



Vision and Eye Health in South Carolina

- There are **more than 138,000**¹ South Carolinians with blindness or severe vision loss, a number that will *double*² by 2030 without effective intervention.
- People with severe vision impairment in SC are more likely to have diabetes (9%), arthritis (18%), and mobility issues (26%)³.
- The economic burden of vision loss and eye disorders in South Carolina **exceeds \$2 billion**. The cost of this burden falls primarily (52%) on patients and their families in all age demographics under 65 years.⁴
- Disparities in vision health are underscored by the causes of blindness, which vary significantly by ethnicity. In the U.S., African Americans are more likely to go blind due to cataracts, Hispanics are more likely to go blind due to Glaucoma, and Caucasians are more likely to go blind due to Age-Related Macular Degeneration.⁵
- Disparities in vision health are further emphasized by the correlation between communities with higher percentages of their population reporting blindness or vision loss and communities with poor general health outcomes.⁶
- Vision loss is **closely associated with mental and emotional health** and well-being.⁷

Programs, Services, and Solutions Offered by LVS

- Lions Vision Services (LVS) is an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization founded by the State Association of Lions Clubs in 1969.
- LVS offers services in all 46 counties in SC to individuals living at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines who have been a SC resident for at least one year.
- Current services offered by LVS include eye surgeries, low vision equipment, eyeglasses (only for residents of Calhoun, Edgefield, and Marlboro Counties), vision screenings, and hearing aids.
- LVS can leverage every \$1 donated into an additional \$4 in services provided thanks to our partnerships.
- LVS operates an annual fishing retreat weekend for blind and visually impaired persons on the shores of Lake Marion. Contact us to stay informed on plans for the next event.
- Individuals wishing to apply for services with LVS can begin their application on the LVS website (www.lionsvisionservices.org) or by calling the LVS office at (803) 796-1304.
- Organizations, physicians, individuals, and other entities serving the blind or visually impaired in SC may partner with LVS through the Palmetto Vision Alliance by visiting the LVS website.
- LVS maintains a Platinum Seal of Transparency on GuideStar, a designation achieved by only the top 0.5% of organizations registered with GuideStar.

Calls to Action

- Educate yourself on the importance of eye health. Subscribe to the monthly LVS newsletter and follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube).
- Refer those in need of vision or eye health services to LVS for assistance.
- Make a tax-deductible donation to support this work by giving online at www.lionsvisionservices.org or by texting “sightfirst” to 44321.

¹ Source: CDC reporting from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

² Source: Experts at the American Foundation for the Blind.

³ Source: CDC 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

⁴ Source: NORC Study on the Cost of Vision Problems, 2013 study.

⁵ Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016 study.

⁶ Comparison between CDC county data in SC and the 2021 County Health Rankings from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

⁷ Source: Multiple studies, seminars, and publications (i.e., Dr. Robin Casten [Focus on Eye Health Summit]; Sarah Polack [Community Eye Health Journal]; John Crews, et. al. [Ophthalmic Epidemiol]; Girdler, et. al. [OTJR]; etc.).