

Financial Aid for Eye Care

The National Eye Institute does not help individuals pay for eye care. However, if you are in need of financial aid to assess or treat an eye problem, the following programs may be able to help you.

Eye Exams and Surgery

- **EyeCare America** is a public service program that provides comprehensive eye exams and eye care at no cost to eligible candidates age 65 or older and people at increased risk for glaucoma who qualify for the program for up to one year. Visit the EyeCare America's website to see if you qualify for the program.

Telephone: 1-877-887-6327

Website: <http://www.aao.org/eyecare-america/online-referral-center>

- **VISION USA** is a program that provides free eye care to eligible low-income and uninsured people. To apply you must work with a charitable organization, social worker, case worker, or community health agency to submit an application.

Telephone: 1-800-766-4466

Website: <http://www.aoafoundation.org/vision-usa/>

- **Lions Clubs International** is a volunteer service organization with local clubs. A local Lions club in or near your community may sponsor a program that may help you buy eyeglasses or get eye care.

To find a Lions club near you, visit the Club Locator

<https://directory.lionsclubs.org/?language=EN>

- **Mission Cataract USA** is a program that provides free cataract surgery to people of all ages who have no other means to pay. Visit the Mission Cataract USA's website to apply and to find a participating eye care professional in your state.

Telephone: 559-797-1629

Website: <http://missioncataractusa.org/>

- **InfantSEE®** is a public health service program that provides eye and vision care for infants. Member optometrists provide a comprehensive eye assessment for infants between 6 and 12 months of age at no-cost to the families.

Telephone: 1-888-396-3937 or 314-983-4160

Website: <http://www.infantsee.org>

Eyeglasses

- **Sight for Students** is a program by Vision Service Plan that provides free eye exams and eyeglasses to low income and uninsured children 18 years and younger that qualify for the program.

Telephone: 1-888-290-4964

Website: <http://www.sightforstudents.org>

- **New Eyes** provides vouchers to people who need to buy new prescription eyeglasses. Voucher applications are only available on the New Eyes website. Applications must be completed and submitted by a social service agency. Individuals will not have access to the portal.

Telephone: 973-376-4903

Website: <http://www.new-eyes.org/>

Prescription Drugs

- **NeedyMeds** offers a database of free or at low cost medications for people who are uninsured or low income.

Telephone: 1-800-503-6897

Website: <http://www.needymeds.org>

- **Partnership for Prescription Assistance** is a website that helps people find assistance via 475 public and private patient assistance programs. The program is funded by pharmaceutical companies.

Website: <https://www.pparx.org>

- **Patient Access Network Foundation** helps with copayments for eligible uninsured and insured patients who need treatment for retinal vein occlusion, uveitis, macular diseases, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic macular edema.

Telephone: 1-866-316-7263

Website: <http://www.panfoundation.org>

- **RX Assist** provides information, resources, news and a directory of patient assistance programs that offer affordable or free medications.

Website: <http://rxassist.org>

Government Programs

○ Medicare Benefit for Eye Exams

For people with **diabetes**—People with Medicare who have diabetes can get a dilated eye exam for diabetic retinopathy. Your doctor will decide how often you need this exam.

For people at risk for **glaucoma**—Glaucoma is a leading cause of vision loss. People at high risk for glaucoma include those with diabetes, family history of glaucoma, are African Americans age 50 or older or, are Hispanic Americans and 65 or older. Medicare will pay for an eye exam to check for glaucoma once every 12 months.

Patients must pay 20 percent of the Medicare-approved amount after the yearly Part B deductible.

Telephone: 1-800-633-4227

Website: <http://www.medicare.gov>

○ Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Offers free or low-cost health coverage for eligible children, teens up to 19 year’s old, and other family members who qualify for the program. These programs may be called by different names in your state. To apply, visit your state’s Medicaid’s website.

Telephone: 1-877-543-7669

Website: <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov>

● Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010 to put in place comprehensive health insurance reforms. To make health care more affordable, accessible, and of a higher quality for everyone including people who were previously uninsured and people who had insurance but it didn't provide them acceptable coverage and security. People who are eligible can apply for health coverage during open enrollment.

Telephone: 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325)

Website: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

The National Eye Institute (NEI) is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and is the federal government's lead agency for vision research that leads to sight-saving treatments and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment and blindness.



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