



meac

midwifery education
accreditation council

Volunteer Handbook

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Purpose of Handbook

This handbook is designed to help you become an effective and engaged MEAC volunteer, supporting our commitment to women’s empowerment and midwifery education. Inside, you will find an overview of our history, philosophy, practices, and policies, along with the many benefits you’ll receive as a valued member of our volunteer team.

If you ever have questions, please don’t hesitate to ask—our volunteer team, staff, and board members are always happy to help. We are confident that you will find your work with MEAC to be both meaningful and rewarding, and we look forward to having you as part of our community!

Mission

MEAC’s mission is to promote excellent education in midwifery through accreditation. Its standards and criteria for the education of midwives incorporate the nationally recognized core competencies and guiding principles of the Midwives Alliance of North America and the requirements for national certification by North American Registry of Midwives.

MEAC’s accreditation criteria for midwifery education programs reflect the unique components and philosophy of the Midwives Model of Care[®].

Midwives Model of Care[®]

The Midwives Model of Care is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes.

The Midwives Model of Care includes:

- Monitoring the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle
- Providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care, continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support
- Minimizing technological interventions
- Identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention

The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma, and cesarean section.

History of Midwifery

The history of midwifery in the U.S. dates back to the colonial period when midwives were the primary providers of maternity care. Traditionally, midwives were women who gained knowledge through apprenticeship and experience, often serving their communities, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Over the decades, midwifery has fallen in and out of favor. In the 1960s and 70s a midwifery renaissance occurred as part of the natural childbirth movement influenced by feminist and holistic health perspectives. The 1980s and 90s saw a rise in Certified Professional Midwives; there was now a path for non-nurses to become midwives. In the 21st century, the field of midwifery has expanded and become more recognized. Midwifery has gained recognition as a safe, cost-effective alternative to traditional obstetric care. Many states now license or regulate midwives, though laws vary widely. There is increasing advocacy for midwifery-led care to reduce maternal mortality and improve birth outcomes, particularly for marginalized communities.

History of MEAC

The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) was established in 1991 to provide accreditation for direct-entry midwifery education programs in the United States. Its creation was part of a larger movement to standardize and professionalize midwifery education, particularly for midwives practicing outside the hospital setting.

MEAC's standards for accreditation were developed by expert midwifery educators from a variety of midwifery educational programs in the United States. MEAC was incorporated in July 1991 and earned its 501-c-3 in 1993. In January 2001, the United States Secretary of Education recognized MEAC as a national accrediting agency for direct-entry midwifery.

MEAC is a membership organization comprised of institutions and programs accredited by MEAC. The first school to attain accreditation was in and was soon followed by other educational institutions that prized the validation of recognition by the United States Department of Education (USDE). As of 2025, MEAC has 9 accredited institutions and programs, with several more schools working toward achieving full accreditation.

Philosophy and Vision on Midwifery and Midwifery Education

The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) is a recognized accrediting body for direct-entry midwifery education programs, approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Our accreditation process ensures high-quality midwifery training by requiring programs to engage in continuous growth and improvement. MEAC embraces its vital role in upholding accountability within the midwifery profession.

We recognize the challenge of maintaining rigorous, objective standards while also supporting a diverse range of educational approaches for students and the childbearing public. MEAC is committed to balancing these priorities by embedding them into our core mission, policies, and accreditation standards.

At the heart of MEAC's work is the Midwives Model of Care (Copyright © 1996-2008, Midwifery Task Force, Inc.), which guides our accreditation practices. We believe this model can positively impact healthcare by fostering collaboration among all maternity care professionals. MEAC applies these ideals to its work by ensuring that our interactions with educators and institutions are respectful, fair, individualized, responsive, and transparent.

MEAC's Commitment to Excellence and Inclusivity

- **High Standards for Education:** MEAC's standards provide a structured pathway for the continuous development of midwifery education programs, integrating the latest research and best practices across classroom learning, distance education, and clinical training.
- **Innovative and Inclusive Learning:** We encourage broad student and faculty participation in shaping creative and effective midwifery programs that meet the needs of diverse communities.
- **Competency-Based Education:** MEAC values competency over time-based learning, ensuring midwives meet internationally recognized standards of professional excellence.
- **Diversity in Midwifery Training:** We actively promote the training of midwives to serve culturally, socially, and economically diverse families.
- **Commitment to Equity and Representation:** MEAC strives for inclusivity in its board composition and the educational programs we oversee, welcoming individuals of all gender identities, sexual orientations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, marital statuses, creeds, ages, and abilities.

Accreditation as a Catalyst for Change

MEAC believes that accreditation has the power to drive positive transformation in maternity care and beyond. By supporting high-quality midwifery education, we elevate the role of skilled midwives as primary healthcare providers for childbearing families. Our commitment to the Midwives Model of Care, diversity, and innovation strengthens midwifery education and enhances the overall quality of maternal healthcare.

Volunteer Positions, Responsibilities, Qualifications, and Time Commitment

Continuing Education Reviewer

MEAC processes approximately 80-100 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) applications each year. These applications are submitted electronically following specific guidelines.

CEU Review Process:

Reviewers receive Dropbox access to the relevant application materials and a review form.

- Completed evaluations must be submitted to MEAC within 30 days.
- Reviewers typically assess 2-3 applications per month.
- Evaluation time varies: Some applications take about one hour, while larger conferences may require five or more hours.

Our CEU reviewers are experienced midwives who actively practice, stay updated on current best practices, and are committed to maintaining high-quality midwifery education.

We ask volunteers to review and become familiar with the MEAC CEU guidelines document. Additionally, volunteers must submit:

- A current CV
- A signed ethics agreement/confidentiality document

Once these documents are submitted and the guidelines are reviewed, MEAC will schedule a one-hour virtual training session.

Before beginning the review process, volunteers should also:

- Explore MEAC's website
- Review the online application submission forms

After completing training, MEAC will grant Dropbox access to the necessary folders and begin assigning CEU applications for review.

Accreditation Review Committee

Training: All ARC members receive training in applying MEAC Standards for Accreditation and the accreditation process. Training involves self-study and completion of coursework through Google Classroom with MEAC's Director of Accreditation. Initial training takes about eight hours (most of which is self-study). Refresher training takes two to three hours.

Self-Evaluation Report (SER): The ARC's role begins shortly after an applicant school submits a comprehensive SER and related documentation. The applicant is asked to comply with approximately 80 MEAC benchmarks in the SER. ARC members conduct a detailed review of the applicant's response for each benchmark. This review takes between ten and twenty hours to complete, depending on the size, complexity of the submission, and the ARC member's experience level.

Material & Information Request (MIR): After reviewing the SER, ARC members determine whether additional information is needed before a site visit can be conducted. The ARC members construct an MIR in collaboration with MEAC's Director of Accreditation. The MIR is sent to the applicant, who has six weeks to respond. ARC members then review the applicant's response to the MIR. This review generally takes two to eight hours, depending on the size and complexity of the submission.

Site Visit: The ARC conducts a three-day site visit to verify the information provided in the SER and MIR. In addition to the three days on-site, there are two travel days to and from the site. Travel and lodging expenses for site visits are scheduled and paid by MEAC and include three daily meals.

ARC Report: Following the site visit, the ARC drafts a report of its findings. This draft report is sent to the applicant for review. The applicant has eight weeks to respond to the draft ARC Report. After MEAC receives the applicant's response, ARC members review the response and write a final ARC Report. The final ARC Report is sent to the Director of Accreditation and then to the MEAC Board of Directors, which makes all final decisions regarding accreditation.

ARC Calls: Throughout the review process, from SER to MIR to site visits to the final ARC Report, ARC members, along with MEAC's Director of Accreditation, hold a series of conference calls to discuss their

findings and prepare recommendations for the MEAC Board of Directors. ARC members may spend up to five hours engaged in these conferences.

MEAC Board Meeting: The Board of Directors may request that ARC members attend, via teleconference, part of the Board meeting at which an accreditation decision is being made. ARC may be asked to provide background and answer questions.

Board of Directors

The MEAC Board of Directors consists of up to 13 members with diverse skills and backgrounds. Board members are elected to three-year terms by MEAC member institutions and programs.

Board Member Responsibilities

- Commit to MEAC's mission and purpose, as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.
- Attend regular Board meetings and actively participate in Board and Committee activities. Directors with two or more unexcused absences may be asked to resign by the Executive Committee.
- Support MEAC's financial health by assisting with fundraising efforts.
- Serve on at least one MEAC committee each year.
- Familiarize themselves with MEAC policies, accreditation processes, and relevant documents.
- Complete accreditation training and participate in accreditation activities, including serving as an Independent Board Reviewer (IBR) (as outlined in Section 6.a.ii of the P&P manual).
- Participate in final accreditation decisions to uphold MEAC's standards.

Volunteer Expectations

MEAC is a welcoming and supportive organization that values and respects its volunteers. We appreciate your time and commitment to our program and are dedicated to protecting your confidentiality.

What you can expect from MEAC:

- Respect for your commitment, time, and confidentiality.
- A supportive team environment where your contributions make a meaningful impact.
- Ongoing assistance from MEAC staff to help you succeed in your role.
- An inclusive and welcoming culture that values diversity and collaboration.
- Recognition and appreciation for your dedication and efforts.
- The freedom to decline any projects or tasks that make you uncomfortable.
- A small stipend for work on accreditation reviews (ARC).
- Five continuing education contact hours toward recertification if you are a midwife for continuing education reviews (CEU).

What MEAC expects from you:

- Honor your commitment to the program.
- Collaborate respectfully with MEAC staff and fellow volunteers.

- Be punctual and reliable in your volunteer role.
- Inform us promptly of any changes to your availability.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding all communications related to MEAC schools and volunteers.
- Foster a respectful and professional environment with staff and fellow volunteers.

The Orientation/Training Process

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

General

- Volunteers represent MEAC and must adhere to MEAC's Ethics Policy, which includes disclosing potential conflicts of interest and maintaining confidentiality. All volunteers are required to sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement.
- Volunteers must read and understand MEAC's core documents and align their work with MEAC's mission and philosophy.
- Board members must be committed to the peer review and accreditation process, which requires time, objectivity, accuracy, attention to detail, evaluative writing, teamwork, timeliness, and strong communication skills.
- Volunteers should be proficient in virtual communication and technology. MEAC primarily uses Google Hangouts or Zoom for meetings and Dropbox for document storage and sharing.
- MEAC operates a virtual office, where documents are stored in Dropbox, and day-to-day communication occurs via email, with attachments or shared Google Docs.
- Volunteers must not be under investigation for fraud or have surrendered a professional license or certification, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.
- Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves respectfully when representing MEAC and must adhere to all ethics and confidentiality policies.

Travel

MEAC is a registered non-profit organization with limited funding. If volunteers are required to travel for a site visit, conference, or in-person board or executive meeting, they are expected to seek cost-effective travel options, including:

- Affordable airfare, accommodations, meals, and ground transportation.

Additionally, MEAC welcomes contributions from volunteers who are able and willing to cover or donate travel-related expenses. Examples include:

- Using frequent flyer miles for flights.
- Covering gas expenses when driving.
- Paying for airport parking.
- Covering the cost of a meal.

Your support helps MEAC allocate resources efficiently while continuing its mission.

Airfare and Ground Transportation

MEAC offers two options for travel arrangements and payments:

- The volunteer has the option to arrange and pay for airfare and be reimbursed by MEAC via check payment, OR
- Alternatively, MEAC will arrange and pay directly for airfare.

MEAC will assist with ground transportation arrangements as needed.

Accommodations

MEAC arranges accommodations for volunteers at hotels or venues such as Airbnb. Volunteers may share their hotel room with family, friends, or colleagues. However, when staying in a house, apartment, or retreat center reserved by MEAC, rooms cannot be shared with individuals who are not affiliated with MEAC.

MEAC covers certain travel expenses for volunteers conducting official MEAC business. All travel arrangements must be coordinated with MEAC administration and staff.

MEAC will reimburse or pay for:

- Airfare, accommodations, ground transportation, and parking.
- Mileage reimbursement (for personal vehicle use) when traveling to site visits, Executive Committee meetings, or in-person Board of Directors meetings. Reimbursement follows the current IRS mileage rate (14 cents per mile in 2025).
- Conference travel expenses, if attending as an official MEAC representative, in accordance with the approved annual budget.
- Meal and incidental per diem (e.g., tips), following the IRS per diem rate (\$59-\$68 per day in 2025).

During site visits, conferences, and board or executive meetings, a MEAC staff member (if present) will use a MEAC credit card for group expenses such as rides, meals, and car rentals.

- If a staff member is not present, volunteers must submit receipts for approved expenses to receive reimbursement.

All reimbursements are subject to MEAC's budgetary guidelines and prior approval.

Reimbursement Procedure

If volunteers choose to arrange their own airfare and accommodations, they must obtain approval from MEAC staff before booking.

For smaller expenses such as ground transportation, meals, and incidentals, volunteers may use their discretion.

To receive reimbursement for any expenses, volunteers must submit receipts to the MEAC administrator. Receipts should be sent to info@meacschools.org.