

# **RESOURCE GUIDE**

## **FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE**

### **VISUALLY IMPAIRED**



**LOW VISION RESOURCE CENTER**  
**SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

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

**1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 800**  
**San Antonio, Texas 78209**  
**210-829-4223**

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

Updated March 2022

# RESOURCE GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE 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.

## 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.

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# **SECTION I: LIVING WITH LOW VISION**

This Guide is designed to help those with vision loss face the challenges of continuing daily living activities and maintaining independence. It should also assist family members and caregivers who are supporting people with visual impairments.

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 newly diagnosed person with a visual impairment may go through phases of grieving such as shock, denial, fear, mourning, withdrawal, and depression.

The Low Vision Resource Center (LVRC) was established to assist people as they work through this adjustment process. The first goal of the LVRC is to “foster hope” which is a critical element of adjusting to the loss of vision.

## **SECTION II: 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?**

Legal blindness is defined as a visual impairment with a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after the best correction. This means that an individual can see at 20 feet what someone with 20/20, or normal vision, can see at 200 feet. Also, legal blindness can be defined as someone with a visual field which is no greater than 20 degrees. A normal visual field is approximately 175-180 degrees so a field of 20 degrees is relatively small.

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

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 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.

## **SECTION III: 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 that work best for you.**
- 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). Place the light-colored cup 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 Mark" (a tactile pen) 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. When measuring items such as vanilla, use droppers 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 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 colored dishes need dark colored placemats or tablecloth. Place dark colored dishes on a light colored background. Use solid colored tablecloths or placemats since 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 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. The U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing provides qualified citizens a free U.S. Currency Reader which will electronically scan and read the denomination of U.S paper currency.

[https://www.moneyfactory.gov/images/US\\_Currency\\_Reader\\_Application-FF\\_NLS-2-508.pdf](https://www.moneyfactory.gov/images/US_Currency_Reader_Application-FF_NLS-2-508.pdf)

<https://www.moneyfactory.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html>

<https://www.moneyfactory.gov/resources/meaningfulaccess.html>

Smartphone apps for electronically reading currency are available:

<https://www.moneyfactory.gov/currencyidmobileapps.html>

2. 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

3. Place currency in different compartments of your wallet or purse.
4. Purchase a currency holder.
5. Obtain an electronic currency reader.

## **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. <https://www.maxiaids.com/>
4. Purchase a writing frame. <https://www.maxiaids.com/>

## **SECTION IV:** **LOW VISION REHABILITATION CLINICS**

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. After an examination, they will advise you how best to 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.

### **1. SAN ANTONIO LOW VISION CLINIC**

<http://lowvisionclinic.net>

210-228-0030

9577 Huebner Road

Building 4

San Antonio, Texas 78240

### **2. LIONS LOW VISION REHAB CENTER OF TEXAS**

<https://www.uthscsa.edu/patient-care/physicians/services/low-vision-services/>

210-567-8600

UT Health San Antonio Greehey Academic and Research Campus

Health Professions Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

8403 Floyd Curl Drive

San Antonio, Texas 78229

### **3. Rosenberg School of Optometry University of the Incarnate Word**

<https://optometry.uiw.edu/patient-services/index.html>

UIW Eye Institute

210-283-6800

Offers clinical services ranging from pediatrics to geriatrics, vision therapy, contact lens, low vision, rehab/acquired brain injury, optical, ocular disease, ophthalmological and oculoplastic services.

# **SECTION V: RESOURCES – LOCAL**

## **1. TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/blind-visually-impaired>

Blind Children’s Vocational and Discovery Program provides information and support for children who are blind or visually impaired. (Ages: Birth to 22 years)

**SAN ANTONIO OFFICE: 11307 Roszell  
MC: 2794  
San Antonio, TX 78217  
Phone: 210-619-8226**

## **2. TEXAS TALKING BOOK PROGRAM**

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html>

**800-252-9605**

A free library service available to anyone with a valid Texas address who is unable to read standard print due to visual, reading, or physical disability.

## **3. TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES**

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/vocational-rehabilitation-services>

Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides services for people with disabilities to help them prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in employment.

### **Vision-Related Disabilities**

- **Blindness**
- **Significant visual impairments**
- **Deaf Blindness**

**SAN ANTONIO OFFICE: 9725 Datapoint Dr., Ste. 200  
San Antonio, Texas 78229  
Phone: 210-438-0581**

#### **4. CRISS COLE REHABILITATION CENTER (CCRC)**

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/criss-cole-rehabilitation-center>

512-377-0300

CCRC is an innovative, residential vocational rehabilitation training facility that serves adults who are legally blind by helping them learn alternative techniques to prepare for, find or retain employment, attend college, university or trade school, and live independently in the community.

#### **5. SAN ANTONIO LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

<https://www.salighthouse.org/>

2305 Roosevelt

San Antonio, Texas 78210

Phone: 800-362-4335 or 210-533-5195

The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind and Vision Impaired (SALBVI) 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 Workforce Solutions – Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

##### **Rehabilitation Services:**

**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.

**Assistive Technology** program provides demonstrations and evaluations for assistive technology, including the latest video magnifiers, screen magnification software, screen reader software, scanning software, note taking devices, and more. Training is also provided on keyboarding, assistive technology, and the latest versions of Microsoft Windows and Office.

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

**Career Guidance** 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.

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

**Children and Youth Program** for ages 0-18 years and who are visually impaired are empowered by events (camps, classes, workshops, etc.) which focus on the nine elements of the Expanded Core Curriculum: assistive technology, career education, compensatory skills, independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills, recreation and leisure, self-determination, sensory efficiency and social interaction skills.

**Transition to Work Program** is an individualized vocational training environment for ages 16 to 22 years, enrolled in high school and referred by their home campus, to help prepare for employment opportunities after high school. The program offers hands on simulation of various career opportunities such as housekeeping, laundry room, basic restaurant skills, basic bicycle repair, basic floral design, button making, assembly of small parts, and basic warehouse skills. In addition, interpersonal skills training, time management, keyboarding, resumé building, job interviewing skills, job-seeking skills, recreation and leisure activities, and use of adaptive aides are provided.

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

The **Low Vision Store** offers talking clocks, watches, thermometers, calculators, games, toys, telephones, and other large print items.

## **6. VETERANS ADMINISTRATION**

**(Audie Murphy Memorial Veterans Administration Hospital)**

**<https://www.va.gov/south-texas-health-care/locations/audie-l-murphy-memorial-veterans-hospital/>**

**Visually Impaired Services Team (VIST), 210-949-8926  
VA Eye Clinic, 210-949-8900 Option 2  
(Located in the VA Dental Clinic Building)  
8410 Datapoint Drive Suite 200  
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 Memorial Veterans Hospital or Kerrville VA Hospital (<https://www.va.gov/south-texas-health-care/locations/kerrville-va-medical-center/>).**

**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 through Wilford Hall or SAMMC.**

## **7. ALAMO SERVICE CONNECTION (ASC) AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC)**

<http://www.aacog.com/107/Alamo-Service-Connection>

210-477-3275 or 866-231-4922

2700 NE Loop 410, Suite 101

San Antonio, Texas 78217

The ASC has an extensive database with information about Medicare, Social Security, legal aid, housing assistance, home repairs, residential support services, assistance with household expenses, and access to transportation services.

## **8. CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

<https://www.sanantonio.gov/humanservices/SeniorServices>

210-207-8198

Comprehensive senior centers and nutrition sites are located across the city and are open Monday to Friday throughout the year.

## **9. Prevent Blindness Texas**

<https://texas.preventblindness.org/>

210-236-7360

Prevent Blindness Texas is the state's leading voluntary eye health and safety organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight:

Eye Care Referral Services for Adults and Children

Request Our Vision Screening Services

Certified Vision Screener Training for Adults and Children

Education and Outreach Programs for Adults

Education and Outreach Programs for Children

National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health

See the Prevent Blindness Texas Vision Services Resource Directory for more information:

<https://texas.preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2020/05/PBT-Vision-Resource-Directory-7-1-15.pdf>

## **10. EYE CARE AMERICA**

<https://www.aao.org/eyecare-america/read-more>

877-887-6327

EyeCare America provides eye care through a pool of more than 5,500 volunteer ophthalmologists through the Seniors and Glaucoma Programs.

The Seniors Program connects eligible seniors 65 and older with local volunteer ophthalmologists who provide a medical eye exam often at no out-of-pocket cost, and up to one year of follow-up care for any condition diagnosed during the initial exam, for the physician services.

The Glaucoma Program provides a glaucoma eye exam at no cost to those who are eligible and uninsured. Those who are eligible and insured are billed normal office procedure, and responsible for any co-payments. (This is an awareness program to provide a baseline glaucoma eye exam to those who may not be aware they are at increased risk).

## **11. RESPECTABLE**

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

Respectable is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that uses the power of the Internet to facilitate redistribution of quality, used eyeglasses to underserved communities worldwide.

Our glasses are donated by members of our community. They are then cleaned, categorized, and loaded into our online database based on their prescription.

## **12. INFANT-SEE AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION**

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

888-396-3937

Provides a comprehensive eye exam and vision assessment for infants within first year of life regardless of family's income or access to insurance coverage.

### **13. NEW EYES FOR THE NEEDY**

<https://new-eyes.org/>

Eye glass voucher program for new prescription glasses. Vouchers can be obtained through social service organizations, or from a school nurse.

### **14. Cataract Surgery for the Uninsured**

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

713- 524-4267, ext. 234

Provides cataract surgery for eligible, uninsured patients in any county in Texas.

Pre-op testing, meds, surgical costs, and post op care at no cost or minimal cost.

Restricted to uncomplicated cataracts.

Application required.

### **15. 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 handler to travel more easily, more quickly, and with greater safety. There are several guide dog organizations in the United States.

#### **1. Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc.**

<https://guidedogsoftexas.org/>

210-366-4081

1503 Allena Drive

San Antonio, Texas 78213

The vision of Guide Dogs of Texas is to serve all Texans who are visually impaired and who would benefit from the use of a guide dog.

## **2. Guide Dogs for the Blind**

<https://www.guidedogs.com>

1-800-295-4050

National Headquarters Mailing Address

PO Box 151200, San Rafael, CA 94915

**“Since 1942, Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) has been creating partnerships between people, dogs, and communities. We prepare highly qualified guide dogs to serve and empower individuals from throughout the United States and Canada who are blind or have low vision.**

**All of the services for our clients are provided free of charge, including personalized training and extensive post-graduation support, plus financial assistance for veterinary care, if needed. Our work is made possible by the generous support of our donors and volunteers; we receive no government funding.”**

<https://texas.preventblindness.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/17/2020/05/PBT-Vision-Resource-Directory-7-1-15.pdf>

## **16. BEST Program**

**Blindness, Education, Screening, and Treatment**

**TX Dept. of Rehabilitation Services**

**Division of Blind Services**

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/blind-visually-impaired/blindness-education-screening-treatment-best-program>

**BEST provides free vision screenings and financial assistance to Texas residents for medically urgent eye treatment with a referral from your ophthalmologist.**

**To be eligible for the program, you must:**

**Be at least 18 years of age**

**A Texas resident**

**Not have insurance or any other resource in which to pay for treatment**

**Not be legally blind**

**Have recommendation from your ophthalmologist**

The BEST program provides 3 services:

1. Blindness prevention education/resources
2. Vision screenings to identify conditions that may cause blindness
3. Urgent eye medical treatment to prevent blindness

## **17. I CARE San Antonio**

[www.icare-sa.org](http://www.icare-sa.org)

210-220-2370

I Care San Antonio is faith-based 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization committed to improving lives by providing complete eye care to those in need. Services are provided by 40 volunteer optometrists and ophthalmologists who donate a half day each month.

## **18. MEALS ON WHEELS HOME DELIVERY**

<https://www.mowsatx.org/>

4306 N. W. Loop 410

San Antonio, Texas 78229

210-735-5115

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

## **19. SAN ANTONIO LOW VISION CLUB**

(Service of Low Vision Resource Center)

<https://www.owlradio.org/low-vision-club>

210-829-4223

The San Antonio Low Vision Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which assists those experiencing significantly reduced or total vision loss.

Monthly meetings help members discover ways to continue daily activities, maintain their independence, inform about the latest medical research into eye diseases, how local resources can assist them and provide social functions throughout the year.

There is no fee to join and donations are appreciated. An application is attached.

## **20. OWL RADIO**

**(Service of Low Vision Resource Center/Radio Reading Service)**

**<http://www.owlradio.org>**

**210-829-4223**

**1250 N. E. Loop 410**

**San Antonio, Texas 78209**

### **Ways to Listen Live**

- 1. Livestream from the website at <http://www.owlradio.org>**
- 2. Listen by phone: (605) 468-5722**
- 3. Apply to receive an Owl Radio (must be within broadcast range.)**
- 4. Available on the app TuneIn**
- 5. Free smart phone app on android and iPhones**

**Owl Radio is provided by the Low Vision Resource Center and Texas Public Radio. It is a community service for those unable to read newspapers or other printed information. Transmissions can be received within 50 miles from the transmitter located near Helotes.**

**Volunteers read the San Antonio Express-News, 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.**

**Persons wishing to participate should complete an OWL Radio application (attached). There is no charge, but a \$35 tax deductible donation to cover the cost of the radio is appreciated.**

## **21. SAN ANTONIO OASIS**

**<https://san-antonio.oasisnet.org/>**

**210-236-5954**

**Main Office**

**700 Babcock Rd.**

**San Antonio, Texas 78201**

**Oasis promotes healthy aging through lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement. Classes are fee based.**

## **22. ASSISTED LIVING**

**Alamo Service Connection (ASC)**

**<http://www.alamoserviceconnection.org>**

**210-477-3275**

**2700 NE Loop 410, Suite 101**

**San Antonio, Texas 78217**

**ASC can provide information on the many Assisted Living and Retirement communities throughout the city.**

## **23. SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES**

**<https://sailstx.org/>**

**210-281-1878**

**11306 Sir Winston, Bldg. F**

**San Antonio, Texas 78216**

**Benefits Assistance:**

**Individualized social security benefits planning.**

**Relocation Services:**

**Transition assistance from nursing facilities to the community.**

**Recreation/Social Events:**

**Opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in various community activities.**

**Deaf/Blind Support Services / Telecommunications:**

**Assistance to persons who are deaf/hard of hearing or deaf and blind. Provide information, assistance and training for adaptive telecommunication devices.**

## **24. OPEN EYES LIFE COACHING & CONSULTING**

**<http://www.openeyeslifecoachingandconsulting.com>**

**PO Box 5631**

**San Antonio, Texas 78201**

**210-859-8961**

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

**Advocate-Inspirational Speaker**

**Support group facilitator for the blind and visually impaired**

## **25. TEAMability Learning Center**

<http://www.teamability.org>

(210) 733-9050

Provides comprehensive services to children with severe multiple disabilities and their families, including Functional Abilities Assessments conducted by a transdisciplinary team comprised of an Educational Specialist, Occupational & physical Therapists; Cortical Visual Impairment Assessments, Functional Vision Assessments and Visual Skills Development Activities. These services are offered to children ages 0 to 22. All services are provided at no cost to families.

## **SECTION VI: SERVICES**

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

<http://www.mysapl.org>

600 Soledad

San Antonio, Texas 78205

210-207-2500

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. Call (210) 207-2500 for this service.

#### **National Federal of the Blind**

**NFB-NEWSLINE** is a free service provided by the National Federation of the Blind to those who cannot read regular newsprint.

#### **Children's Low Vision Reading Room**

The Low Vision Reading Room is located on the third floor of the Central Library in the Children's Department. It contains children's Braille books and kits with a book and audio combination.

#### **Texas Talking Book Program**

The Texas Talking Book Program is a free service for anyone residing in the state. Audio recording, large print, Braille, and more are located on the website: <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html>

### **Databases With Accessibility Features**

Many of the Library's databases have built-in accessibility features. Ask a librarian to assist in finding them.

### **Windows Navigator and Magnifier**

All library computers have Windows Navigator and Magnifier installed. Please ask a library staff person to show you how to use the accessibility features of the computers.

### **Hand held Magnifying Glasses**

Magnifiers are available on request. Please speak to a staff person to use one in the library.

### **Books**

Large type books and Braille books are available.

### **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.

### **Monomouse**

This video magnifier, shaped and handled like an oversized computer mouse, enlarges printed text and images when into a television's video jack.

### **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. BEXAR COUNTY BIBLIO TECH LIBRARY**

<http://www.BexarBiblioTech.org>

For use within the Library, Focus 40 Blue Wireless Braille Display is available. It connects to computers, iPads, and phones using Bluetooth.

The Braille Display converts text to contracted and un-contracted braille which is displayed on a Perkins style keyboard.

The Pearl Portable Reading Solution provides access to reading material brought to BiblioTech.

Magic Large Print Keyboard is available as is the Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software which is a screen reader for Windows.

Magic Zoom is also available which magnifies the computer screen.

## **3. Bookshare**

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

It is the world's largest accessible online library for people with print disabilities and a Global Literacy initiative of Benetach. There is a fee to use this service.

## **4. NFB-NEWSLINE®**

<http://www.nfbnewsline.org>

866-504-7300

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

## **5. TEXAS STATE LIBRARY: TEXAS TALKING BOOKS**

<http://www.tsl.texas.gov>

800-252-9605

Box 12927

Austin, Texas 78711-2927

Free library service to Texans who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical, or reading disabilities.

Books and magazines are available in different formats, in Braille and large print. Books are delivered to your home and returned through the mail free of charge.

## **6. TELEPHONE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE**

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

## **7. TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC BILL PAYMENT ASSISTANCE**

<http://www.puc.state.tx.us>

888-782-8477

Discounts on monthly telephone and electric bills, assistance with phone calls, and phone assistive equipment are available for qualified customers.

## **8. HANDICAPPED PARKING**

[www.txdmv.gov](http://www.txdmv.gov)

210-335-2251

Any family with 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.

## **9. BANKING**

Many banks offer services for those with visual impairments. These include 24 x 7 live customer service via phone, ATMs with Braille capability, large print checks, or oversized checks. Contact your bank for more information.

## **10. U.S. MAIL**

<http://www.usps.com>

800-275-8777

Limited free postal service for the blind is provided.

## **11. FEDERAL INCOME TAXES**

<http://www.irs.gov>

800-829-1040

Eligibility for an additional federal income tax exemption is available if corrected visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye or field of vision is 20 degrees or less. A certified statement from a Doctor of Optometry or Ophthalmology must be attached.

## **12. SOCIAL SECURITY**

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov>

800-772-1213

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 are 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.

## **13. HADLEY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

<http://www.hadley.edu>

Tuition-Free Distance Education

800-323-4238

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 pace themselves.

### **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 to parents of blind children and family members of blind adults. Topics include independent living, technology, advocacy and adjustment to blindness issues, child development, independent living and Braille instruction.

**Hadley School for Professional Studies** provides information and guidance on working with visually impaired people.

## **14. 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. All the original sound and words within the film remain, while a descriptive narration brings the film's images to life.

Regal Theaters, and perhaps others, in San Antonio, offer DVS for its movies.

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.

## **SECTION VII: TRANSPORTATION**

### **1. VIATrans PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

[www.viainfo.net/viatrans](http://www.viainfo.net/viatrans)

210-362-2140

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 fare is \$2.00 and 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.

### **2. ALAMO REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM**

<http://www.aacog.com/art>

866.889.7433

Provides low cost transportation services in eleven rural counties.

## **SECTION VIII:** **EYE GLASSES, EXAMS, MEDICAL EYECARE**

The following organizations may assist with eye exams, treatment, or purchase of eye glasses.

### **SAN ANTONIO AND BEXAR COUNTY PROGRAMS**

**Rosenberg School of Optometry  
University of the Incarnate Word**

<https://optometry.uiw.edu/patient-services/index.html>

**UIW Eye Institute**

**210-283-6800**

Offers clinical services ranging from pediatrics to geriatrics, vision therapy, contact lens, low vision, rehab/acquired brain injury, optical, ocular disease, ophthalmological and oculoplastic services.

### **PREVENT BLINDNESS TEXAS**

<https://texas.preventblindness.org/>

**210-236-7360**

Prevent Blindness Texas is the state's leading voluntary eye health and safety organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight:

**Eye Care Referral Services for Adults and Children**

**Request Our Vision Screening Services**

**Certified Vision Screener Training for Adults and Children**

**Education and Outreach Programs for Adults**

**Education and Outreach Programs for Children**

**National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness**

## **I CARE SAN ANTONIO**

[www.icare-sa.org](http://www.icare-sa.org)

210-220-2370

I Care San Antonio is faith-based 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization committed to improving lives by providing complete eye care to those in need. Services are provided by 40 volunteer optometrists and ophthalmologists who donate a half day each month.

## **CATARACT SURGERY FOR THE UNINSURED**

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

713- 524-4267, ext. 234

Provides cataract surgery for eligible, uninsured patients in any county in Texas.

Pre-op testing, meds, surgical costs, and post op care at no cost or minimal cost.

Restricted to uncomplicated cataracts.

Application required.

## **Texas Workforce Commission**

Medical treatment for diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma detached retina and other medical necessities. 800-628-5115

## **NATIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **Eye Care America**

<https://www.aao.org/eyecare-america/read-more>

877-887-6327

EyeCare America provides eye care through a pool of more than 5,500 volunteer ophthalmologists through the Seniors and Glaucoma Programs.

The Seniors Program connects eligible seniors 65 and older with local volunteer ophthalmologists who provide a medical eye exam often at no out-of-pocket cost, and up to one year of follow-up care for any condition diagnosed during the initial exam, for the physician services.

The Glaucoma Program provides a glaucoma eye exam at no cost to those who are eligible and uninsured. Those who are eligible and insured are billed normal office procedure, and responsible for any co-payments. (This is an awareness program to provide a baseline glaucoma eye exam to those who may not be aware they are at increased risk).

## **INFANT-SEE AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION**

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

888-396-3937

Provides a comprehensive eye exam and vision assessment for infants within first year of life regardless of family's income or access to insurance coverage.

## **NEW EYES FOR THE NEEDY**

<https://new-eyes.org/>

Eye glass voucher program for new prescription glasses. Vouchers can be obtained through social service organizations, or from a school nurse.

## **Medicare**

<https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/eyeglasses-contact-lenses>

Medicare will generally pay for one set of eye glasses or contact lenses only following cataract surgery that implants lenses.

## **SECTION IX: ADAPTIVE AIDS FOR SALE**

There are many adaptive aids available for people who are visually impaired.

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.

### **1. SAN ANTONIO AND SOUTH TEXAS DISTRIBUTORS**

#### **CHRISTAL VISION**

<http://www.christal-vision.com>

210-666-0700

106 Evans Oak Lane, San Antonio, Texas 78260

#### **SAN ANTONIO LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND LOW VISION STORE**

<http://www.salighthouse.org>

210-533-5195

2305 Roosevelt Ave., San Antonio, Texas 78210

#### **HIMS LIFESTYLE INNOVATION**

<https://hims-inc.com/>

512-837-2000

4616 W. Howard Lane, Suite 960, Austin, Texas 78728

### **2. INTERNET AND CATALOG SOURCES INCLUDE:**

#### **INDEPENDENT LIVING AIDS**

<https://independentliving.com/>

800-537-2118

**LS & S GROUP**  
<https://lssproducts.com/>  
800-468-4789

**MAXIAIDS**  
<http://www.maxiaids.com>  
800-522-6294

**THE LOW VISION STORE**  
[www.lowvisionstore.org](http://www.lowvisionstore.org)  
800-871-8780

## **SECTION X: SOFTWARE AND APPS**

Computer software and smartphone applications are available to assist people with visual impairments.

Most manufacturers include magnifiers and screen reading technologies on their computers.

Smartphones allow users to turn on screen reading capabilities to facilitate operation and access apps such as navigation, currency determination, and many other aids.

You may determine features of interest when you shop for computers or smartphones.

**SECTION XI:**  
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, LOCAL**  
**CHAPTERS, AND WEBSITES**

**1. AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

<http://www.acb.org>

800-424-8666 or 202-467-5081

**2. ALAMO COUNCIL OF THE BLIND**

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

210-492-4420

**3. AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND**

<http://www.afb.org>

800-232-5463 or 212-502-7600

**4. BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

<https://bva.org/>

800-669-7079

South Texas Regional Group

<https://bva.org/regional-groups/south-texas-regional-group/>

Walley Guerra: 210-639-4141 / [walleyg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:walleyg@sbcglobal.net)

Jose Cotto: 210-401-4995 / [borinqueneer1@aol.com](mailto:borinqueneer1@aol.com)

Gerald Valdez: 210-300-0141 / [vldzjrry@gmail.com](mailto:vldzjrry@gmail.com)

**5. FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS**

<https://www.fightingblindness.org/>

800-683-5555

**6. NATIONAL EYE INSTITUTE**

<http://www.nei.nih.gov>

301-496-5248

## **SECTION XII: LOW VISION** **RESOURCE CENTER APPLICATIONS**

1. Owl Radio (Application for Radio Receiver)
2. San Antonio Low Vision Club (Application for FREE Membership)

# APPLICATION FOR RADIO RECEIVER

(Page 1 of 2)



Return completed form to:

**Owl Radio**  
1250 NE Loop 410, Suite 800  
San Antonio, TX 78209

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:**

Date Received:  
Radio ID Number:  
Delivery Date:

Questions?  
Call (210) 829-4223

## How would you like to listen to Owl Radio?

- Please send a radio receiver (you must be within our broadcast range)
- By telephone at 605-468-5722 or free app on your smart phone
- On-line at [www.owlradio.org](http://www.owlradio.org)
- On the app TuneIn

## 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:** Though provided free of charge, Owl Radio must purchase our receivers. A donation of \$35.00 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. Your donation is tax deductible.

# APPLICATION FOR RADIO RECEIVER

(Page 2 of 2)

## **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.*

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## **CERTIFICATION OF STATUS FOR OWL RADIO RECEIVER**

### **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     Lighthouse     Other:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Low Vision Club Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Low Vision Club?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your eye disease or condition?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your birthdate? \_\_\_\_\_ (info used for grant applications)

Are you a veteran? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Are you a member of Owl Radio? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Would you like information about Owl Radio? \_\_ YES \_\_\_ NO

Other comments or information? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed application to:

Low Vision Resource Center  
1250 NE Loop 410, Ste. 800  
San Antonio, TX 78209

Questions?

Call: 210-829-4223