees, both deputy sheriffs and civilian staff, who serve a population of 237,300 county individuals in our custody. Arlington Deputy Sheriffs performs duties in corrections, inmate transportation, civil process service, and courtroom/courthouse security.

For more information, please visit [arlingtonva.us/sheriff](http://arlingtonva.us/sheriff) or connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **About Birth in Color**

Founded in 2018, the group’s mission is to bring cultural inclusivity to the forefront of Maternal Health Reproductive Justice narratives. Through community events, workshops, and steadfast policy efforts, they work to redefine what maternal health means for families of color.

For more information, please visit [birthincolor.org](http://birthincolor.org) or connect with them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).