ANNUAL IMPACT STATEMENT 2022

Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired

AER Accreditation Council

A photograph showing a lush tropical scene of trees, plants, a flowing brook, and flowering purple and white orchids. 

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*“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit.”*  *~~ Will Durant,* The Story of Philosophy, 1924

January 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF AER ACCREDITATION COUNCIL – Lee Sonnenberg

**Since its inception,** AER and the Accreditation Council have had one primary purpose and that is to elevate the conditions that drive to excellence.

Whether it is supporting professionals who deliver services or supporting professionals who provide instruction to emerging professionals, AERAC recognizes the role standards play in achieving short- and long-term goals that are the foundation of the “habit of excellence” referenced on our title page.

In 2017, the AER Board of Directors voted to adopt an accreditation program previously conducted by the National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services. Building on its experience with the AER University Review Program, AER launched the AER Accreditation Council. At the AER Conference in July 2018, the membership approved an amendment to the AER Bylaws which gave the AER Accreditation Council legal and functioning authority.

Today, AERAC makes the final determination regarding all accreditation statuses but delegates continuous review of standards and operations to two Commissions, one for Higher Education Accreditation (HEAC) and the other for Organizations and Schools Accreditation (OSAC). Dedicated professionals and members of the public provide invaluable insight and leadership on a volunteer basis in furtherance of the accreditation program.

**Now completing our fifth year,** we proudly share the following accomplishments achieved in 2022.

* As promised, AERAC submitted its application to Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in March 2022. Based on informal feedback, the application was revised in April. The CHEA Recognition Committee interviewed AERAC’s delegation in July. The full CHEA Board returned the application for finalization by AERAC with a due date of August 1, 2023.
* The Accreditation Program webpage was updated with new revisions of:
  + HEAC and OSAC Handbooks and Annual Report Forms (in response to comments from programs going through their accreditation processes).
  + OSAC standards
  + AERAC Policy and Procedures Manual
  + Reviewer Profile form
  + Listings of accredited University personnel preparation programs and addition of public-facing decisions and annual reports, per CHEA requirements.
* A Presentation was delivered at the AER International Conference, July 2022, entitled *Preparing for Accreditation*.

LOOKING AHEAD to 2023:

* 10 universities are in the process or scheduling their accreditation/re-accreditations
* 18 organizations are in the process or scheduling their accreditation/re-accreditations

Please read below the names of organizations and individuals who dedicated themselves to excellence in the provision of services to people who are blind or visually impaired.

**Lee Sonnenberg**

**CHAIR, AER Accreditation Council** 

**ACCREDITATION ACTIONS IN 2022**

**Awarded Full Accreditation: 2 OSAC**

Florida Outreach Center for the Blind

Savannah Assoc for the Blind—added Vocational Counseling to existing full accreditation

**Removed Provisional Accreditation and Awarded Full Accreditation: 2 OSAC**

Lighthouse of Broward

Lighthouse Vision Loss Education Center

**Awarded Provisional Accreditation: 1 OSAC**

The Sight Center of NW Ohio

**Denial of Accreditation upheld after appeal: 0**

**WE WISH TO CONVEY OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO:**

AERAC Members:  Chair Lee Sonnenberg, John McAllister, Paul Olson, Natalina Martiniello, Kathy Beveridge, Tamara Greenwood, and these members who resigned mid-year: Anthony Stevens, Don Overton.

HEAC Members:  Chair John McAllister, Sean Tikkun, Dorinda Rife, Brooke Kruemmling, Dawn Anderson, Dan Norris, Richard Oliver

OSAC Members:  Chair Paul Olson, Sylvia Perez, Ronee David, Kathy Mullen, and this member who resigned mid-year: Jeanne Prickett

Applications were received and reviewed by AERAC and OSAC. New members will fill vacancies starting in January 2023.

**HONORING REVIEWERS IN 2022**

Cori Andrews Peggy Beckley Susan Dalton

Brooke Kruemmling Jerry Miller Kathy Mullen

Sylvia Perez Sam Picciano

We could not do it without you!

Do you want to join your peers on a review team?

🖰   <https://aerbvi.org/accreditation/become-a-reviewer/>

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             📧  [accreditation@aerbvi.org](mailto:accreditation@aerbvi.org)