

Resources for Follow-Up Eye
Treatment for North Carolinians with
Financial Need

This resource guide has been developed in order to provide individuals, health departments, departments of social services and school system staff with a better understanding of the resources available for securing eye care for those in financial need throughout our state.

Prevent Blindness North Carolina hope to promote state-funded resources and other free or low-cost programs so that those in need are better served.



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www.preventblindness.org/nc

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Medicaid (Health Check)

- Income: Up to 185% of Poverty Level
 - Covers: Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services
 - Ages: All
 - Eligibility: NC resident, US citizen or qualified immigrant
 - Information: Care Line 800.662.7030
EDS 800.688.6696
www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma
Click: Consumer Links or Programs
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- Applications can be requested by phone but must be filed with the department of social services in the county of residence.
 - Medicaid is funded by the federal government and the state of North Carolina. It provides free health insurance to children whose families cannot pay for private insurance.

Medicare

- Income Level: All
 - Ages: 65 and Older
 - Information: Care Line 800.633.4227
www.medicare.gov
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- Medicare does not cover routine eye exams.
 - Some services are available for people with diabetes or a family history of glaucoma.
 - Glaucoma screenings are available once every 12 months.
 - Cataract surgery is covered at 80% of the Medicare-approved amount.
 - Patients who have had cataract surgery with intraocular lens may receive assistance in paying for cataract glasses, contact lenses or intraocular lenses.

Children's Health Insurance Plan (Health Choice)

- Income: Up to 200% of poverty level and not eligible for Medicaid
 - Covers: Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services with prior approval
 - Ages: 6 to 19 years
 - Information: 800.367.2229
www.nchealthystart.org
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- North Carolina Health Choice is a program for children funded by the federal government and the state of North Carolina. It provides low-cost insurance to children whose families cannot pay for private insurance and who do not qualify for Medicaid.
 - Applications available online and in all county health departments and departments of social services. Must provide proof of income and proof of child's age. Applications are available in English and Spanish.
 - The same application is used for Medicaid (Health Check) and NC Health Choice programs. Determination of eligibility will be made by the department of social services in the county of residence.
 - This program is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield.
 - Children will be enrolled on a first come-first served basis.

Prevent Blindness North Carolina Vision Service Plan (VSP)

- Income: Up to 200% of poverty level and not enrolled in Medicaid or Health Choice or other vision insurance
- Covers: Exams and glasses, if prescribed
- Ages: Children up to age 18 and enrolled in school or daycare
- Eligibility: Child must be a US citizen or parent must have a social security number
- Information: 800.543.7839
www.preventblindness.org/nc
- Financial eligibility is self-declared by parent.
- Children are eligible for one voucher within a 12-month period.
- Services must be secured at a VSP participating provider office. A list of providers will be provided with each approved voucher.
- No cost to family unless a cosmetic option or other extra is purchased.
- VSP vouchers have a pre-printed expiration date on the form.
- Applications are available in English and Spanish.
- For a list of providers within a 50-mile radius of child's residence, log on to www.vsp.com/member/htmls/find_dr_signon.jsp and enter zip code.

North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE)
North Carolina Foundation for Public School Children

- Income: No requirements
- Covers: Eyeglasses and other items deemed necessary
- Ages: Must be a student enrolled in public school
- Eligibility: US citizenship is not required
- Information: 800.662.7924 ext 205
www.ncae.org
Click on Foundation for Public School Children
under Family/School/Community heading
- School staff or school nurse must request assistance on behalf of the child. Parents are not to seek applications. Cost of eye exam must be paid by parent or other organization.
- Applications available on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays from September through mid-June.
- The North Carolina Foundation for Public School Children was started by NCAE in December 1995 to assist needy students during the school year with basic items needed in order to continue with their education and be successful in school.

North Carolina Lions Foundation , Inc.

- Income: Varies by local club
- Covers: Exams and glasses and other items deemed medically necessary
- Ages: All
- Eligibility: Must be a NC resident for two years
- Information: 800.662.7401, 828.478.2135 or www.nclf.org
- North Carolina Lions Clubs have been active and generous with both their time and gifts throughout North Carolina.
- Contact your local Lions Club regarding funding for an eye exam or eyeglasses.

Vision USA

- Income: Based on income and size of household
- Covers: Exams
- Ages: All
- Information: 800.766.4466 Fax: 314.991.4101
www.aoa.org

- General eligibility requirements include:
 - have a job or live in a household where there is at least one working member,
 - have no vision insurance,
 - have an income below and established level based on the size of the household, and
 - have not had an eye exam within two years.

- These requirements may vary from state to state.

- Volunteers in Service in Our Nation (VISION USA) is a program developed by doctors of optometry who are members of the American Optometric Association.

- If an individual or family is eligible, they will be matched with a volunteer doctor who will provide a comprehensive eye exam at no charge.

- The doctors are donating their services and may be limited in some areas.

- Eyewear may also be provided at no cost or for a small fee or donation in some states.

- Contact Vision USA, 243 North Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63141.

Eye Care America

- Income: Call 800.222.3937 to qualify
- Covers: Exams and up to one year of follow-up care for condition diagnosed at initial exam
- Ages: 65 and older
- Information: www.eyecareamerica.org
- The Eye Care America programs listed below are sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology:
 - Senior Eye Care Program: Must be a US citizen or legal resident, have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years and do not have eye care insurance through an HMO or the VA.
 - Diabetes Eye Care Program: Must be a US citizen or legal resident, have diabetes, have not seen an ophthalmologist in three or more years and do not have eye care insurance through an HMO or the VA.
 - Glaucoma Eye Care Program: Must be a US citizen or legal resident, have not had an eye exam in 12 months or more, are at increased risk for glaucoma (family history, race, age) and do not have eye care insurance through an HMO or the VA.

Individuals eligible for a referral through the program receive a comprehensive medical eye exam and up to one year of care — at no out-of-pocket cost — for any disease diagnosed during the initial exam. Volunteer ophthalmologists will accept Medicare and/or other insurance reimbursement as payment in full.

Eyeglasses, prescription drugs, hospital services, fees of other medical professionals are not included.

Organization	Contact Number	Income Level
Medicaid	800.662.7030	Up to 185% of Poverty Level
Health Choice	800.367.2229	Up to 200% of Poverty Level
Division of Services for the Blind	866.222.1546	Up to 125% of Poverty Level
Prevent Blindness North Carolina/VSP	800.543.7839	Up to 200% of Poverty Level
NCAE Foundation	800.662.7924 Ext 205	All
North Carolina Lions Club	800.662.7401	Case By Case
Vision USA American Optometric Association	800.766.4466	Based on Income and Size of Household
LensCrafters' Hometown Day	www.lenscrafters.com	Case By Case

Items Covered	Who is Eligible	Ages Covered
Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services with prior approval	US citizens and qualified immigrants	All
Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services with prior approval	US citizens and qualified immigrants	6 to 19
Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services with prior approval	US citizens or permanent residents	All
Exams and glasses	Children who are US citizens or parent/guardian with a SS#	Up to 18 and still enrolled in school
Glasses and other necessary items - no eye exams	US citizenship is not an issue	School-age children enrolled in public school
Exams, glasses and other medically necessary services	Must be NC resident for 2 years	All
Exam at no charge; may also provide glasses at no cost or small fee/donation	US citizenship is not an issue	All
Exams and glasses	US citizenship is not an issue	All

New Eyes for the Needy

- Income: At or below US poverty guidelines
- Covers: Basic glasses with single or bifocal lenses
- Ages: All
- Information: www.neweyesfortheneedy.org
- Must have had a recent exam and have no resources to pay for glasses. All other programs and organizations must be explored first.
- Applications are available through participating social service agencies, school nurses, or by downloading from the website.
- The website provides a link for assistance in locating sources of free or low-cost eye exams.
- New Eyes for the Needy purchases new prescription eyeglasses for low-income individuals in the US through a voucher program. New Eyes for the Needy also accepts donations of plastic frames and sunglasses in good condition and metal frame eyeglasses in any condition. Reusable eyeglasses are sorted by volunteers and sent to medical missions and international charitable organizations for distribution to needy individuals overseas.

Eye Clinics

- The following eye clinics may provide free or low-cost eye exams for people of all ages, depending on ability to pay. Income verification is required. Routine eye exams, glasses, or contacts are not covered.
- UNC Department of Ophthalmology, Chapel Hill, NC
For general information, call 919.966.5296
For questions regarding financial assistance, call 919.966.3424
To schedule an appointment, call 919.966.5509
- Duke Eye Clinic, Durham, NC
For more information, call 800.422.1575 or 919.684.6611
www.dukeeye.org

LensCrafters' Hometown Day

- Income: Case by Case, usually for those without other means
- Covers: Exams and glasses
- Ages: All
- Information: Call your local Luxottica affiliate. Luxottica retail stores include LensCrafters, Pearle Vision, Sears Optical, Target Optical and Sunglass Hut. Or visit www.givethegiftofsight.org

Hometown Day

On the first Tuesday in December, Luxottica retail stores and other participating optometrists and ophthalmologists provide free eye exams and new glasses to those in need in their local communities. All recipients are pre-screened by local charities (Lions, for financial and visual need and taken into the local stores to receive a complete eye exam and new glasses.

In-store Programs

Luxottica-affiliated optometrists and associates help recipients in-store who have been pre-selected by local charities. This program includes the Gift of Sight voucher program (free eyewear for pre-selected recipients referred by charitable agencies for both optical and financial need) and the Special Pricing voucher program (discounted eyewear vouchers available for charitable agencies to purchase and distribute).

Discounted eye exams with local doctors may be pursued with the individual doctor as each doctor runs his/her own business.

Medication Assistance

- Benefits Check Up is a comprehensive web-based service to screen for benefits/programs for seniors with limited income and resources. This program strives to find public/private programs to pay for prescription drugs, health care, rent, utilities and other needs. Visit the website at www.benefitscheckup.org for more information.
- NeedyMeds.com provides a no-cost service to assist individuals find patient assistance programs by the name of the drug, program or company. Additional databases include information on disease-based assistance, discount drug cards, government program and programs for children. Visit www.NeedyMeds.com for more information.
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
PhRMA's PPA Program assists qualifying patients who lack prescription coverage get the medicines they need through the appropriate public or private program. To access the program by phone, call 888.477.2669 or visit the website www.pparx.org for more information.
- RxAssist offers a comprehensive database of assistance programs and tools, news for healthcare professionals and patients. The website provides resources on the use and understanding of the programs and materials tailored to providers and consumers regarding medication access. Call 401.729.3284 or visit www.rxassist.org for more information.
- RxHope is a web portal for physicians to submit applications for patient assistance over the internet. Applications are submitted in cooperation with a doctor. For more information, visit www.rxhope.com or call 877.979.4673.
- The Medicine Program
This program assists individuals as they enroll in one or more of the patient assistance programs providing prescription medicine free of charge to those in need. Patient must meet the sponsor's criteria and the program is conducted in cooperation with the patient's doctor. For additional information, visit the website at www.themedicineprogram.com or call 866.694.3893.

- The following pharmaceutical manufacturers require assistance applications be submitted through a physician. Your physician should contact the following programs for additional information:

Alcon US Patient Assistance:

800.222.8102 or www.alcon.com

Allergan Patient Assistance:

800.553.6783 or www.allergan.com

Merck Prescription Discount Program:

800.506.3725 or www.merckuninsured.com

Novartis Patient Assistance:

800.277.2254 or www.pap.novartis.com

Pfizer Helpful Answers:

866.706.2400 or www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com

Schering-Plough Patient Cares Assistance Program:

800.656.9485 or www.schering-plough.com

Senior Prescription Drug Discounts

- **Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage**
Medicare prescription drug coverage provides protection for individuals who have very high drug costs. This insurance covers both brand-name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies in your area.

Medicare recipients are eligible for this coverage regardless of income and resources, health status, or current prescription expenses. Visit www.medicare.gov for more information about Medicare prescription drug plans. Costs will vary depending on which drug plan you choose.

If you have limited income and resources, you may qualify for extra help and may not have to pay a premium or deductible. For more information, visit socialsecurity.gov or by call 800.772.1213.

- **Together Rx Access™ Card**
The Together Rx Access™ Card was created to help qualified individuals and families without prescription drug coverage. This program helps individuals who are not eligible for Medicare save on brand-name, generic, or other prescription products. For more information regarding eligibility, visit www.togetherrxaccess.com or call 800.444.4106.

Additional Resources for Children and Adults

- NC Assistive Technology Project
919.850.2787 or www.ncatp.org
- North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
888.388.2460
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
919.855.3500
- NC Division of Services for the Blind
866.222.1546
- NC Council on Developmental Disabilities
919.420-7901 or www.nc-ddc.org
- Mission Cataract USA
Providing free cataract surgery to individuals of all ages with no other means to pay. Call 800.343.7265 or visit the website www.missioncataractusa.org for more information.
- Lighthouse International
A vision resource organization. Call 800.829.0500 or visit the website www.lighthouse.org for more information.
- National Eye Institute
For more information regarding eye diseases and conditions, visit the website www.nei.nih.gov or call 301.496.5248.
- Medem
An e-health network created by leading medical societies, visit the website www.medem.com for more information.

Who We Are And What We Do

Prevent Blindness North Carolina is a nonprofit voluntary health agency dedicated to preventing blindness, preserving and restoring sight, and promoting good vision for all. Prevent Blindness conducts direct service screening programs, public and professional awareness campaigns and research. Our direct service programs include:

Kenneth Royall Children's Vision Screening Improvement Program

During the 2007-08 school year, Prevent Blindness trained and certified **4,770** vision screeners and over **500,000** school children were screened. Of those children screened, approximately **40,000** were referred to eye care professionals for possible vision problems.

Preschool Photorefractive Vision Screening Program

During the 2007-08 year, Prevent Blindness offered photorefractive screenings to preschoolers in **30** counties and screened **29,263** preschoolers. Approximately **2,300** of the preschoolers screened were referred to eye care professionals for possible vision problems.

Sight For Students Voucher Program (VSP)

This program targets "gap" children up to the age of 18 and still enrolled in school. Services include a free eye exam and eye glasses, if prescribed by one of the VSP participating doctors. During the 2007-08 school year, Prevent Blindness distributed approximately **2,380** vouchers to North Carolina children. The average value of each voucher is **\$216** making the program value to North Carolina's children total **\$510,909**.

Adult Vision Screening Program

Prevent Blindness conducts adult vision screenings at health fairs, senior centers, health clinics, corporations, malls and the NC State Fair. Prevent Blindness screened more than **5,071** adults this past fiscal year. Of those screened, almost **2,000** were referred to eye care professionals for possible vision problems or eye disease.