

# **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**

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Low Vision Resource Center

# **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](http://www.lowvisionclub.org)**  
**[www.owlradio.org](http://www.owlradio.org)**

**1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 525  
San Antonio, Texas 78209  
210-829-4223**

**[lowvisionresourcecenter@yahoo.com](mailto:lowvisionresourcecenter@yahoo.com)**

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# **LIVING WITH LOW VISION**

**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 adaptation 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.

# **VISION REHABILITATION**

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

### **3. VETERANS ADMINISTRATION**

**210-949-8929**

**Visually Impaired Support Team  
(Located in the VA Dental Clinic Building)  
8410 Datapoint Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78229**

**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](http://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](http://www.guidedogsoftexas.org)**

**1503 Allena Drive**

**San Antonio, Texas 78213**

## **8. PREVENT BLINDNESS TEXAS SOUTHWEST TEXAS REGION**

**210-236-7360**

**[Texas.preventblindness.org](http://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.**

# **SERVICES**

## **1. SAN ANTONIO PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**210-207-2500  
www.mysapl.org**

**600 Soledad  
San Antonio, Texas 78205**

**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.**

## **14.MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

**877-633-8747**

**[www.tmhp.com](http://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](http://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.**



### **3. DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO SERVICE (DVS)**

**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](http://www.independentliving.com)

Carolyn's Low Vision Products

800-648-2266

[www.carolynscatalog.com](http://www.carolynscatalog.com)

Daily Living Solutions

800-826-4200

[www.shoplowvision.com](http://www.shoplowvision.com)

LS & S Group

800-468-4789

[www.lssproducts.com](http://www.lssproducts.com)

Maxiaids

800-522-6294

[www.maxiaids.com](http://www.maxiaids.com)

Sight Connection

800-458-4888

[www.sightconnection.com](http://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](http://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](http://www.blindness.org)

(Please contact the LVRC for local information.)

#### **5. LIGHTHOUSE INTERNATIONAL**

800-829-0500

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

#### **6. VISION AWARE**

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

Self help website.

#### **7. NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE**

301-496-5248

[www.nei.nih.gov](http://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

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date Received:  
Radio ID Number:  
Delivery Date:  
Delivered By:

**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?

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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**