RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Although we researched the information in this Guide carefully, we know there will be changes during the life of the Guide. We also know this information is not all inclusive and that additional information is available through other sources such as the Internet. We like to hear from you so please send us your updates or suggestions.

The information in this guide is intended for information only and should not be interpreted as an endorsement of any vendor or organization listed.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND THANKS TO:

THE EMPLOYEE COMMUNITY FUND OF THE BOEING COMPANY

For funding this eighth edition of the Resource Guide

Copyright by the Low Vision Resource Center
Mission statement: To foster hope, offer help, and promote independence for people with vision loss.

Our organization has been helping people with vision loss since January 1997. We offer help through the San Antonio Low Vision Club and Owl Radio. Please visit one of our websites or call us for more information:

www.lowvisionclub.org
www.owlradio.org

1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 525
San Antonio, Texas 78209
210-829-4223
lowvisionresourcecenter@yahoo.com
**Table of Contents**

I. **LIVING WITH LOW VISION** ........................................... 1  

II. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** ....................................... 2  

III. **HOUSEHOLD HINTS** .................................................. 5  

IV. **VISION REHABILITATION** ......................................... 10  

V. **LOW VISION CLINICS**  
   1. Santa Rosa Low Vision Clinic ................................... 11  
   2. Lions Low Vision Center of Texas ............................ 11  
   3. Vision Rehabilitation Center ................................. 12  

VI. **RESOURCES – LOCAL**  
   1. Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services ..... 13  
      (DARS)  
   2. San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind ..................... 14  
   3. Veterans Administration ...................................... 17  
   4. Alamo Service Connection ..................................... 18  
   5. City of San Antonio Community Initiatives ............. 19  
   6. Orientation and Mobility ...................................... 20  
   7. Guide Dogs .......................................................... 20  
   8. Prevent Blindness Texas ........................................ 21  

VII. **SERVICES**  
   1. San Antonio Public Library ...................................... 22  
   2. Driving with Low Vision ......................................... 24  
   3. Handicapped Parking ............................................. 24  
   4. U.S. Mail ............................................................. 25  
   5. Telephone Directory Assistance .............................. 25  
   6. Telephone and Electric Bill Payment Assistance ........ 25  
   7. Banking .................................................................. 26  
   8. Federal Income Taxes ............................................. 26  
   9. Social Security ..................................................... 26  
   10. Hadley School for the Blind ................................... 27  
   11. Call A Ride for Seniors ......................................... 28
12. VIATrans .................................................................30
13. City of San Antonio Senior Services ..........................30
14. Medical Transportation Program .............................31
15. Meal Home Delivery ..............................................32
16. Senior Companions .................................................32
17. Assisted Living .......................................................32
18. NFB-NEWSLINE ....................................................33
19. San Antonio Low Vision Club ................................33
20. OWL Radio ............................................................34
21. OASIS ................................................................34
22. Texas State Library - Talking Books .........................35

VIII. FREE INFORMATION
1. Large Print Newsletters ............................................36
2. Reference Guide .......................................................36
3. Descriptive Video Service .......................................37

IX. ADAPTIVE AIDS FOR SALE
1. Closed Circuit Television Magnifiers .........................38
2. Internet and Print Catalogs ..................................39

X. READING MATERIAL FOR SALE
1. Newspaper ..............................................................40
2. Bibles ..................................................................40
3. Magazines and Journals .....................................40
4. Books ..................................................................41

XI. NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND WEBSITES
1. American Council of the Blind ...............................42
2. American Foundation for the Blind .......................42
3. Blinded Veterans Association ...............................42
4. Foundation Fighting Blindness ............................43
5. Lighthouse International ..................................43
6. Vision Aware .........................................................43
7. National Eye Institute ........................................43

XII. APPLICATIONS
1. Owl Radio ..............................................................44
2. Low Vision Club ..................................................46
This Guide is designed to help those with vision loss face the challenges of maintaining daily living activities and independence.

The newly diagnosed visually impaired person may go through phases of grieving such as shock, denial, fear, mourning, withdrawal, depression, and hopefully, acceptance.

Becoming visually impaired involves more than just losing sight. It requires physical, emotional, financial, and living adjustments. Although vision loss can significantly impact daily activities, it should not be considered incapacitating, but it takes determination, encouragement, and persistence. Life after the loss of sight can be rich and fulfilling.

The Low Vision Resource Center was established to assist people as they work through this adjustment process. The first goal of the LVRC is to “foster hope” which is extremely important as a therapeutic tool.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. WHAT IS LOW VISION?

Low Vision is a visual impairment that interferes with daily activities. Generally, this is vision loss that cannot be corrected by standard eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.

2. I HAVE LOW VISION. WILL I GO BLIND?

Some eye diseases can cause total blindness but most do not.

3. WILL I ALWAYS HAVE LOW VISION?

Some diseases which cause low vision, such as cataracts, are treatable while other conditions are not.

4. WHAT DOES LEGALLY BLIND MEAN?

In most states, a legally blind person is one who tests 20/200 or less in the better eye after the best correction, or have a visual field which is no greater than 20 degrees.

5. IS HAVING LOW VISION OR BEING LEGALLY BLIND THE SAME AS BLIND?

Unfortunately, people often confuse "legally blind" with "blind." People who are "legally blind" or have "low vision" usually have some usable vision. Their vision can often be improved with low vision aids. Blind is the total lack of vision.
6. HOW CAN LOW VISION PATIENTS BE HELPED?

A low vision examination employs special examination techniques. Special devices are evaluated for their capacity to improve a patient’s visual performance. Though these aids may not improve vision, they may allow a patient to use their remaining vision to its fullest capacity. Low vision aids may make things appear larger, appear brighter, or improve contrast.

7. WHAT TYPE OF THINGS ARE "VISUAL AIDS?"

Visual aids may be special optical lenses, telescopes, magnifiers, visors, filters, reading stands, lamps, large print documents, or other devices that improve a low vision patient’s visual performance. Though standard spectacle corrections may be one type of aid, most visual aids are very different, and may involve some compromise and adaption by the low vision patient. For example, the visual aid may be more encumbering than spectacles or reading material may have to be held very close. The degree of compromise varies with each low vision patient. Most people will readily adapt to an aid that provides some measure of improved visual performance.

8. WILL LOW VISION AIDS CURE MY EYE DISEASE?

No! Using visual aids will not affect the health of your eyes, thus visual aids will not cause your eye problem to get better or worse. Low vision aids do not cure or restore your vision to normal, but you should be able to perform visual tasks better.
9. SINCE I HAVE A VISION PROBLEM, CAN I HURT MY EYES BY USING THEM?

Using your vision will not cause it to deteriorate. In fact, most doctors feel that using eyes helps train the brain to interpret what you see. Thus, using eyes can help maintain visual sense.

10. CAN I HURT MY EYES BY HOLDING PRINT TOO CLOSE?

No! To gain the magnification necessary to see print or other small items, you may have to be very close. This does not hurt your eyes, although it may take some practice getting used to this different posture.

11. WHAT LIGHTING IS BEST FOR PEOPLE WITH LOW VISION?

The proper degree of light may vary between various forms of vision loss. Some people may find they prefer dimmer illumination. More importantly, the light source you select should be positioned to reduce glare. Typically, the least amount of glare is from a light positioned over either shoulder.
HOUSEHOLD HINTS

HOME:

1. Keep things orderly. Organization will help you locate items with much greater ease.

2. Adjust the light according to the activity you are doing. Use more or less light as appropriate. Use natural daylight.

3. Use color contrast when possible. Place light objects against dark backgrounds and dark objects against light backgrounds. Use the colors you see best.

4. Use colored tape on household items such as thermostats, electrical outlets, light switches, and drawstrings on drapes.

5. Mark the first steps or stairs with tape or paint for better visibility.

6. Place furniture in a comfortable "conversational setting." Chairs placed too far apart may be beyond the visual comfort of the visually impaired individual.

7. Place a plant or bright object near furniture corners to provide contrast with surroundings.

8. Avoid patterned tablecloths and upholstery. They make it difficult to locate objects that may be placed on or near them.

9. Purchase large button colored electrical switches with audible feedback as on/off switches for appliances and lights.

10. Use talking devices such as phones, blood pressure cuffs, and watches.

11. Use large print or large buttons on items such as measuring tapes or phones.
KITCHEN:

1. Use a light colored cup when pouring dark liquids (like coffee). The light colored cup should be placed on a dark colored background.

2. Use a contrasting colored cup placed on a light background when pouring light liquids such as milk.

3. Use a dark colored glass when pouring water. Listen for the sound to change as the cup is being filled.

4. Use trays or placemats to create a contrasting background on countertops. For example, if you have a light colored countertop, and you are pouring coffee into a light colored cup, place the cup on a dark colored tray to help in locating the cup.

5. Use a dark cutting board for light foods; a light board for dark food.

6. Use brightly colored paint, vinyl, or tape on cupboards, cabinets, drawers, handles, etc, to help locate them.

7. Use brightly colored paint or tape on handles of kitchen equipment and utensils. For example, a bright strip of tape on a measuring cup handle will help locate the handle.

8. Use a pot with flat color (rather than aluminum) on the inside. It may help you see boiling water and foods within the pot.

9. Mark kitchen dials with bright contrasting tape, Velcro, or “bump dots.” Mark the oven dial at the temperature most frequently used, or use several contrasting colors for different temperatures. Use a tube of "Hi Marks" which is a type of cement that dries into raised beads to identify dial positions on stoves, irons, TVs, etc. "Hi Marks" can be placed on paper, cloth, wood, metal, and may be washed.
10. Use droppers when measuring items such as vanilla. Or, bend metal measuring spoons so the handle is perpendicular to the spoon. The spoon can be dipped into the item to be measured without fear of over-pouring or spilling.

11. Cover the back burners of your stove unless you absolutely need them. This will prevent reaching over a hot burner in front.

12. Use a timer. It will be easier than trying to visually check some of the items you are cooking.

13. Color code recipe cards. For example, one color for meat dishes, another for poultry, a third for desserts.

14. Rewrite favorite recipes on index cards in large print with a black felt-tip pen.

15. Label groceries by rewriting the name of the item on light colored matte paper with a black felt-tip pen and secure the label with a rubber band or tape.

16. Keep the kitchen organized! Be the one in charge of putting groceries and other items away.

17. Remind everyone to completely close all kitchen cabinets, cupboards, and drawers.

18. Sniff spices before sprinkling to verify you have the correct spice.

19. Remove small throw rugs as they are not easily seen and may be a tripping hazard.
EATING:

1. Use the contrast rule for setting the table: Light dishes need dark placemats or tablecloth. Dark dishes should lie on a light background. Use solid tablecloths or placemats only...patterns can be confusing.

2. Place a high intensity lamp by your seat to illuminate your plate.

3. Use a clock system to locate food on your plate. For example, pork at the top of the plate will be at 12 o'clock, peas at the bottom of the plate would be at 6 o'clock.

4. Try the “low and slow” approach for locating items on the table. There is less chance of knocking glasses over.

BATHROOM:

1. Use magnifying mirrors to help with shaving and make-up.

2. Hang a towel on the wall opposite the bathroom mirror to provide a contrasting background for brushing hair.

3. Hang a clear plastic shower curtain to allow more light for showering.

4. Put the toothpaste on your finger and then transfer it to the toothbrush.

5. Use a rubber backed mat in the tub.

6. Put a brightly colored sponge or object in the tub to indicate the depth of the water.
MONEY:

1. Fold currency for identification.

   $1.00  Leave flat
   $5.00  Fold in half width-wise
   $10.00 Fold in half length-wise
   $20.00 Fold in half width-wise and length-wise

2. Place currency in different compartments of your wallet or purse.

3. Purchase a currency holder.

LAUNDRY:

1. Simplify laundry chores by using a system to identify articles of clothing. A "V" cut in a label could identify a permanent press item, while a corner cut off the label may indicate the item is colorfast.

2. Safety pin socks into pairs before washing.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Use felt tip pens for writing. Experiment with different colors.

2. Consider different shades of paper. White may be the easiest to read. Try putting the paper against a different colored background.

3. Use paper with thick black lines.

4. Purchase a writing frame.
One key to maintaining an active and independent life with low vision is vision rehabilitation. San Antonio is fortunate to have low vision rehabilitation clinics staffed with eye care professionals who specialize in low vision. They will examine your low vision condition and advise you on how to maximize the use your remaining vision.

The exam may be followed by several training sessions with a vision rehabilitation specialist using special tools and techniques. This training could result in an improvement in your ability to see. The rehabilitation specialist may recommend adaptive devices such as magnifiers, talking computers, and large print keypads. They may also provide practical suggestions on items such as lighting and marking appliances.

A low vision specialist does not take the place of your ophthalmologist but works with your primary eye doctor, who often makes the referral for low vision care.
LOW VISION REHABILITATION CLINICS

1. SANTA ROSA LOW VISION CLINIC
   Dr. Nancy Amir, O.D.
   210-228-0030
   www.lowvisionclinic.net
   9577 Huebner Road
   Building 4
   San Antonio, Texas 78240

2. LIONS LOW VISION CENTER OF TEXAS
   Dr. Sandra Fox, O.D.
   210-567-8600
   www.uthscsa.edu/eye
   Health Professions Building
   8403 Floyd Curl Drive
   San Antonio, Texas 78229
3. VISION REHABILITATION CENTER

Dr. Stephanie Schmiedecke, O.D.

Rosenberg School of Optometry
University of the Incarnate Word

210-531-1591
www.evcclinic.com

(The Vision Rehabilitation Center is collocated with the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind.)
2305 Roosevelt Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78223
RESOURCES – LOCAL

1. TEXAS DEPARTMENT of ASSISTIVE and REHABILITATIVE SERVICES (DARS)
DIVISION FOR BLIND SERVICES (DBS)

800-687-7039
www.dars.state.tx.us

SAN ANTONIO OFFICE
210-785-2750

Trinity Building
Suite 274
4204 Woodcock Dr.
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Programs:

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program is designed for adults whose visual condition limits their ability to begin or continue work. As part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Division for Blind Services has services for individuals who are deaf blind.

The Business Enterprises of Texas Program provides employment opportunities.

The Independent Living Rehabilitation Program assists adults who are blind or visually impaired to learn adaptive skills to continue to live independently with vision loss.

The Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program assists children who are blind and visually impaired to develop their individual potential. Emphasis is on restoring vision, reducing dependency, and preparing for vocational success.
The Transition Program, which is part of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, provides educational and career guidance for adolescents and young adults.

The Blindness Education, Screening and Treatment Program wants to help Texans keep their vision healthy.

The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC), located in Austin, is a residential program that offers intensive vocational and independent living training to Texans who are blind.

2. SAN ANTONIO LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

800-362-4335  
210-533-5195  
www.salighthouse.org

2305 Roosevelt  
San Antonio, Texas 78210

The San Antonio Lighthouse assists people who are visually impaired and blind to reach their highest level of independence. There are no direct fees to the individual to participate in any program. Most participants are referred to the Lighthouse for services by the Texas Division for Blind Services (DBS), the Texas Division of Rehabilitation Services, or the Texas Workforce Commission.

Rehabilitation services:

The Technology Evaluation and Training program trains visually impaired individuals on the latest technology available, enabling
them to participate in academic, employment and independent-living environments.

The **Assistive Technology** program provides demonstrations, evaluations and training with typing, 10 key calculators, large print, speech recognition software, computers, Braille, note taking devices, scanning software, closed circuit televisions, and more.

The **Job Readiness and Placement** program helps individuals complete applications, prepare resumes, write cover and thank you letters, and search for jobs.

The **Career Guidance** program helps people explore occupations, see how their interests and skills fit into jobs, learn about suitable job accommodations, and develop a career plan. The center specializes in making accommodations for each person’s needs. All materials are available in large print, Braille, and/or cassette tape.

The **Vocational Support and Counseling** program teaches time management, interpersonal relationships, problem solving, working with difficult people, conflict resolution, effectiveness communications, ethics, goal setting, etiquette, goal setting and dressing for success.

**Community Services** arranges temporary lodging for participants traveling from out of town.

The San Antonio Lighthouse serves as a valuable **Employer Resource**. The staff can assist employers to meet the needs of applicants and employees who have a visual impairment or other disabilities.

The San Antonio Lighthouse converts written materials into **Large Print and Braille**. Estimates may be obtained over the telephone.

The **Senior Center** provides independent living skills training including in-home personal care, travel, household
management, daily living suggestions, access to computers, and counseling.

The Center also supports active lifestyles by providing opportunities for participants to interact with others in various social, recreational and educational settings such as low vision clubs, peer support groups, arts and crafts, and exercise groups.

The Center offers Caregiver Training as well by educating family members, caregivers, and service providers on blindness awareness through sensitivity training and “Train the Caregiver” presentations.

The **Summer Work Skills Program for Youth** is a five week program that helps high school graduates with visual impairment or students with other disabilities nearing graduation prepare for future employment. The program teaches work ethic, time management, social skills, communication skills, grooming/hygiene, and interpersonal skills.

**Emma Freeman Scholarships** are awarded annually for one or two years of college study.

The **Low Vision Products Store** offers talking clocks, watches, thermometers, calculators, games, toys, telephones, and other large print items.
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides comprehensive low vision and blind rehabilitation services for eligible veterans of the United States.

Eligible veterans are provided a full range of services, including visual aids, to assist them in overcoming the challenges of sight loss.

Services to blind and visually impaired veterans in South Texas are coordinated through the Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST).

The VA also offers residential blind rehabilitation services. The school for South Texas is located in Waco, Texas. This school is also coordinated through the VIST Team.

To receive services from the VA, the veteran must enroll in the VA system, which can be done at the Audie Murphy Veterans Hospital or Kerrville VA Hospital. Even if the veteran is receiving services from Wilford Hall or the San Antonio Area Military Medical Center, they must enroll in the VA system to receive VA services. Enrollment in the VA system may entitle the veteran to low vision devices not otherwise available.
4. ALAMO SERVICE CONNECTION

866-231-4922
210-477-3275
www.alamoserviceconnection.org

8700 Tesoro Dr.
Suite 700
San Antonio, Texas 78217

The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) provides services for residents 60 and over in Bexar County, people with disabilities, and their families through the Alamo Service Connection.

The ASC provides information on:

**Public Benefits:** Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Social Security, Prescription Drug Plans, Managed Care, and Private Health Insurance.

**Planning:** Long-term Services and Support, Community Living, Simple Legal Issues, Volunteer, Educational, or Employment Opportunities.

**Care:** Home Care Services, Caregiver Support and Relief, Adult Foster Care, Adult Day Care, Assisted Living and Nursing Facility.

**Health Needs:** Home Delivered Meals, Senior Nutrition Centers, Prescription Assistance, Medical Equipment, Personal Care Supplies, Behavior Health Resources, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs.

**Support:** Utility Assistance, Adaptive Equipment, Transportation, Rental Assistance, Home and Community Services for Persons with Mental Retardation, Services to the Deaf, and Independent Living Skills.
5. CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Senior Services Division
www.sanantonio.gov

106 South St. Marys
Suite 700
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Programs:

Comprehensive nutrition ........................................207-7172
Available at nutrition centers throughout the city.

Provides elderly persons, 60 years and older, and spouses, in Bexar County, with a nutritionally balanced noon meal in a congregate setting.

Supportive Services for the Elderly Project ............207-6680
Senior Transportation Program.

SSEP provides specialized, door-to-door para transit services to persons, 60 years and older, primarily for essential medical appointments. Transportation to appointments, Social Security, Food Stamp and legal assistance offices, the grocery store and the bank is provided when available. Para transit services are provided free on a space-available basis.
6. ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY
(O & M)

People with low vision can travel safely by adapting their vision loss. O & M training can greatly improve the ability to walk safely in the home and community. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Division for Blind Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs may provide qualified instructors for this service.

7. GUIDE DOGS

A guide dog is an aid to mobility. Good orientation and mobility skills are an important foundation to successfully working with a guide dog.

The training program with the guide dog is very intense. Upon completion of training, the guide dog allows a skilled traveler to travel more easily, more quickly, and with greater safety.

Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc.

800-831-9231
210-366-4081
www.guidedogsoftexas.org

1503 Allena Drive
San Antonio, Texas 78213

8. PREVENT BLINDNESS TEXAS
SOUTHWEST TEXAS REGION

210-236-7360
Texas.preventblindness.org

1600 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 125
San Antonio, Texas 78209
Prevent Blindness Texas San Antonio and South Texas Branch has four major programs:

- Vision screening for all ages with emphasis on preschool and elementary school age children.
- Glaucoma screening for older adults.
- Vouchers for adults who qualify for free eye glasses.
- Education and information services concerning eye health, eye safety, and eye disease.
The San Antonio Public Library has many useful aids for low vision patrons. Some of the services available are:

**Materials-By-Mail**

Materials are available through the mail for homebound individuals.

**Audio Books**

The library has a large collection of audio books in a variety of formats. These include books on CD’s and downloadable audio books.

**Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

CCTVs are available at most locations of the San Antonio Public Library. These devices allow material to be greatly magnified onto a monitor. Books, letters, pictures etc. can all be magnified by using these devices.

**Monomouse**

This is a portable CCTV device that looks like a computer mouse. It plugs into a standard television set. Whatever you roll the mouse over is magnified onto the TV screen. These devices can be placed on hold like a book and sent to any branch for pickup.
Computer Terminals for the Visually Impaired

Jaws, OpenBook, ZoomText, or Magic software is available on a computer at most library locations. The JAWS and OpenBook software can be used to access the Internet, use MS Office products and, with the use of a scanner, listen to printed material such as books or magazines. ZoomText and Magic software allow a user to magnify the material on the computer screen up to 16 times its original size.

Large Type Books

A large collection of large type books are available in the library system. These titles can be sent to any of our branches and mailed out to homebound patrons.

Descriptive Videos

Many of the DVD’s the library has obtained in the past several years have an additional audio track which features a narrator subtly describing the action which is taking place. This allows an individual with a visual disability the opportunity to more fully enjoy the video experience.
2. DRIVING WITH LOW VISION

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
Drivers License Office

210-531-2240
www.txdps.state.tx.us

The Texas Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, can provide information regarding visual standards.

Driving depends on many visual skills that are not related to an eye chart. Depending on overall visual performance, a person with moderate vision loss can earn driving privileges. Before any license would be issued, the low vision person would have a stringent road test that carefully tested his or her capacity to drive safely. Once issued, the license could have a number of restrictions.

3. HANDICAPPED PARKING

210-335-2251
www.txdot.gov

Print the form and ask your physician to certify that you qualify for the Disabilities License Plate.

Any family that has a member with severe vision loss may qualify to have a special parking permit for the handicapped. A person’s medical condition must meet the legal definition of a disability to qualify. "Disability" means a condition in which a person has:

- Visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses
• Visual acuity of more than 20/200 but with a limited field of vision in which the widest diameter of the visual field is an angle of 20 degrees or less
• Mobility problems that substantially impair a person’s ability to move around.

You may apply for your disabled parking permit or obtain further information at your nearest Bexar County Tax Assessor Office.

4. U.S. MAIL

210-368-8315
www.usps.com

The U. S. Postal Service provides limited free postal service for the blind. Publication #347 "Mailing Free Matter for Blind and Visually Handicapped Persons" is available on-line or by calling the Postal Service. This booklet has questions and answers on eligibility, restrictions, etc.

5. TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE

Many telephone providers offer free directory assistance to qualified customers. Please contact your telephone provider for more information.

6. TELEPHONE AND ELECTRIC BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

888-782-8477
www.puc.state.tx.us
Discounts on monthly telephone and electric bills, assistance with phone calls, and phone assistive equipment are available for qualified customers.

7. BANKING

Many banks offer special checkbooks that are designed to ease check writing. The checkbooks may be in large print, embossed print, or utilize a plastic check writing guide. Contact your bank if you would like more information.

8. FEDERAL INCOME TAXES

Internal Revenue Service

800-829-1040
www.irs.gov

If your best corrected visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye, or your field of vision is 20 degrees or less, you are eligible for an additional exemption on your federal income tax return. You must attach to your return each year a certified statement from a Doctor of Optometry or Ophthalmology.

If this eye condition will never improve beyond these standards, the certified statement should state this opinion.

9. SOCIAL SECURITY

800-772-1213
www.socialsecurity.gov
Social Security (SS) may pay benefits to people who are blind under two programs: the Social Security Disability insurance program and the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The medical rules to validate whether you are blind are the same for each program. Other rules are different for each program.

You may qualify for Social Security or SSI disability benefits if you are considered “legally blind.” SS considers you to be legally blind if your vision cannot be corrected to better than 20/200 in your better eye, or if your visual field is 20 degrees or less in your better eye.

If your vision does not meet the legal definition of blindness, you may still qualify for disability benefits if your vision problems alone or combined with other health problems prevent you from working.

For more information about Social Security disability benefits, contact Social Security to get Disability Benefits (Publication No. 05-10029). This booklet is also available in Braille.

Social Security disability benefits are not retroactive, so it is important to apply for them immediately after qualifying.

10. HADLEY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Tuition-Free Distance Education

800-323-4238
www.hadley.edu

700 Elm Street
Winnetka, Illinois 60093-2554

The Hadley School for the Blind is a distance education school and offers more than 100 courses in a variety of different media formats. The custom, one-on-one service allows students to
work at-their-own-pace and benefit from Hadley's expertise regardless of where they live.

PROGRAMS:

**Academic and High School Studies**: Features academic courses and electives for students who seek to earn a high school diploma. Students can earn high school credit, which is easily transferred to their local schools, or earn a diploma through Hadley.

**Adult Continuing Education Studies**: Covers topics ranging from Braille and academic studies to independent living, life adjustment, technology and recreation.

**Family Education Program**: Offers courses of interest to parents of blind children and family members of blind adults. Focuses on independent living, technology, advocacy and adjustment to blindness issues. Topics include child development, independent living and Braille instruction.

**Hadley School for Professional Studies**: Offers parents, family members, caregivers, and professionals information and guidance on working with visually impaired people.

11. CALL A RIDE FOR SENIORS

[www.callarideforseniors.org](http://www.callarideforseniors.org)

210-477-3275

Four non-profits provide free transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. This includes services such as transportation to medical appointments, the grocery store, pharmacy, and more. Call to locate the one serving your local area.
Jefferson Outreach for Older People  
(Northwest)  
210-734-5016  
201 Meredith  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  

North East Senior Assistance  
(Northeast and South)  
210-967-6372  
10635 IH 35N, Suite 211  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  

South East Community Outreach for Older People  
(Southeast)  
210-359-6678  
1602 Goliad Road  
San Antonio, Texas 78223  

South West Community Outreach for Older People  
(Southwest)  

“OUTSIDE” SAN ANTONIO  
WITHIN BEXAR COUNTY  

Greater Randolph Area Services Program  
210-658-6351  
250 Donalan Dr.  
Converse, Texas 78109  

GRASP is available to seniors living outside the San Antonio city limits on the east side, (Windcrest exception). They provide special transportation services for a fee, community meals in Converse and more.
12. VIAtrans PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Specialized Transportation

210-362-2140
(to apply for services)

www.viainfo.net
(click on Accessible Services)

VIAtrans is San Antonio's specialized public transportation service for riders with special needs. If you meet the definition of legal blindness, you may qualify for this service. The current fare is under two dollars per ride but you must obtain a VIAtrans ID to use the service. The ID also allows VIAtrans riders, their personal care attendants, and companions with VIA IDs to ride the bus, streetcar, and special event services free.

13. CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
   SENIOR SERVICES

Specialized Transportation

210-207-6680

Door-to-door transportation is provided to individuals 60 years of age and older for medical appointments, food stamps, legal aid, social security offices, grocery shopping, and banking. Reservations must be made three to ten business days in advance. One escort may accompany the rider. Services are available at no charge within Bexar County. Donations are accepted but not necessary.
MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

877-633-8747
www.tmhp.com
(click on Non Emergency Transportation Providers box on right side of screen)

Provide transportation to Medicaid health care provider.

The Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Program (MTP) is a statewide program that is responsible for ensuring that eligible clients of Medicaid, Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program, and Transportation for Indigent Cancer Patients (TICP) who have no other means can be transported to their medical and dental appointments.

MTP arranges free non-emergency transportation to eligible Medicaid and CSHCN Services Program clients who do not have any other means of transportation to access health-care services. MTP also provides medical transportation services to individuals who are diagnosed with cancer or cancer-related illness in South Texas. Attendants are also eligible for transportation assistance.

Transportation services can include:

- Providing tickets to use fixed-route and special transit public transportation bus systems.
- Arranging a demand-response transportation service provided by vendors that use buses, vans, or sedans.
- Distributing up-front funds or reimbursement for meals, lodging and transportation costs for eligible recipients and their accompanying parent/guardian when health-care services require overnight or extended stays and/or travel to another city or even out-of-state. These services are available for clients through 20 years of age.
- Reimbursing a friend, neighbor, or family member for gas to drive a client in a personal vehicle to a scheduled health-care appointment by enrolling the person in the Individual Transportation Provider (ITP).
15. MEAL HOME DELIVERY

Christian Senior Services
Meals on Wheels

210-735-5115
www.christianseniorservices.org

4306 N. W. Loop 410
San Antonio, Texas 78229

Delivery of meals to home bound seniors over the age of 60.

16. SENIOR COMPANIONS

210-735-5115
www.christianseniorservices.org

4306 N. W. Loop 410
San Antonio, Texas 78229

Companionship and personal assistance provided by senior volunteers to home bound seniors.

17. ASSISTED LIVING

Alamo Service Center

210-477-3275
www.alamoserviceconnection.org

8700 Tesoro Drive
Suite 700
San Antonio, Texas 78217- 6228

The ASC can provide information on the many Assisted Living and Retirement communities throughout the city.
18. NFB-NEWSLINE®

866-504-7300
www.nfb.org

NFB-NEWSLINE® provides free access via telephone or computer to 300+ newspapers and magazines across the United States.

19. SAN ANTONIO LOW VISION CLUB
(Service of Low Vision Resource Center)

210-829-4223
www.lowvisionclub.com

The San Antonio Low Vision Club has a membership of more than 900 area residents. Its objective is to assist those experiencing significantly reduced or total vision loss to discover ways to continue daily activities and maintain their independence.

Monthly meetings include presentations designed to keep members informed about the latest medical research into eye diseases and how local resources can assist them. Members also enjoy social functions several times a year.

We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. There is no fee to join but donations are appreciated. An application is attached.
20. OWL RADIO
(Service of Low Vision Resource Center)

Radio Reading Service

210-829-4223
www.owlradio.org

1250 N. E. Loop 410
Suite 525
San Antonio, Texas 78209-1524

OWL Radio is a community service for area residents who are unable to read newspapers or other printed information. It is brought to you by The Low Vision Resource Center and Texas Public Radio.

OWL Radio volunteers read the San Antonio Express-News for three hours daily. The remainder of programming for the 24 hour service is provided via satellite or the internet by nationally-syndicated reading services for the blind. Transmissions can be picked up within 40 to 50 miles from the transmitter located near Helotes.

Persons wishing to participate should obtain an OWL Radio application (attached). There is no charge, but a $25 tax deductible donation to cover the cost of the radio is appreciated.

21. OASIS

210-236-5954
www.oasisnet.org

Main Office
St. Cloud and McNeel Road
San Antonio, Texas 78201
Offer classes for a fee and “Person to Person” peer support for older adults going through normal life changes.

22. TEXAS TALKING BOOKS
(Texas State Library)

800-252-9605
512-463-5458
www.texastalkingbooks.org

Box 12927
Austin, Texas 78711-2927

Provides free library service to Texans of all ages who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical, or reading disabilities—whether permanent or temporary.

Books and magazines are available in different formats, mainly on cassette, but also in Braille and large print. Books are delivered to your home and returned through the mail free of charge. The program offers more than 80,000 titles in fiction and nonfiction, plus 80 national magazines for adults and children.
FREE INFORMATION

1. LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTERS

The Braille Forum Newsletter

800-424-8666
www.acb.org

2200 Wilson Blvd., #650
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Available in large print, Braille, audio computer disk, or E-mail.

Sharing Solutions Newsletter

800-829-0500
www.lighthouse.org
(Click on Sign Up for Newsletter)

2. REFERENCE GUIDE

Senior Directory

800-955-8510
www.seniordirectory.com
(Available free at numerous locations.)

Provides a broad spectrum of information for seniors and disabled individuals.
Those with low vision who have difficulty seeing the visual images on film may benefit from films that have been dubbed with a narration that describes the visual moments on the film. The narration does not interfere with the movie's sound track. Thus, all the original sound and words within the film remain, while a descriptive narration brings the film's images to life.

The Federal Government has mandated that a portion of TV programs must be provided in accessible (DVS) format. Check with your local TV stations to determine availability.
ADAPTIVE AIDS FOR SALE

There are many adaptive aids available for the visually impaired person.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) provides magnification that far exceeds that of optical magnifiers, and for some patients CCTVs may be essential. Currently, several manufacturers offer a variety of CCTV devices that are especially designed for patients with low vision.

If your low vision provider prescribes a CCTV device, there are many possible suppliers. Ask your low vision provider for further advice regarding the possible CCTV options. CCTVs can be very expensive.

Area distributors include:

**Christal Vision**
210-666-0700
www.christal-vision.com
106 Evans Oak Lane
San Antonio, Texas 78260

**Kewing Enterprises**
512-340-0062
www.kewing.com
2005 Short Summer Drive
Austin, Texas 78754

Other adaptive aids are available to improve functioning of a person with low vision.
OPTICAL DEVICES are lenses including strong reading glasses or microscopes, hand and stand magnifiers, telescopes, prisms, and tints or filters.

NON-OPTICAL DEVICES include enlarged items such as large print playing cards, big eye needles, and large print watches, reading stands, lamps to provide proper illumination, signature guides, and "talking" devices such as "talking watches."

ELECTRO-OPTICAL DEVICES are magnification systems that utilize electronic enlargement rather than lens magnification, and include CCTV's large print computer software, and head mounted cameras such as the V Max.

Internet sources include.

Independent Living Aids  
800-537-2118  
www.independentliving.com

Carolyn’s Low Vision Products  
800-648-2266  
www.carolynscatalog.com

Daily Living Solutions  
800-826-4200  
www.shoplowvision.com

LS & S Group  
800-468-4789  
www.lssproducts.com

Maxiaids  
800-522-6294  
www.maxiaids.com

Sight Connection  
800-458-4888  
www.sightconnection.com
READING MATERIAL FOR SALE

1. NEWSPAPER

The New York Times Weekly

800-631-2580
www.nytimes.com

Large Print (16 point) Newspaper
Approximately $100 per year/1 per week

2. BIBLES

Audio Bibles for the Blind
941-748-3031
www.audiobiblesfortheblind.org

Bibles are provided in a variety of languages. They are available in print or audio formats.

3. MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS

Dialogue Magazine

800-860-4224
www.blindskills.com

Braille, cassette, large print, e-mail

Guideposts Magazine

800-431-2344
www.guidepostsmag.com

Large print magazine
4. BOOKS

*Read How You Want*

800-797-9227
www.readhowyouwant.com

Large print books and accessible formats.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND WEBSITES

1. AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
   800-424-8666
   202-467-5081
   www.acb.org

   Alamo Council of the Blind

   (Please contact the LVRC for local information.)

2. AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND
   800-232-5463
   212-502-7600
   www.afb.org

   (Please contact the LVRC for local information.)

3. BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION
   202-371-8880
   www.bva.org

   South Texas Regional Group
   210-825-8809

   (Please contact the LVRC for local information.)
4. FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS
800-683-5555
www.blindness.org

(Please contact the LVRC for local information.)

5. LIGHTHOUSE INTERNATIONAL
800-829-0500
www.lighthouse.org

6. VISION AWARE
www.visionaware.org

Self help website.

7. NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE
301-496-5248
www.nei.nih.gov

Many other associations, foundations, and websites can be located on the internet.
APPLICATION FOR RADIO RECEIVER

Return completed form to:

Owl Radio
1250 NE Loop 410, Suite 525
San Antonio, TX 78209-1549
Questions? Call (210) 829-4223

APPLICANT INFORMATION:
DATE: _____/____/_______  NAME: __________________________
STREET ADDRESS: __________________________________________
CITY: __________________________ STATE: ________________
ZIP: _________________
PHONE: ( ) ___________  E-MAIL: _______________________
DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/_______  SEX: ☐ Male  ☐ Female
ETHNICITY: ☐ White  ☐ Black  ☐ Hispanic  ☐ American Indian
  ☐ Asian  ☐ Other
MEMBER OF THE LOW VISION CLUB: ☐ Yes  ☐ No
  ☐ Would Like Information

NEAREST RELATIVE OR FRIEND:
NAME: ___________________ RELATIONSHIP: _______________
STREET ADDRESS: _________________________________________
CITY: __________________________ STATE: ________________
ZIP: _________________
PHONE: ( ) ___________  E-MAIL: _______________________

DONATION: ☐ Check here if a donation is enclosed. A donation of $25.00 or more is appreciated, but not required, to help pay for this service. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Low Vision Resource Center.

RECIPIENT AGREEMENT:
I am applying for a special radio receiver from the Low Vision Resource Center. I agree to return the radio receiver when I no longer have use for it or if I move out of the broadcast area.

SIGNATURE: ______________________ DATE: ___/___/_______

CERTIFICATION OF STATUS
FOR OWL RADIO RECEIVER

A copy of a letter from your doctor certifying that you are legally blind will satisfy this certification requirement. Otherwise, please send this completed certification form along with your application to:

CERTIFICATION:

I certify that ____________________________ is unable to read standard size print due to the following visual, physical and/or perceptual reason:____________________________________________________________

SIGNATURE: ______________________ DATE: ___/___/_______

PROFESSIONAL MAKING CERTIFICATION:

NAME: ______________________ TELEPHONE: (               ) _________

☐ MD ☐ Psychologist ☐ Ophthalmologist
☐ Optometrist ☐ Counselor ☐ Teacher ☐ Rehab Worker
☐ Other Title: ________________________________

COMPANY/ORGANIZATION: ________________________________

I HEARD ABOUT OWL RADIO FROM:

☐ Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
☐ Prevent Blindness ☐ Veterans Administration ☐ San Antonio Lighthouse ☐ Postcard ☐ Other:________________
LOW VISION CLUB APPLICATION

Name: ___________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________ Apt: ______

City, State, Zip: ____________________________________________

Telephone Home: __________ Work: __________ Cell: __________

How did you hear about the Low Vision Club?
_________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________

What is your eye disease/condition? __________________________

What is your acuity? ________________________________________

Birth Date? ________________

Are you a veteran? Yes____ No____

Other Info: ________________________________________________

Mail completed application to:

Low Vision Resource Center
1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 525
San Antonio, Texas 78209