

## Press Kit Fact Sheet

*Updated March 2023*

### **About Lions Vision Services**

Lions Vision Services (LVS) was created as a statewide 501(c)3 nonprofit organization by the Lions Clubs of South Carolina in 1969 and exists today to empower the under-served blind and visually impaired in South Carolina to live safe, meaningful, and fulfilling lives. LVS offers a range of programs and services to low-income South Carolina residents who apply for need-based financial assistance with obtaining eye exams, eyeglasses, affordable eye surgeries, and vision technology. Free vision screenings are also provided to promote early detection and correction of vision impairments. Each spring the organization hosts a Blind Fishing event.

In addition to programs providing direct services to the blind and visually impaired, LVS facilitates and stewards the Palmetto Vision Alliance (PVA). Created on World Sight Day 2020 the PVA maximizes resources for blind and visually impaired persons in South Carolina through collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among key service stakeholders. More than 20 entities representing nonprofits, professional associations, and healthcare providers from across the state share a membership in this coalition and meet on a quarterly basis.

Headquartered in Columbia, SC in Lexington County, LVS offers services to South Carolina residents in all 46 counties throughout the state. Through living out the core values of empathy, community, growth, accountability, and curiosity, LVS seeks to advance its social, moral, intellectual, relational, and financial capital by being a trusted community ally and neighbor.

To learn more about LVS's services, visit [www.lionsvisionservices.org](http://www.lionsvisionservices.org) or follow us on social media through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, or YouTube.

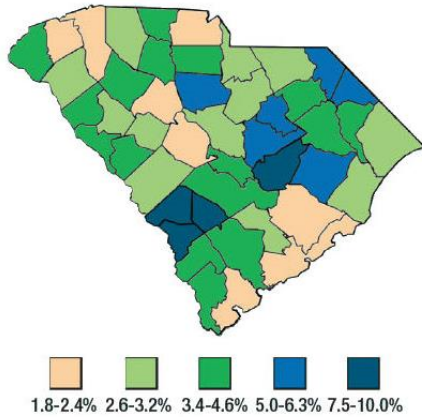
### **Our Vision**

We envision a vibrant community in which preventable blindness is eliminated, the blind and visually impaired have the resources necessary to live fulfilling lives, and public perception recognizes the potential and dignity of every blind and visually impaired person. Achieving this vision requires an innovative and enduring spirit to meet the challenges we face.

Vision health is seldom defined as an “essential service,” yet our sight is absolutely essential to our quality of life, safety, economic security, and general health and well-being. Vision and eye health sits at a pivotal intersection of social determinants of health and serves as an insightful bellwether of other health conditions within a population. Addressing vision health first empowers individuals to more effectively take control of their overall health and wellbeing.

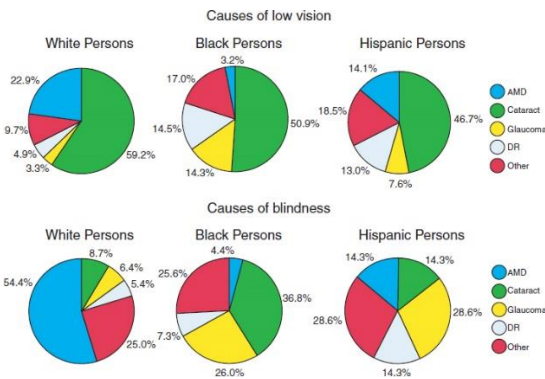
Without immediate and ongoing action to address our community's vision health needs, the coming decade will create an unprecedented strain on a fragile public health system through the developing spike in vision loss, which will impact the most vulnerable among us most severely.

## Seeing the Big Picture



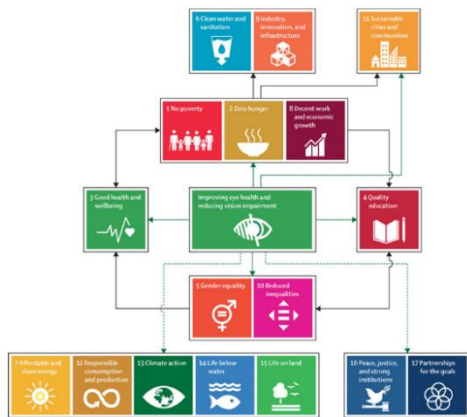
### Vision Health in South Carolina

There are **more than 138,000**<sup>1</sup> South Carolinians with blindness or severe vision loss, a number that will *double*<sup>2</sup> by 2030 without effective intervention. People with severe vision impairment in South Carolina are more likely to have diabetes (9%), arthritis (18%), and mobility issues (26%)<sup>3</sup>. 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.<sup>4</sup>



### Equity and Vision Health

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.<sup>5</sup> Our work at LVS levels the playing field by achieving equitable outcomes in eye care for all demographics and communities.



### Vision and Sustainable Development

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/75/L. 108 commits the international community to eye care for 1.1 billion people who will be living with preventable sight loss by 2030.<sup>6</sup> This resolution connects vision health to 10 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals that are vital to a healthy community and connect eye care to social determinants of health that impact communities throughout South Carolina.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: CDC reporting from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.  
<sup>2</sup> Source: Experts at the American Foundation for the Blind.  
<sup>3</sup> Source: CDC 2015 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.  
<sup>4</sup> Source: NORC Study on the Cost of Vision Problems, 2013 study.  
<sup>5</sup> Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016 study.  
<sup>6</sup> Source: UNGA Resolution A/75/L. 108: [www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.108](http://www.undocs.org/en/A/75/L.108).  
<sup>7</sup> Source: The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Eye Health and the SDGs.



## What Others Are Saying

*The Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina Immediate Needs grant funding supports organizations devoted to meeting the fundamental needs of individuals, families, and communities. These organizations are doing important work to implement thoughtful programs, provide hope, and create change. We are proud to partner with Lions Vision Services.*



Meredith Mathews  
Senior Director of Grantmaking and Strategy  
Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina

*The vision services that LVS provides give access to sight saving care to those left out by our medical system. I am proud to partner with LVS and do what I can to assist them in this process.*



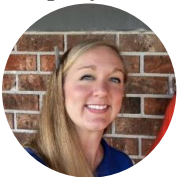
Carl Sloan, MD  
Ophthalmologist  
Coastal Eye Group

*Lions Vision Services is providing an essential need in communities across our nine-county footprint. We are proud to support the organization's work expanding access to affordable vision care throughout our region in this time of need.*



Darrin Goss, Sr.  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina

*As a partner of LVS, Servants for Sight is proud to support their work. Our organization would not be able to help 65% of our surgical cases if we were not partnered with this distinguished nonprofit. I am grateful for the organization's work and partnership.*



Amy Evette  
Executive Director  
Servants for Sight

*As someone who has needed corrective lenses from early childhood, I very much appreciate the critical importance of healthy vision. This is a necessity of a quality life regardless of who you are or where you come from.*



Peyton Bryant  
Partner, Director of Business Development  
Trinity Partners  
Former LVS Board Treasurer



## What Others Are Saying

*Ariel loves having her gadgets and stimulating her mind. I feel having the OrCam MyEye device can expose her to normal average natural material surrounded by us out in public giving her many new experiences to explore and gain more knowledge.*

Jessica Murphy (Ariel's Mother) | Clemson, SC  
Vision Technology Client



*I had cataracts in my right eye and had to have surgery or go blind. I didn't know what to do. LVS helped me in a difficult time, and I am very grateful for your support and taking the time to help me. The world needs more people like you. I will never forget your support and kindness. You have my deepest thanks.*

Jennifer Means | Union, SC  
Eye Surgery Client

*The OrCam Read is a wonderful device that helps people like myself that are vision impaired. It reads my mail for me and other important information. Now I don't need assistance from others, and I feel more independent.*

James Nelson | Georgetown, SC  
Vision Technology Client

*At 50 + years old I decided to go back to school to further my education in nursing. Over the years, I had made some mistakes, but never did I lose my desire to excel. So here I am sitting in classrooms with fellow students young enough to be my children. I'm moving a bit slower, seeing a lot less, though looking quite a bit harder, but determined not to give up.*

*I needed cataract surgery. But with no insurance and no money to pay for the surgery, it didn't seem that was going to happen. I didn't lose Faith because I knew God has brought me through the storm time and time again. And once again he called in his angels. I had reached out to and was contacted by the Lions Vision Services. They paid for my cataract surgery on both eyes.*



*So yes, I'm still sitting in classrooms with fellow students young enough to be my children. My movements may still be a bit slower than theirs, but best believe, I can see them better. I want to say thank you to the Lions, God's angels. I'm ever so grateful for what you've done for me. Thank you for letting me "see" my way as I'm shooting for the moon. And if by chance, I should miss it head on, at least I know I will dwell among the Stars. I love you and thank you.*

Linda Etheredge | Batesburg, SC  
Eye Surgery Client