

Vision Loss Guide to Services

Humboldt &
Del Norte Counties

2006/2007

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This publication is an information and referral guide for people experiencing uncorrectable vision loss as well as service providers, family, and friends who may know someone with a significant vision loss. The first, 2005 guide, was made possible by a Healthy Vision 2010 Grant from the:

National Eye Institute

2020 Vision Place, Bethesda, MD 20892-3655

(301) 496-5248

www.nei.nih.gov

This publication was prepared by the Healthy Vision Task Force. Our aim is to provide the reader with resource options that are intended to be accurate and complete. If you have feedback for future publications, please contact the producers of the second guide:

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Area 1 Agency on Aging

A to Z Eye Care

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Community Health Alliance

Eureka Assistive Technologies

Eureka & North Coast Lion's Clubs

Healy Senior Center

Humboldt Diabetes Project

KEET-TV Channel 13

LightHouse of the North Coast

Reading Service of the Redwoods

Silvercrest Residence

Southern Humboldt Low Vision Support Group

The Eyes Have It: Low Vision Support Groups

Tri-County Independent Living, Inc.

United Indian Health Services

Vision Loss Definitions and Terms

Low Vision

“Low vision” is a loss of vision that cannot be corrected to the normal range by ordinary glasses, contact lenses, medical treatment, and/or surgery. People have low vision, or partial sight, if their best-corrected vision is 20/70 or less in their good eye. Even when wearing regular corrective lenses, partially sighted people cannot read newsprint, or see expressions on another person's face. There are approximately 4.3 million Americans who have been diagnosed as partially sighted. An estimated 8-10 million more Americans report vision problems that interfere with their ability to do daily tasks without help.

Legal Blindness

In the United States, a person is considered “legally blind” when the best corrected vision is 20/200, or the person's visual field is 20 degrees or less. That is, with the best eye and with correction, one sees at 20 feet what others without vision loss can see at 200 feet. Or with the best eye and with correction, one sees only within a narrow field of view (limited side or peripheral vision). Most people who are considered blind have some remaining vision. Many legally blind people have usable vision and are partially sighted. A person may be considered to be blind or to have low vision when he/she can no longer drive safely, has difficulty reading a newspaper, or cannot see objects to the side. A small percentage of people, approximately 1 in 10, have no usable vision and have what is commonly called functional blindness or total blindness.

Blindness

The term “blind” refers to the absence of vision or the ability to determine only the existence (not the source) of light (known as light perception).

Vision Rehabilitation

“Vision Rehabilitation” is a process during which people experiencing vision loss learn new ways to approach tasks. Kinds of vision rehabilitation include:

1. Vocational rehabilitation - for work goals
2. Homemaker rehabilitation - for independent living goals
3. Personal Goals rehabilitation - for short-term adjustment to vision loss goals

Vision Rehabilitation Specialists

Vision Rehabilitation Specialists help people set goals and find ways to perform familiar activities. Vision Specialists include:

- Rehabilitation Counselors
- Rehabilitation Teachers
- Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- Access Technology Specialists

Eye Disease Simulations

For eye disease simulations, go to the National Eye Institute: www.nei.nih.gov/photo/sims/index.asp

The Four Major Eye Diseases

1. Cataracts

In order to see clearly, the cornea and lens must be clear. A cataract is a cloudy or hazy lens, which blurs the picture on the retina. Effects of cataracts may include: colors seeming to faded, problems with glare (lamps, or sunlight may appear too bright), a halo may appear around lights and decreasing night vision. Cataracts are usually treatable with outpatient surgery.

2. Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic Retinopathy is a complication from Diabetes in which retinal blood vessels in the eye break, leak or become blocked, causing spotty vision. Retinopathy risk increases with age. Effects on functional vision may include changing reading and distance vision, sensitivity to glare, floaters and lack of the eye's ability to adjust to changes in lighting—from dark to light and light to dark. Diabetic Retinopathy can usually be managed by good control of blood sugar, regular eye care and your doctor.

3. Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition that causes optic nerve damage. High eye pressure, or fluid build-up in the eye, is a high-risk factor for glaucoma. The most common type of Glaucoma, Open-Angle Glaucoma, has no symptoms initially. Glaucoma destroys peripheral vision first and may eventually result in blindness if left untreated.

Effects on functional vision include day-to-day changes in vision, tunnel vision, poor night vision, sensitivity to light and glare, difficulty reading, seeing large objects at close range, and less sensitivity to black, white, and other colors. There are several medical and surgical treatment options when diagnosed early.

4. Macular Degeneration

Macular Degeneration, often referred to as Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), is the leading cause of vision loss in people over age 60. AMD causes damage to the central retina (the macula) which may result in vision loss in a person's central vision. Effects on functional vision include reduced detail vision (reading and recognizing faces), sensitivity to light and glare and poor color vision. There are some treatment options that may be available.

Other Eye Diseases & Causes of Vision Loss

- Retinitis Pigmentosa
- Detached Retina
- Cytomegalovirus Retinitis (HIV/AIDS related)
- Trauma/Stroke

Vision Loss Tip-offs

Here are some “tip-offs” that indicate that you or someone you know may be experiencing vision loss. People with such changes in their vision should be sure to see their eye doctor, an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist.

1. Somebody who is over cautiously driving or stops driving.
2. Somebody who finds lighting either too bright or too dim.
3. Somebody whose eye glass prescription changes often.
4. Somebody who holds books close to his or her face.
5. Somebody who squints or tilts his or her head to see.
6. Somebody who has difficulty recognizing people’s faces.
7. Somebody who changes his or her leisure activities.
8. Somebody who changes his or her personal appearance.
9. Somebody whose table manners changes.
10. Somebody who moves about cautiously.
11. Somebody who bumps into objects.
12. Somebody who appears confused or disoriented.

* Please note that these behaviors may result from other causes. You should consider seeing a doctor whenever your health and safety are in question.

Continuum of Services in Humboldt & Del Norte Counties

1. Prevention:

If you have normal vision, then continue to get yearly eye exams. Trained vision care professionals such as Optometrists or Ophthalmologists may detect and treat vision problems or diseases early.

What to do if you are having vision problems:

2. Visual Impairment:

Take charge and see an eye doctor, this is something you can do for yourself immediately!

- Make an appointment with an eye doctor, also known as an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist. Some vision problems can be corrected with glasses or other devices. Many eye diseases start without any symptoms. Some diseases, such as glaucoma, can be managed with an early diagnosis and medication.

For a local eye doctor, call:

Academy of Ophthalmology **800-443-9370**
www.aao.org

California Deaf-Blind Services **415-239-8089**
www.sfsu.edu/~cadbs

California Optometric Association **866-396-3937**
www.coavision.org

EyeCare America (for 65+) **800-222-3937**
www.Eyecareamerica.org

K'ima:w Medical Center (Hoopa) **530-625-4261**
www.hoopa-nsn.gov/departments/kimaw

United Indian Health Services **707-825-5000**
www.crihb.org/united.htm

- Even if the doctor corrects your vision completely with glasses or contact lenses, make sure that you continue to make annual visits to the doctor to assure the best health for your eyes and your vision.

3. Low Vision:

If you have low vision and you have some useable vision (for example, you can read headlines on newspapers, bill boards, or view people close-up, but they are blurred) then:

- Get a special eye exam called a “Low Vision Evaluation.” This evaluation is in addition to your regular eye exam, usually preformed by an Optometrist who specializes in Low Vision. A Low Vision Exam will provide you with information and training regarding the best magnification, lighting, contrast and strategies for you to maximize your usable vision.

Nearest Low Vision Evaluations & Exams:

Dr. Janet Caddell (Santa Rosa)	707-575-3800
Dr. Robert Caskey (Santa Rosa)	707-575-3800
Dr. Alan French (Fortuna)	707-726-5144
Dr. Doug Lanning (Eureka)	707-443-4581
Dr. Richard Martin (Redding)	530-222-3166
Dr. Hai Tong (Arcata)	707-822-7641
UC Berkeley Low Vision Clinic (provides driving evaluations)	510-642-5726
LightHouse for the Blind (SF)	415-431-1481

LightHouse of the North Coast 707-268-5646
www.lighthouse-sf.org/skills/lhnc.php
individual and classroom daily living and
travel training both inside and outside the home

Blind Veteran’s Association 800-669-7079
www.bva.org
training services for veterans who lose their vision

Eureka Assistive Technologies 707-826-1312
www.eurekaat.com
individual computer and assistive technology training

Rose Communication Services 707-839-0588
www.rosecoms.com
living skills & adaptive technology training

- b. Get connected with others experiencing vision loss through a low vision support group in your community. Peer led support groups will enable you to learn from others losing their vision and good coping strategies and practical tips for living independently.

Nearest Vision Loss Support Groups:

Arcata Low Vision Support Group	707-445-3726
Crescent City Low Vision Support Group	707-464-6416
Eureka Low Vision Support Group	707-445-3726
Fortuna Low Vision Support Group	707-726-9133
McKinleyville Low Vision Support Group	707-839-1798

Reading Service:

Reading Service of the Redwoods	707-443-0884
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- c. Get involved with community and statewide issues that affect persons with vision loss and persons with disabilities by contacting an advocacy organization.

Nearest Advocacy Groups:

Humboldt Council of the Blind **707-839-7266**
www.humguide.com/hcb

Diabetes Action Network (California) **818-996-6621**
nfbcal.org/nfbc/DanCal.htm

LightHouse of the North Coast **707-268-5646**
www.lighthouse-sf.org/northcoast

National Federation of the Blind **818-558-6524**
of California
www.nfbcal.org

Northwest Committee for the **707-476-4287**
Employment of People with Disabilities

Pedestrians for Equal Access **707-839-7266**

Tri-County Independent Living, Inc **707-445-8404**
www.tilinet.org

7. **Deaf-blind Services:**

If you or somebody you know has both vision and hearing loss, contact an agency familiar with both conditions.

Nearest Deaf-Blind Agencies:

California Deaf-Blind Services **800-822-7884**
www.sfsu.edu/~cadbs

Coalition of Parents & Educators **415-239-8089**
Of Deaf-Blind Children **Extension 21**

Hearing and Deafness Resource Center **415-923-4485**
Provides counseling, guidance, referrals,
education, materials, and technology.

Hearing & Speech Center of Northern CA **415-693-5870**
www.hearingsociety.org **TTY 415-834-1005**

Additional Resources - Service providers and organizations providing support.

Below are local, state, and national services for people with vision loss. (Or call Senior Information and Assistance in Humboldt 707-442-9591 and in Del Norte 707-464-7876.)

Advocacy Groups

Aging and Disability Resource Center	707-464-7876
Diabetes Action Network (California)	818-996-6621
Disability Rights Advocates:	510-665-8644
	TTY 510-665-8511
Humboldt Council of the Blind	707-839-7266
National Federation of the Blind of California	818-558-6524
Northwest Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities	707-476-4287
Pedestrians for Education, Development & Safety	707-822-3132
State Independent Living Council	916-445-0142
	TTY 916-445-5627
Tri-County Independent Living, Inc	707-445-8404

Children

Blind Babies Foundation	510-446-2229
California School for the Blind	510-794-3800
Del Norte Office of Education	707-464-6141
Enchanted Hills Camp for the Blind	415-431-1481
Humboldt County Office of Education	707-445-7000

Deaf-blind Services

California Deaf-Blind Services	800-822-7884
Coalition of Parents & Educators Of Deaf-Blind Children	415-239-8089 Extension 21
Hearing and Deafness Resource Center	415-923-4485
Hearing & Speech Center of Northern CA	415-693-5870
(TTY)	415-834-1005

Departments of Rehabilitation

Department of Rehabilitation (Del Norte)	707-464-8347
Department of Rehabilitation (Humboldt)	707-445-6300

Diabetes

Community Health Alliance	707-445-2806
Health Education Alliance	707- 443-4563
Diabetic Education—St. Joseph’s	707-269-4251
Eureka Diabetes Support Group	707-442-5239
Fortuna Diabetes Support Group (afternoons)	707-725-3944
Fortuna Diabetes Support Group (evenings)	707-445-2806
Humboldt Diabetes Project	707-443-4553
K’ima:w Diabetes Support Group	530-620-4559 Extension 230
McKinleyville Diabetes Group (evenings)	707-839-3068
McKinleyville Diabetes Group (afternoons)	707-445-2806
Edie Nelson, RN, Diabetes Educator	707-445-3063
Rio Dell Diabetes Support Group	707-445-2806
Beth Schatzman, CDE	707-443-4563 Extension 46
Margaret Stevens, RNC, Health Educator	707-442-7118

Financial Assistance

Children's Medical Services—California	916-654-0499
Eureka Lion's Club—Magnifier Demos	707-443-6111
EyeCare America—Glaucoma Project	800-391-3937
EyeCare America—Seniors	800-222-3927
Knights Templar Eye Foundation	707-839-4102
Lion's Eye Foundation of California	415-923-3950
Mission Cataract USA—Cataract Surgery	800-343-7625
New Eyes for the Needy— Glasses	973-376-4903
North Coast Lions Eye Foundation	707-839-3762
Pearle Vision Foundation—Eye Surgeries	972-277-6191
Prevent Blindness--Adult Screenings	415-387-0934

Library and News Services

Braille & Talking Book Library	800-952-5666
Braille Transcribers of Humboldt	707-442-4048
Newsline (newspapers read)	800-952-5666
Reading Service of the Redwoods	707-443-0884
Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic	650-493-3717
TellMe (voice-activated info)	800-555-8355

Low Vision Services

Dr. Janet Caddell (Santa Rosa)	707-575-3800
Dr. Patrick J. Caskey (Santa Rosa)	707-575-3800
Dr. Alan French (Fortuna)	707-725-5144
Dr. Doug Lanning (Eureka)	707-443-4581
Dr. Richard Martin (Redding)	530-222-3166
Dr. Hai Tong (Arcata)	707-822-7641
American Academy of Ophthalmology	415-561-8500
UC Berkeley Low Vision Clinic (Berkeley) driving evaluations	510-642-5726

Native American Resources

K'ima:w Diabetes Support Group 530-620-4559

Extension 230

K'ima:w Medical Center (Hoopa) 530-625-4261

United Indian Health Services 707-825-5000

Ophthalmologists

Dr. Patrick J. Caskey (Santa Rosa) 707-575-3800

Dr. David Cink (Crescent City) 707-465-2020

Dr. Andrew Cochran 707-443-9777

Dr. David Davis 707-443-3013

Dr. Larry Eninger (C. City & Ashland) 541-469-5800

Dr. Gregory Gibb 707-822-7222

Dr. Erik Jansson 707-443-9777

Dr. John Mastroni 707-443-9777

Dr. Louise A. Minor 707-442-8911

Dr. Michael Mizoguchi 707-725-5129

Optometrists

Dr. Loren Azevedo 707-822-7641

Dr. Linda Azevedo 707-822-7641

Dr. Roy Baker (So. Humboldt) 707-923-7826

Dr. James Barnes 707-822-7641

Dr. Karl Bruhns 707-465-2020

Dr. Brian Calvert 707-725-5255

Dr. Paul Domanchuk 707-443-1619

Dr. David Flemons 707-476-8430

Dr. Alan French 707-725-5144

Dr. Timothy Gallagher 707-443-4581

Dr. Zuzana Gellner 707-442-1472

Dr. Larisa Johnson 707-822-7641

Dr. Kenneth L. Kaiser 707-444-2962

Dr. Paul King 707-441-1898

Dr. Melissa Kuntz	707-822-7641
Dr. Doug Lanning	707-443-4581
Dr. Lori MacFarlane	707-839-2828
Dr. Phillip Ruprecht	707-839-2828
Dr. Daniel Ryan	707-443-4581
Dr. Yuesum (Summy) To	707-442-7206
Dr. Hai Tong	707-822-7641
Dr. Juan Trejo	707-444-2685
Dr. Martin Turkis	707-445-4126

Resource Information

Academy of Ophthalmology	800-443-9370
Aging and Disability Resource Center	707-464-7826
Area 1 Agency on Aging	707-442-3763
Blinded Veterans Association	800-669-7079
California Association of Optometrists	866-396-3833
Coping with Sight Loss in Northern CA	800-338-3041
DCARA (Deaf & Hard of Hearing)	707-476-8680
Eureka Assistive Technologies	707-826-1312
Glaucoma Research Foundation	800-826-6693
Hadley School for the Blind	800-323-4238
Health Insurance Counseling (HICAP)	707-443-9747
Humboldt Community Switchboard	877-460-6000
In-Home Support Services (IHSS)	707-476-2100
LightHouse of the Northcoast	707-268-5646
Linkages Case Management & MSSP	707-443-9747
Macular Degeneration International	800-393-7634
Senior Info & Assistance—Humboldt	800-408-4636
Senior Info & Assistance—Del Norte	707-464-7876

Spanish: Informacion en Español

American Academy of Ophthalmology 415-561-8500
American Optometric Association 800-365-2219

Extension 22

Latino Net 707-826-1710

LightHouse of Marin 800-592-9053

LightHouse for the Blind (San Francisco) 415-431-1481

Extension 262

Support Groups

Arcata Low Vision Group 707-445-3726

Crescent City Low Vision Group 707-464-6416

Eureka Low Vision Group 707-445-3726

Fortuna Low Vision Group 707-726-9133

McKinleyville Low Vision Group 707-839-1798

Transportation Services

Arcata-Mad River Transit 707-822-3775

Blue Lake Rancheria Van 707-668-5101

Bridgeville Community Center Van 707-777-1775

Care-a-Van 707-433-7077

City Cab/Dial-A-Ride 707-442-4551

Dial-A-Ride / Dial-A-Lift 707-443-0826

Eureka Transit System 707-443-0826

Ferndale Senior Van 707-786-4141

Fortuna Senior Citizen Bus 707-725-7625

Klamath-Trinity Transportation 530-629-1192

The Quail (Southern Humboldt) 707-943-3000

Redwood Coast Transit 707-464-9314

(Klamath to Crescent City)

Utilities/Housing

CTAP (free phone)	800-806-1191
SBC (free operator assistance)	800-772-3140
Pacific Power & Light	888-221-7070
PG&E	800-743-5000
REACH (assistance with utilities)	707-442-1851
Social Security Administration	800-772-1213

For additional options call Senior Information and Assistance at 707-442-9591, 707-464-7876, 800-408-4636 (toll free)

Accessibility Note

This resource guide is printed in APHont (pronounced Ay'-font). APHont was developed by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) specifically for low vision readers. APHont embodies characteristics that have been shown to enhance reading speed, comprehension, and comfort for large printer users.

The entire APHont Suite is now available free of charge on the APH website. The APHont Suite consists of regular, bold, italic, and italic bold. One must certify use for or by a person with a visual impairment before downloading.

<http://www/aph.org/products/aphont.html>

Alternative Formats

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Tape, CD, Braille, Spanish, Electronic 707-268-5646