

Vision Statement

The Vision of the Lions of Illinois Foundation is to create a permanent vehicle for the delivery of programs and services to people with vision and hearing needs.

Mission Statement

The Lions of Illinois Foundation exists to assist in the general improvement of the quality of life of those in Illinois having unmet needs. It is the specific mission of the Foundation to provide quality programs and services to the people of Illinois for the detection, treatment, and rehabilitation of visual and hearing impairments. The Foundation, solely, or in conjunction with the Lions/Lioness Clubs, Foundations, and other organizations, shall provide its assistance through grant processes or delivered through direct or indirect programs and services.

Why the Lions Help

The Lions of Illinois Foundation is a nonprofit organization with members throughout the state of Illinois. Since 1925, the Lions have taken the challenge given to them by Helen Keller. Addressing the Lions at their convention she urged them to become: **“Knights of the Blind in the Crusade Against Blindness.”**

Funding for Programs & Services provided by the Lions of Illinois Foundation is provided through the generosity of Lions Clubs throughout the state as well as annual fundraisers such as Candy Day and Sight & Sound Sweepstakes. Thank you for your support!

Questions? Email us at: LlOffice@lifnd.org

Lions of Illinois Foundation

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Scan here to learn more about LIF.

2025

Lions of Illinois Foundation

Serving People with Vision and Hearing Needs throughout Illinois

PROGRAMS & SERVICES



It is the Foundation's objective to:

- provide quality programs & services for the conservation of sight and hearing for the citizens of Illinois.
- provide assistance for the unmet medical needs associated with sight and hearing.
- provide assistance for activities and services for those suffering disabilities.

WE ARE LIONS... "WE SERVE"

Learn how the Lions of Illinois Foundation can serve you, your loved ones & your community.



Camp Lions - Since 1957

Camp Lions of Illinois is a **FREE, week-long, over-night Summer Camp for Low Vision/Blind and HOH/Deaf eligible youth and adults.** It offers Illinois residents exciting camp activities and an opportunity to make new friends with peers who have similar vision or hearing loss.



It was the dream of Chicago area Lions to offer blind and/or deaf children a chance to experience summer camp, just like their sighted and hearing friends. The first season of Camp Lions was held over one week during the Summer of 1957, since then, thousands of youth and adults have attended Camp Lions.

Today Camp Lions hosts roughly 200 campers annually, running for 5 weeks during Summer months and is held at 4 different locations throughout Illinois. While the program has grown and evolved over the years, Camp Lions mission still holds true...

Our mission is for the overall growth of the individual camper in self-confidence, knowledge, independence, leadership, and creativity through a recreational experience geared to individual abilities, from the beginning camper to the returning veteran.

Campers enjoy swimming, canoeing, team sports, archery, fishing, cookouts, arts and crafts, nature programs and more. Every session offers opportunities to explore new skills in a safe and nurturing environment with a 4:1 ratio of campers to counselor.

Camp counselors are positive role models and many have vision and/or hearing loss themselves. They know what it means to be treated differently by peers. Counselors encourage every camper to reach for new goals, strengthening their abilities and self-esteem. Most Camp Lions counselors are fluent in American Sign Language, are 18 years or older, and together with a camp nurse, are trained in CPR & First Aid.



Hearing Aid Bank

In the late 90's, in cooperation with the University of Illinois Chicago Audiology Department, LIF established a Hearing Aid Bank (HAB). **The HAB is kept supplied through donations of hearing aids from local Lions Clubs as well as the general public.** The audiology staff at UIC maintains the Bank and serves as hearing consultants to our Social Services Department and to our participating Audiological Clinics throughout Illinois. Once a request has been approved, the donated hearing aids are reconditioned by our partnering manufacturers and sent to the appropriate clinic. Hearing aids that are not eligible for reconditioning, such as older or damaged aids are used as salvage credit to reduce the costs of the program.



Used Eyeglass Collection



Throughout the year, Lions and other volunteers collect used eyeglasses, sort them and deliver them to LIF. Through this program, glasses are repurposed for future use as well as shipped by missions to developing countries to reach people in need around the world. Eyeglass donation boxes can be found at many Lions Clubs and at many public buildings throughout communities such as local libraries, post offices, eye doctors offices, etc.

LIF Recycling Program

In addition to eyeglasses and hearing aids, LIF recycles: sneakers, keys/key fobs, cell phones/smart phones, pop tabs, and ink cartridges. These recycled items not only make an impact on our environment but also help to fund various programs and services that assist those with vision and hearing needs throughout Illinois.



Social Services



The Lions of Illinois Foundation Social Services Program is a referral service that helps connect Lions Clubs with people in Illinois who have vision and hearing needs. Each Lions Club will work with individuals within their community to help provide access to needed services and equipment, at a reduced cost, through one of the Lions of Illinois Foundation's numerous vision and hearing partners. **If you or someone you know is in need of assistance please visit the LIF website for more information and to download request forms:**

LionsofIllinoisFoundation.org

Lions of Illinois Eye Research Institute



The Lions of Illinois Foundation has a strong commitment to the development and advancement of eye research. From 1978-1984, the Foundation led the campaign to raise \$5 million to finance construction of Lions of Illinois Eye Research Institute (L.I.E.R.I.) in Chicago. Thanks to the commitment and fundraising efforts of Lions throughout Illinois, L.I.E.R.I. has grown into a vision research powerhouse.



Since opening in 1986, researchers at L.I.E.R.I. have obtained 138 patents, received over 150 grants, and produced over 1,500 publications. The UIC Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences is ranked 7th in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding among ophthalmology departments nationwide.

Today's L.I.E.R.I. houses over 142 research faculty who employ the most advanced biotechnologies to search for the underlying causes of every major eye disease including macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. LIF is proud to be a longtime supporter of L.I.E.R.I. and the wonderful advances in eye research that is completed there.



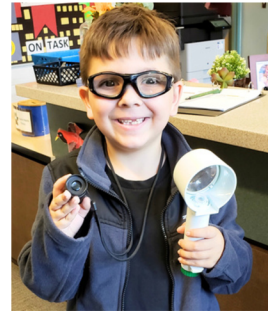
Vision Programs

Student Low Vision Program

The Student Low Vision Program began in 1976 with our Jacksonville Clinic and in 1991, with the addition of several other vision partners, became the expansive program it is today. The Lions of Illinois Foundation now works in partnership with Spectrios Institute for Low Vision, the Illinois College of Optometry, and the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind to serve the needs of children statewide.



This program performs FREE Comprehensive Vision Screenings throughout Illinois, helping students with low vision make the most of their remaining sight. Students from kindergarten through twelfth grade gain a better understanding and awareness of their vision loss.



Low Vision optometrists travel to the screening locations throughout Illinois, bringing equipment for examinations and demonstrations. Students are referred by special education staff employed by the Illinois Board of Education. This program offers FREE eyewear, vision tools, and training to further a low vision/blind youth's ability to increase their academic potential, enrich their social skills, and helps with future employment opportunities. Above all, the Low Vision Program for Students helps address the daily challenges of growing up with vision loss.



Other components of the Student Low Vision Program include referring parents to vocational counseling, Braille reading instruction, orientation and mobility training for children, and adaptive technology training.



Student
Low Vision
Partners:



Vision Programs

Children's Vision Screenings



In 2018, the Lions of Illinois Foundation began the Children's Handheld Screening Program, partnering with Lions KidSight. This screening program detects vision disorders in children 6 months and up. The earlier a vision disorder or media opacity is detected the sooner it can be treated.



Plusoptix S12 Camera

Adult Low Vision Program

Lions of Illinois Foundation is proud to offer vision services to Low Vision adults. Funding for this program comes from annual Foundation grants, made possible by donations from local Lions Clubs. With the help of partners like the Center for Sight and Hearing in Rockford, the Lake County Center for Independent Living in Mundelein, the Educational Center for the Visually Impaired in Springfield, and Second Sense in Chicago, adults who have recently lost or are losing their sight can receive Orientation and Mobility Training.

O&M training focuses on instructing safe and effective ways for an individual with vision needs to travel through their environment. An O&M specialist provides training that is designed to develop or re-teach these skills and concepts to restore independence and confidence to complete daily tasks.

There is often no funding through government assistance or private insurance to assist an individual who is blind or has low vision with everyday living skills unless they were training for a job. Through the Adult Low Vision Program, the Lions will help these individuals to get the support they need to regain their independence.

Adult Low Vision Partners:



CENTER FOR
SIGHT & HEARING
Specialized Experts. Proven Solutions.



Second Sense
Beyond vision loss



Educational Center for
the Visually Impaired

Mobile Unit for Vision & Hearing Screenings

The first Mobile Screening Unit was brought into service in 1965 and was a vision screening unit that screened specifically for glaucoma. The Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness supplied doctors to do the testing and the Lions provided assistance and maintained the screening schedule. Between 1965-1969, 7,973 people were screened for glaucoma.



In the 1980s, an additional unit was added to screen for hearing loss. The screening unit fleet continued to travel throughout the state for decades.

In 2007, with the addition of a retinal screening device to our mobile unit, we could offer both retinal and hearing screenings. Staffed by trained technicians, this multi-purpose unit is on the road from March 1st through October 31st every year. The Foundation Programs Department sends invitations to clubs throughout the state to host a Mobile Screening Unit Event offering FREE screenings at local events and health fairs within their communities.



Visit our website calendar to find a screening event near you: <https://lionsofillinoisfoundation.org/mobile-screenings/>

Diabetes Awareness



Diabetes is the #1 cause of blindness in people 20 years and older in America! More specifically, it has been identified that Diabetic Retinopathy and Macular Degeneration are the leading causes of vision loss. To inform the public of the warning signs and risk of Diabetes, Lions hold a Diabetes Awareness Campaign every year from March 1st - May 31st. The LIF Mobile Screening Unit and it's staffed technicians assist by screening for these retinal diseases by taking digital images of the eye which are reviewed by professional staff at Illinois Retina Associates. Those found to exhibit symptoms are encouraged to seek further medical evaluation.