



# Healthy Vision 2010 Community Action Guide

## Community Action Guide

The Community Action Guide provides advice to community leaders on how to develop Healthy Vision 2010 activities, establish collaborations, and work with the media.

This Community Action Guide is part of the Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit. See the inside back cover for more information about the toolkit.

This Community Action Guide is from the National Eye Institute (NEI), the lead agency for Healthy Vision 2010. The NEI conducts and supports research that leads to sight-saving treatments and plays a key role in reducing visual impairment. The NEI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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## **Welcome to Healthy Vision 2010:**

Healthy Vision 2010 is a set of objectives devoted to recognizing and addressing the many challenges posed by the loss or impairment of vision. Specifically, these objectives address visual impairment, eye examinations, refractive error, eye disease, injury prevention, and vision rehabilitation. The objectives are part of Healthy People 2010, our Nation's framework to increase quality and years of healthy life and eliminate health disparities.

Thank you for your interest in helping to reach the 10 Healthy Vision 2010 objectives. We understand the important role you can play in educating and engaging your clients, and motivating them to understand and embrace their role in improving eye health.

Vision is an essential part of everyday life, depended upon constantly to learn, to communicate, to live safely, and to enjoy life. Yet, too many Americans put their vision at risk by not taking proper precautions, not getting eye health care when needed, and not making the most of the vision they have. As leaders, we must work to ensure that people have the information and resources they need to take full advantage of eye health care, vision correction, emerging treatment, and vision rehabilitation services and devices to make the most of their remaining vision.

This Community Action Guide will provide you with information to help you identify the critical eye health needs in your community. You will learn how to work with businesses, organizations, institutions, and people to develop activities, events, partnerships, and initiatives. Your actions can help make vision a health priority in your community. Whether you choose to work on one Healthy Vision 2010 objective or several, you will be helping to improve the eye health of people living in your community.

Each of the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks contains objective-specific tools, information, and materials that you can reproduce and distribute. Share them with neighborhood businesses, health centers, policymakers, health care providers, educators, and others who influence your target audience and their caregivers. The Handbooks are available online at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/), or they can be requested from the National Eye Institute at 1-800-869-2020.

Your involvement is essential to achieving the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives. Thank you again and best wishes for your success.





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# Making Vision a Health Priority







## Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives

Making vision a health priority in your community is important and rewarding. The 10 Healthy Vision 2010 objectives appear in Focus Area 28 of Healthy People 2010, our Nation's framework for improving the health of all Americans in the first decade of the new century. The Healthy Vision 2010 objectives identify national eye health concerns, and encourage individuals, organizations, and businesses to help address these concerns in their communities. The Healthy Vision 2010 objectives are as follows—

<b>28-1</b>	<b>Increase the proportion of persons who have a dilated eye examination at appropriate intervals.</b>
<b>28-2</b>	<b>Increase the proportion of preschool children aged 5 years and under who receive vision screening.</b>
<b>28-3</b>	<b>Reduce uncorrected visual impairment due to refractive errors.</b>
<b>28-4</b>	<b>Reduce blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under.</b>
<b>28-5</b>	<b>Reduce visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.</b>
<b>28-6</b>	<b>Reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma.</b>
<b>28-7</b>	<b>Reduce visual impairment due to cataract.</b>
<b>28-8</b>	<b>Reduce occupational eye injury.</b>
<b>28-9</b>	<b>Increase the use of appropriate personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home.</b>
<b>28-10</b>	<b>Increase vision rehabilitation.</b>
<b>28-10a</b>	<b>Increase the use of rehabilitation services by persons with visual impairments.</b>
<b>28-10b</b>	<b>Increase the use of visual and adaptive devices by persons with visual impairments.</b>

## What You Can Do To Help

Healthy Vision 2010 is designed to help you determine what you can do—in your home, community, business, or state—to integrate Healthy Vision 2010 objectives into current health education programs, special events, publications, and meetings to help improve the eye health of all Americans.



The vision community is working together to advance eye health in neighborhoods and communities. Choose to develop a community-wide initiative, start a program, or add a vision component to a program in your business or organization. You can start by addressing one of the 10 Healthy Vision 2010 objectives that works with your community's needs, strengths, and resources, and building on your success.

Here are some suggestions to help you create an agenda to improve the eye health of people living in your community—

- ❖ Become an advocate for the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives.
- ❖ Select an objective that matches the needs in your community.
- ❖ Use the Healthy People 2010 and Healthy Vision 2010 resources.
- ❖ Identify community-based intermediaries that will work with you.
- ❖ Visit [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/) and add the Healthy Vision 2010 logo to your Website.
- ❖ Join the Healthy Vision Consortium (see below).

Community organizers like you are essential to delivering messages that encourage others to protect their sight and make the most of their vision. Your efforts, combined with those of thousands of other community leaders nationwide, will help achieve the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives. In so doing, more vision problems in children can be identified and corrected before they affect learning and development. Refractive errors in people of all ages will be corrected to improve their learning, working, and social activities. Comprehensive dilated eye exams at appropriate intervals will lead to early diagnosis and timely treatment for eye diseases. More athletes, both young and old; workers in risky occupations; and people doing chores around the home will be encouraged to use protective eyewear to reduce eye injuries. And more people who have lost some of their sight that cannot be regained will take advantage of vision rehabilitation services and adaptive devices.

## Vision Health Disparities

Improving eye health goes beyond preventing visual impairment. Good eye health improves overall health and may reduce risks of disease, injury, and disability. By becoming involved, you also contribute to accomplishing the overarching goals of Healthy People 2010—to increase the quality and years of healthy life for all Americans and to eliminate health disparities.

- ❖ More than two-thirds of visually impaired adults are ages 65 and older. There are 34 million persons in the United States over age 65. That number is expected to more than double by the year 2030.
- ❖ Compared with Whites, African Americans of comparable socioeconomic status are 20 to 50 percent more likely to have visual impairment.
- ❖ Compared with Whites, Hispanics have three times the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. They also have a higher risk of complications, such as diabetic eye disease.

## Children and Healthy Vision

A number of new studies focusing on children's eye care finds that race, income, location, gender, and insurance status can make a big difference in the likelihood that children with vision problems will see an eye care professional or get lenses to correct their vision. Left untreated, vision problems in children can have lifelong consequences, including delayed social development and academic achievement. Following are some relevant statistics:



- ❖ Five percent of preschool children are estimated to have impaired vision.
- ❖ Fewer than 15 percent of all preschool children receive an eye examination.
- ❖ Fewer than 22 percent of preschool children receive some type of vision screening.
- ❖ Generally, between 3 to 6 percent of all early school-age children (kindergarten to second grade) have a refractive error: farsightedness (hyperopia), nearsightedness (myopia), or astigmatism.
- ❖ By adolescence, nearsightedness becomes much more common in all children.
- ❖ About one-quarter of children ages 12 to 17 years are nearsighted.

# Healthy Vision 2010 Resources

## Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit

The Toolkit includes this Community Action Guide and nine Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks. Each Handbook contains information on a specific objective and other messages and materials that can be used separately or together, depending on the size and focus of your program.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Community Action Guide

This Guide will help you—

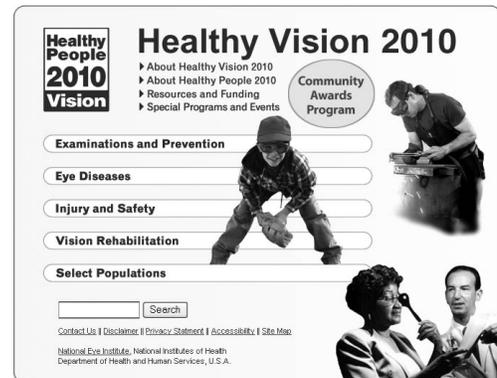
- ❖ Learn where you can get information about the eye health concerns in your community and across the Nation.
- ❖ Determine the vision objective your program will address.
- ❖ Identify the size and type of program you will develop.
- ❖ Adapt or develop messages and materials to support your program.
- ❖ Plan and carry out community events and programs for your target audience.
- ❖ Network with others to implement community-wide eye health promotion and education programs.
- ❖ Publicize the success of your program so that others may benefit.
- ❖ Achieve the Healthy Vision 2010 goals to reduce visual impairment nationwide.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks

The Handbooks provide more focused activities for specific Healthy Vision 2010 objectives that you and others can undertake in your community. We encourage you to share the Handbooks with businesses, volunteer organizations, professional associations, vision centers, faith communities, community centers, hospitals, clinics, and senior centers. Encourage them to copy and pass along materials in the Handbooks to people who can directly benefit from the information, or to those who can help other people make vision a health priority. All activities and materials in the Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit may be adapted for a variety of target populations.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Website

Remember to check out the Healthy Vision 2010 Website regularly. We encourage you to share your ideas, learn what others are doing, and get the latest information and resources available. The site also has links to organizations, agencies, and associations concerned with eye health and Healthy People 2010. The Website address is [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).



## Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards Program

The National Eye Institute (NEI), through a support contractor, offers funding for the implementation of health education activities that support the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives and the Healthy People 2010 goals to reduce health disparities and improve quality of life. The awards provide seed money of up to \$10,000 to develop innovative vision-related health promotion projects that have the potential for sustainability. They are intended to stimulate collaborative community health education initiatives that support specific Healthy Vision 2010 objectives.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Consortium

The Healthy Vision Consortium comprises a wide range of people and groups concerned about eye health. They represent a unified commitment for vision organizations and people to work together toward a common goal: to ensure that vision information reaches every community and workplace nationwide. Consortium members incorporate the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives into the strategies and programs of their organizations. Members can sign up to receive a listserve, and can submit and receive news and announcements related to Healthy Vision 2010 and Healthy People 2010 activities. Learn more about the Healthy Vision Consortium at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/), or call 1-800-869-2020.



# Facts About Healthy Vision 2010



Facts About  
Healthy Vision 2010





## Visual Impairment

Vision is an essential part of everyday life, influencing how we learn, communicate, work, play, and interact with the world. Yet, millions of Americans live with visual impairment. Many more remain at risk for eye disease and preventable eye injury. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is working to improve the health of all Americans. These efforts include reducing visual impairment from eye disease and injury, and improving the quality of life of people affected by vision loss.

## What Is Healthy People 2010?



Healthy People 2010 is the framework of health objectives for the Nation to achieve over the first decade of the new century. The objectives span the range of human health, disease, and prevention issues, and build on initiatives pursued over the past two decades by HHS. Healthy People 2010 challenges individuals, communities, and professionals—indeed, all of us—to take specific steps to ensure that good health and long life are enjoyed by all. The goal is to improve Americans' life expectancy and quality of life, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, or health status.

## What Is Healthy Vision 2010?

Healthy Vision 2010 refers to the vision objectives in Healthy People 2010 that address 10 specific areas of need regarding the eye health of our Nation. Vision objectives appear in Focus Area 28 of Healthy People 2010. The National Eye Institute, within HHS, is the lead agency for Healthy Vision 2010.

## What Are the Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives?

The 10 Healthy Vision 2010 objectives address visual impairment, eye examinations, refractive error, eye disease, injury prevention, and vision rehabilitation. The goal is to improve eye health through prevention, early detection, treatment, and rehabilitation.

### Examination and Prevention

#### **28-1: Increase the proportion of persons who have a dilated eye examination at appropriate intervals.**

Most eye diseases that affect Americans have no early warning signs. A comprehensive dilated eye examination can help to detect eye disease before any vision loss from eye disease occurs. Drops are placed in your eye to widen, or dilate, the pupils—the dark opening in the middle of the colored area (iris) of the eye. Your eye care professional uses a special magnifying lens to examine your retina and optic nerve for signs of damage and other eye problems. After the exam, your close-up vision may remain blurred for several hours.



#### **28-2: Increase the proportion of preschool children aged 5 years and under who receive vision screening.**

Many vision problems begin before children reach school age. Vision screening often identifies children who need comprehensive dilated eye exams that detect eye conditions such as refractive error, amblyopia (lazy eye), or strabismus (crossed eyes). Left untreated, some vision problems can become more difficult to correct and can lead to lifelong consequences, including learning and social problems.

#### **28-3: Reduce uncorrected visual impairment due to refractive errors.**

To have a refractive error means that your eyes have problems focusing clearly. It is the most common visual impairment. Most errors are correctable with standard eyeglasses, prescription contact lenses, or refractive surgery. People may not know they have a refractive error until they get their eyes examined by an eye care professional.

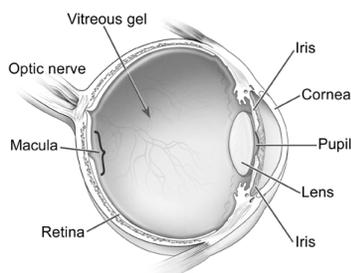
#### **28-4: Reduce blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under.**

Nearsightedness (myopia) is one of the more common conditions among children and adolescents aged 17 years and under. Myopia is found in 2 percent of children entering first grade and in 15 percent of youths entering high school. Eye health is an important part of health care for children and adolescents.

## Eye Diseases

### 28-5: Reduce visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes and a leading cause of visual impairment. It occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels inside the retina,



the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. A healthy retina is necessary for good vision. All people with diabetes—both type 1 and type 2—are at risk. Everyone with diabetes should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Between 40 to 45 percent of Americans diagnosed with diabetes have some stage of diabetic retinopathy. Early detection and timely treatment can prevent vision loss.

### 28-6: Reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can damage the optic nerve, the network of fibers that carries visual signals to the brain, and result in vision loss. Open-angle glaucoma, the most common form of the disease, affects about 2.2 million Americans. Another million do not know they have the disease. Early detection and treatment often protect people from serious vision loss. People at high risk for glaucoma—African Americans over age 40; everyone over age 60, especially Mexican Americans; and people with a family history of the disease—should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once every 2 years.

### 28-7: Reduce visual impairment due to cataract.

Cataract is most often related to aging. By age 80, more than half of all Americans have either a cataract or have had cataract surgery. Other risk factors for cataract include certain diseases such as diabetes, personal behavior such as smoking and alcohol use, and excessive exposure to sunlight. Symptoms include cloudy or blurred vision, colors that seem faded, glare, poor night vision, and frequent prescription changes for eyeglasses or contact lenses. The symptoms of early cataract may be improved with new eyeglasses, brighter lighting, antiglare sunglasses, or magnifying lenses. If these measures do not help, an eye care professional may recommend removing the clouded lens and replacing it with an artificial lens (surgery). Cataract surgery is one of the most common surgeries performed in the United States each year. Ninety percent of people who receive cataract surgery see better afterward.

## Injury and Safety

### **28-8: Reduce occupational eye injury.**

Eye injury is a leading cause of blindness in one eye and is second only to cataract as the most common cause of visual impairment. As many as 1,000 eye injuries occur in the workplace every day. Appropriate protective eyewear prevents most workplace eye injuries. Most workers who receive an eye injury either do not wear protective eyewear, or wear protection inappropriate for the job.



### **28-9: Increase the use of appropriate personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home.**

Nearly half of all eye injuries occur at home, and more than one-quarter occur during sports and recreation activities, and on streets and highways. Many injuries are preventable when people learn about injury risks and wear appropriate protective eyewear.

## Vision Rehabilitation

### **28-10: Increase vision rehabilitation.**

#### **28-10a Increase the use of vision rehabilitation services by persons with visual impairments.**

#### **28-10b Increase the use of visual and adaptive devices by persons with visual impairments.**

Low vision, or visual impairment, affects more than 14 million Americans every year. People affected find everyday tasks like reading or driving difficult, even with standard glasses, prescription contact lenses, medicine, or surgery. Vision rehabilitation helps people make the most of their remaining sight. Rehabilitation services include counseling and special education, as well as visual and adaptive devices that may help people see more clearly, navigate around their environments, and participate more fully in social activities.

# Planning Guide







## Planning Guide

This section offers step-by-step suggestions for planning and carrying out effective eye health promotion activities and public education projects. The planning guide will help you identify what you already know about the eye health needs in your community, and what you need to know. It will help you develop a plan with measurable outcomes, work with partnering organizations, get your message out to your target audience, and plan for future projects. Following these steps, whether you conduct a one-time special event, or a longer term comprehensive or ongoing program, will help ensure your success. Several ideas and examples of actual programs are given in the next section. Many more program outlines are available for review at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/), where you can add your program description once it is underway.

The basic steps outlined in this section are—

- ❖ Plan Your Approach
- ❖ Identify Eye Health Needs in Your Community
- ❖ Choose Your Healthy Vision 2010 Objective
- ❖ Learn About Your Target Audience
- ❖ Look at Other Projects
- ❖ Develop a Plan
- ❖ Develop a Key Message
- ❖ Choose Community Activities
- ❖ Assess Your Resources
- ❖ Develop a Budget
- ❖ Develop a Timeline
- ❖ Implement Your Plan
- ❖ Measure Your Success
- ❖ Apply Lessons Learned

## Plan Your Approach

Successful community-based programs come in all forms. Whatever your approach, you do not have to start from scratch. Deciding in advance what level of involvement you and/or your organization are willing to commit will determine how in-depth your planning will need to be to ensure your success.

Some research will help you learn about the needs in your community, find the Healthy Vision 2010 objective that relates to those needs, and decide how you can help. The scope of your plan, compared with existing resources, will determine the additional resources you will need and the amount of planning required.

Suggested activities for different groups begin on page 44 in this section, and each of the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks (see page 6) has more specific activities related to each objective. The following are three samples of approaches your program or activity can take:

### Start something

Start a program within your own organization, company, or association.

- ❖ Distribute the Healthy Vision 2010 brochure that best applies to your group or environment.
- ❖ Provide incentives for people in your organization to make vision a health priority.
- ❖ Print one of the Healthy Vision 2010 public service announcements (PSAs) in your newsletter or listserve announcement.
- ❖ Put a link to the Healthy Vision 2010 Website on your Intranet or Website.

### Team up

You can work with an existing program to find vision services for the children and families of people within your organization, or support another group with their vision needs or program.

- ❖ Team with an organization that provides vision screenings and eyeglasses and that will provide services for your group or organization.
- ❖ Sponsor the activities of an organization that provides services to a disadvantaged population in your community.
- ❖ Invite a local organization that provides vision services to host a booth at your event free of charge.

- ❖ Donate printing, accounting, advertising space, or another service to support Healthy Vision 2010 activities in your community.

## Take the lead

Create a network of companies and organizations that will work together to sponsor activities that meet the needs of their own organization and/or others in their community.

- ❖ Focus on one Healthy Vision 2010 concern in your community and involve individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses to help address that concern.
- ❖ Encourage individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses to take action to address the Healthy Vision 2010 objective most appropriate to their environment.
- ❖ Identify an annual observance, day, week, or month to raise awareness about making vision a health priority, such as tying into Healthy Vision Month in May.

## Identify Eye Health Needs in Your Community

Gather information about the needs within the scope of your approach—your business or organization, the organization you are teaming with, or your community. This information will be the foundation of a successful program and will help you understand the needs, information channels, and barriers to healthy vision among your target audience. Based on this information, you can better identify partnership opportunities, set goals and objectives, determine the resources needed, plan and implement your program, measure your success, and plan for future activities.

## Use the Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives

You may already be aware of an eye health concern in your community because of your personal experience. Your child's vision problem may have gone undetected, affecting his grades in school or relationships with classmates, and you want to prevent this from happening to others. Perhaps someone in your family has an eye disease or vision loss, and you truly appreciate the importance of preventing vision loss and blindness. Knowing how widespread the problem is in your community will help you find likeminded individuals and organizations, and will encourage others to help you achieve your objective.

## Ask questions

If you are not already aware of a need in your community that requires attention, here are some sample questions you may want to answer to help identify a Healthy Vision 2010 objective:

- ❖ Do people in our community have timely comprehensive dilated eye exams? Are people at higher risk for eye diseases aware of the importance of early detection and timely treatment to help protect their vision? Are populations at risk aware that these important eye exams may be covered by Medicare? How can we reach them with this information? (Objective 28-1: Dilated eye examinations)
- ❖ Do children in our community get vision screenings before they reach the first grade and at other appropriate times? Are certain population groups or geographic areas underserved? What prevents children from getting the recommended screenings? How can our community improve screening levels? (Objective 28-2: Vision screening for children)
- ❖ What can be done in our community to make sure people get prescriptive contact lenses or eyeglasses to correct refractive errors like nearsightedness? (Objective 28-3: Impairment due to refractive errors)
- ❖ How many children and adolescents are visually impaired? How can visual impairment be reduced among these groups in our community? Who are their caregivers? Where and how can they receive low-cost eye exams, treatment, or prescription eyeglasses? (Objective 28-4: Impairment in children and adolescents)
- ❖ How many people in our community have diabetes and are at risk for diabetic retinopathy? How can visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy be reduced in our community? Are there diabetes programs that could include a vision component in their patient education? (Objective 28-5: Impairment due to diabetic retinopathy)
- ❖ How many people in our community are at risk for glaucoma? How can visual impairment due to glaucoma be reduced in our community? Are people aware of the Medicare benefit that covers dilated eye exams for people with a family history of glaucoma? (Objective 28-6: Impairment due to glaucoma)



- ❖ How many people in our community are at risk for cataract? How can visual impairment due to cataract be reduced in our community? Do older people in our community know that there is treatment for cataract? (Objective 28-7: Impairment due to cataract)
- ❖ Does our community have a large number of workers whose vision is at risk on the job? Do employers make protective eyewear available through their company health care service? (Objective 28-8: Occupational eye injury)
- ❖ Do adults and children in our community use protective eyewear for sports or while working in the yard, workshop, or garage? Does our recreation department require protective eyewear in their sports programs? (Objective 28-9: Protective eyewear)
- ❖ How many people in our community could benefit from vision rehabilitation services, adaptive devices, or visual devices? Are there gathering places where people could learn more about these devices and services? (Objective 28-10: Vision rehabilitation services and devices).

## Find Answers

Finding answers to these questions is the beginning of developing contacts and ideas for your plan. Use the contact form on the following page to keep track of your activities. You probably won't need to complete the entire form during your first call, but get as much information as you can. This information will be helpful in locating organizations that will support your activities at other stages in your plan.

- ❖ Contact your local health department, social service agency, parks and recreation commission, or planning agency to find out about programs and vision problems in your community.
- ❖ Ask schools whether they have information about the number of children and adolescents who have had vision screenings, and about programs that are available.
- ❖ Check with volunteer and advocacy organizations that have target audiences in common with your project's focus, such as the local office of the American Diabetes Association or your area Agency on Aging. A diabetes program could include a diabetic eye disease program. Groups that serve older Americans could help identify people who need eye exams or rehabilitation services.
- ❖ Find out if your community has a Healthy People 2010 plan or program where you could introduce a Healthy Vision 2010 program.

## Contact Form

Contact Name & Title	Organization	Committee Position Proposed*	Phone & Fax	Address/ E-mail	Next Steps	Notes (org. description, audience served, reach, resources)

- ❖ Visit [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/) for links to sites where you can learn what is available in your community.

Ask each person or organization you contact to suggest other contacts. For example, the health department staff might suggest some local charitable and cultural organizations you could contact. Here are some other ideas for making contacts:

- ❖ Local or state affiliates of national organizations like Lighthouse International and the Lions Club. (See a list of organizations involved with Healthy Vision 2010 at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).)
- ❖ Health education departments of local hospitals, clinics, and health maintenance organizations (HMOs).
- ❖ Local or state chapters of health professional organizations, such as the National Association of School Nurses, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the American Optometric Association.
- ❖ Local libraries, colleges, and other educational institutions.

## Choose Your Healthy Vision 2010 Objective

Once you have gathered information about the eye health needs in your community, consider which of the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives fit with your findings. Keep in mind that the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives address broad national concerns. You will need to determine which of these national goals applies to your community. Then adapt the national objective so that it more specifically applies to the target audience and meets the needs in your community.



For example, the Healthy Vision 2010 objective that addresses glaucoma is—  
*Reduce visual impairment and blindness due to glaucoma.*

The community objective in the sample below reflects the specific ways in which a community program can adapt that national concern to the local level by doing the research in the Identify Eye Health Needs in Your Community section of this guide:

- ❖ Increase awareness and knowledge of glaucoma among African American women.

- ❖ Increase the number of African American women who make appointments for comprehensive dilated eye exams for their family members age 40 and older.

## Learn About Your Target Audience

Learn more about the target audiences identified in the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives than just statistics. The more you know, the better you can devise possible solutions to the eye health concerns in your community, and the more effectively you can personalize messages, materials, and events and help ensure their success. For a given Healthy Vision 2010 objective, gather information about the target audience for your objective by answering questions such as—

- ❖ How many people are affected?
- ❖ What prevents them from taking steps to protect their vision?
- ❖ What are their values and plans for the future?
- ❖ Whom do they trust to provide health information?
- ❖ Where do they work, gather, shop, worship, and socialize?
- ❖ Where, from whom, and how do they get their health information?
- ❖ Where do they receive health care, and at what cost—both financially and personally (time, convenience, and stress)?
- ❖ What opportunities exist to develop a program that will overcome these barriers to improve the eye health of your community?
- ❖ What benefits and costs would they consider acceptable for making vision a health priority?

Answers to some of the above questions should help you profile your target audience. If you cannot answer these questions, you may need to do more research. For example, you may learn that many Hispanics/Latinos in your community have diabetes and are at risk for diabetic retinopathy. Knowing how many people are affected, where they live and work, and their English-language skills, will help you decide what materials are already available, what you will need to develop, how many you will need, and where they should be made available.

More information about who is affected by each objective is available from the sources below—

- ❖ Facts About Healthy Vision 2010 section of this Community Action Guide
- ❖ Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks, each focusing on a different objective (see page 6)
- ❖ The Healthy Vision 2010 Website: [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/)
- ❖ The National Eye Institute: 1-800-869-2020.

## Look at Other Projects

The Examples of Programs and Ideas for Programs section beginning on page 53 offers some examples of real projects funded by the Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards Program of the National Eye Institute, and ideas for other projects. Use these to get ideas for your own project and build on others' experiences.

### What comes first?

What comes first? Deciding what is needed? Or deciding how you or your organization can help do what is needed? A plan is a starting point. It should be dynamic and challenging. You can adapt your plan as you learn more about the resources in your community, your target audience, and who and what other organizations are doing in your community. Be flexible. Do what makes sense, fits with your interests and experience, and is likely to work for you. Then build on your success.

This planning guide uses the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives as a framework for your needs assessment research. You could also start from a different point by adding an eye health component to an existing program. Say, for example, you have worked successfully with older adults. You can easily build on this experience in the eye health area. Older Americans are more likely to have glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataract, and low vision. You could address four Healthy Vision 2010 objectives with older Americans as your target audience:

- ❖ 28-5 Reduce visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy
- ❖ 28-6 Reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma
- ❖ 28-7 Reduce visual impairment due to cataract
- ❖ 28-10 Increase the use of vision rehabilitation services and adaptive devices.

## Develop a Plan

In the previous section, you identified a Healthy Vision 2010 objective that relates to the needs of one or more target populations within your community. In this section, you will learn how to outline a plan that will help you identify opportunities, resources, and activities for addressing the objective you identified. After you share your plan with the others who will work with you, it may be revised to reflect their roles and resources.

The plan for the program you are developing can be as simple as the sample glaucoma plan on the next page. This section includes a brief discussion for developing each component of the community-wide program, based on the sample glaucoma plan. Whatever program or activity you decide to do, the elements in the sample plan provide a good outline for your own program, large or small. They include—

- ❖ Target audience
- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Key message
- ❖ Activities
- ❖ Materials
- ❖ Resources
- ❖ Groups to involve
- ❖ Budget
- ❖ Timeline
- ❖ Measure your success



## Sample Program Plan for Glaucoma

<b>Target Audience:</b>	African American women ages 40 and older
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>Help African American women understand the importance of annual comprehensive dilated eye exams for their friends, neighbors, and loved ones who are ages 40 and older.</p> <p>Increase the number of African American women who make appointments for comprehensive dilated eye exams for themselves and their family members who are ages 40 and older.</p>
<b>Key Message:</b>	Don't lose sight of glaucoma. Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam.
<b>Activities:</b>	Distribute NEHEP materials
<b>Community:</b>	Develop and print lists of eye exam sources Make presentations at four sorority meetings
<b>Media:</b>	Appear on two call-in shows on African American-oriented radio programs Place billboards in selected neighborhoods Place bus cards on city buses
<b>Materials:</b>	National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) poster NEHEP brochure Resource list—where to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam in our community Radio live-announcer copy
<b>Resources:</b>	Printing Three months' billboard space Billboard design Speakers Service providers Meeting/outreach space Media outreach

**Groups to Involve:**

**Resource**

**Providers:**

ABC Printers  
Acme Billboards  
Health care organizations (speakers, services)  
Faith-based community (transportation,  
meeting/outreach space)

**Outreach**

**Businesses:**

Three largest employers of African American women  
Grocery, drug, and convenience stores in selected  
neighborhoods  
Selected beauty shops

**Organizations:**

Selected faith-based institutions, sororities, and social clubs  
Local affiliates of NEHEP partnership members

**Government**

**Agencies:**

Libraries in selected neighborhoods  
Social Security offices

**Health Care**

**Providers:**

Local Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)  
Two hospitals with community outreach programs  
Two community health centers

**Measure success:**

Track number of materials distributed  
Track call-in show response  
Track number of comprehensive dilated eye exams  
performed by selected facilities  
Survey patients at selected facilities on knowledge and  
sources of information

**Budget** (see heading in this section)

**Timeline** (see heading in this section)

## Develop a Key Message

Part of developing your key message depends on the approach you are taking, the objective that applies to your program, and your goals. Use a short, well-crafted message to inform your target audience what they should know and do.

For example, if you are developing a diabetic eye disease program, think about using a message like the one the National Eye Institute developed for Healthy Vision Month (May) 2004 that diabetes health educators could add to their self-care message.

If you have diabetes,  
**get a dilated eye exam** and  
keep your health on **TRACK**:

**T**ake medications as prescribed by your doctor.  
**R**each and maintain a healthy weight  
**A**dd physical activity to your daily routine  
**C**ontrol your ABCs (A1C, blood pressure, and cholesterol)  
**K**ick the smoking habit.

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

 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
National Institutes of Health  
National Eye Institute

In the sample glaucoma plan, the message is—

**"Don't lose sight of glaucoma. Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam."**

If you are starting a new initiative, look at the messages developed by other organizations that are on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website, or use the brochure and newsletter articles in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbook that apply to your objective to get some ideas.

Identify who, when, and where your audience will be hearing this message to help stimulate other ideas. Bring these ideas to a brainstorming meeting that includes some of the people you contacted earlier, or people in your business. Share your program objectives with them and come up with several ideas. Select a few of the messages to share with members of your target audience.

Some programs work through intermediaries. An intermediary is the person who is in direct contact with your target audience. Intermediaries can be parents who can convey messages to their children, married couples, coaches, health care providers, or recreation directors. If you are asking people to pass this message along to your target audience, find out how they feel about the message. If they are not comfortable with the message, they are less likely to pass it on.

Getting feedback from your target audience before you develop your materials is called pretesting your message. It helps to ensure that your message will appeal to the target audience and that it will be passed along, understood, and acted upon. Pretesting can be as simple as gathering a group that is representative of your target audience from your office, recreation center, health center, or school. If you have the time and the money, you can hire a professional focus-testing provider to do this for you. Be prepared to revise the messages one or more times until the message is clear and appealing to your target audience and is comfortable for the intermediaries. For example, "Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam," may not be appealing to a person without insurance or other means to pay for the exam. Maybe your message would be more effective if it said, "Ask about free eye exams for people at risk." Using this message requires that your program plan include a way for this to happen, of course.

## Choose Community Activities

Here is where you define exactly what you are going to do to accomplish your objective. Later on, these activities will be put into a timeline and a budget to determine when your activities will take place, and how much it will cost. Some of these tasks were already considered when you were developing your message. Now is the time to get specific.

Knowing, learning, and applying what you know about your target audience in developing your plan will help you to devise innovative ways to get your message out where you can motivate people to take action.



Some questions to ask for deciding what activities will resonate with your target audience include—

- ❖ Who is your audience—the public, intermediaries, or specific persons?
- ❖ What do they read?
- ❖ Where do they shop?
- ❖ What local activities does your target population enjoy?
- ❖ Where does your target audience do their regular car repairs or buy auto parts to repair their own cars?

## Media Activities

A media guide begins on page 65 of this Community Action Guide. The media guide will assist you in working with the media to increase the visibility of your program and aid in its success. Your program plan should include media activities that you feel will best reach your target audience.

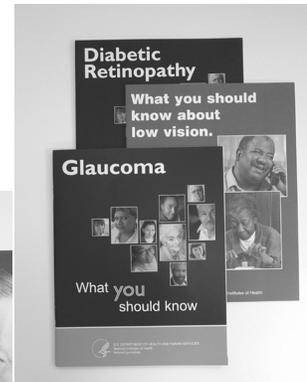


## Materials

Suppose you have learned in your research that most of the eye injuries in your community occur in manufacturing facilities. Think about the places this audience and their intermediaries work, worship, socialize, and/or obtain health care information. In this case, you may want to talk to the eye care professionals who treat workplace injuries, to personnel directors, to staff physicians, or to the spouses of the employees. The promotional materials you develop or use will depend on what role the person plays in the decisionmaking process of your target audience and what materials will help you gain their attention.

- ❖ Would youths find an "eyeball" keychain an appealing reminder to get an eye exam before they start driver's education classes?
- ❖ Will the messages or materials reach your target audience better in newspapers or newsletters, pharmacies, utility bills?
- ❖ Will a fun, eye-catching activity like a baseball toss at a local baseball game be a good opportunity to hand out materials about wearing protective eyewear?
- ❖ Would a keychain with a tiny pair of goggles given away at auto parts stores serve as a reminder to use protective eyewear in risky situations at home and at work?

As with message development, the people you work with on your committee and other local organizations may have materials and products that you can use or adapt for your particular target audience and project. Having an idea of some materials that you think will convey your message in an appealing way can also help you identify partners and resources to develop, adapt, or provide those materials.



The National Eye Institute offers free materials that you may use in your activities, including posters, brochures, educational tools, and more. For a list of materials, visit

[www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/). You can also find the names of organizations that have an interest in your Healthy Vision 2010 objective on the Website. Many offer low-cost materials to promote eye health. Lighthouse International, for example, offers glasses that simulate how a person's vision can be affected by different eye diseases.

## Assess Your Resources

The Approach People About Working With You section that begins on page 40 will help you prepare to discuss your findings with your partners so that you can agree on a plan that leverages everyone's strengths and resources. Assess your own individual and organizational resources for carrying out your potential project. Be realistic. Include staff, time required, funds, facilities, expertise, and contacts. Make a list of your needs so that you can be specific about how collaborating organizations and people can help, as well as benefit. Review the contact forms that you used in the Identify Eye Health Needs in Your Community section to identify potential partners and resources. In the case of a project targeting Hispanic/Latino people with diabetes, for example, you may need help in reaching that population and in developing bilingual messages. If you adapt English-language materials to Spanish, consult with people from your target audience to be sure that the meaning, as well as the words, conveys your message.

You have both the vision and the facts to implement a program that will address an eye health need in your community. You know the target audience and the resources required to reach that audience and fill that need. You know what your organization can contribute. Now you need to decide where to obtain additional resources that will help mobilize people and organizations to work with you. The Approach People About Working With You section beginning on page 40 offers tips for approaching and working with the organizations that will be your partners.

Decide exactly what you need, who can fulfill that need, and what level of involvement you think they are willing to provide. Review the Plan Your Approach section from the view of the person you are contacting. Where do they see themselves in your plan? Your partners may be willing to provide space or financial support, but not outreach activities. They should have a clear understanding of the objectives of your program and how they fit into the overall plan. People whom you plan to ask to serve on your planning committee should be able to fill a specific need you have identified, and be prepared to spend the time necessary to accomplish your goals. Solicit help from contacts to locate additional resources. Include nonprofit groups, businesses, volunteer organizations, and civic groups. The form on the next page will help you identify avenues to provide the resources you need.

## Other Resources

Consider additional tasks, space, and activities you may need to implement your plan, such as—

- ❖ Committee communications
- ❖ Budget management
- ❖ Media management
- ❖ Speakers
- ❖ Equipment
- ❖ Expert consultants
- ❖ Meeting or event space
- ❖ Government support
- ❖ Graphics—posters, invitations, and promotional products
- ❖ Volunteers
- ❖ Outreach
- ❖ Giveaways
- ❖ Printing
- ❖ Eye care services
- ❖ Protective eyewear for demonstrations

Use the following form to record information about the needs of and resources for your program. If you don't want to write in this booklet, or if you need more space, feel free to photocopy the form.

**Need money?** What funding sources are available that are sponsored by local businesses, schools, organizations, and agencies that are concerned with your objective or target audience?

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**Need meeting/event space?** What locations are central to where your target audience lives, works, gathers, worships, or plays that could be used as the program location?

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**Need visibility?** What local personalities or community leaders would make good spokespeople for your program?

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**Need public awareness?** What are the local media outlets (TV, radio, print) that are available to support your vision program?

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## Develop a Budget

Your budget should include the costs for all of the components of your plan, from program development through service delivery. The budget should follow the same format as your plan, or the format of the source from which you will receive your funding, whether that is your own company or a different funding source.

Don't try to show how inexpensive the program will be to implement, and end up running short. Anticipate shortfalls and come out ahead. People will be more likely to work with you again, and you will give your program the best chance for success.

A budget can be the first indication that you need more planning, more money, or more audience research. You may find that you need to scale back your plan to work within your budget, and build up to something else. For example, you could try out your plan at one location to decide whether you correctly estimated the number of people who will respond.

Explain any items that need further detail in a narrative description of how, where, and why you have included expenses. For example, your company may allow employees paid time off for volunteer work 2 hours per month. This cost and the cost of space donated, including utilities, may be a tax deduction for your company as a charitable contribution.

- ❖ Include direct expenses, indirect expenses, and like-kind contributions.
- ❖ Tell the same story as your program's plan
- ❖ Include detailed descriptions or reasons for use, if reasons are needed
- ❖ Project costs to be needed during the program's duration
- ❖ Anticipate various or unforeseen expenses
- ❖ Include all items required by the funding source
- ❖ Include all items paid for by other sources
- ❖ Include volunteer and in-kind services to be provided
- ❖ Detail additional benefits separate from salaries, if these costs are required
- ❖ Include all fees for consultants or contractors
- ❖ Lay out details of all non-personnel costs
- ❖ Include indirect costs when appropriate

Budget for Sample Glaucoma Plan	Actual cost	Resource	Net cost
<b>Materials:</b>			
25 National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP) posters	Free	NEI	Free
NEHEP brochures reprint from Glaucoma Handbook	\$17.00	ABC Printers	Free
Resource list—where to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam in our community—600	\$17.00	ABC Printer	Free
Radio live-announcer copy Reprint from Glaucoma Handbook—10	Free	NEI	Free
<b>Resources:</b>			
Three months' billboard space	3x\$150=\$450	Acme Billboards— One month free	\$300
Billboard design	\$1,000	The Ad Agency/ Non-profit discount 30%	\$700
Speakers	\$50x4=\$200	Health care organization	\$200
Service providers (comprehensive dilated eye exams)	Cost 250x\$75= \$18,750	Discount from providers	250x\$35= \$8,750
Meeting/outreach space, including phone, utilities, and staff	Salaries: \$2,600 Space: \$1,400	Our organization Free space	Free
Outreach support (transportation)	Free	Faith-based community/volunteers	Free
Media outreach/message testing	20 hours@ \$25/hour= \$500	The discount rate of the firm of \$25 per hour	\$500
<b>Recognition:</b>			
Awards	\$100	Our Organization	\$100
Breakfast	\$3,500	Our Organization	\$3,500
<b>Total Net Cost:</b>			<b>\$14,050</b>

## Develop a Timeline

Every program, event, or activity should have a detailed implementation plan with milestones. Some events, especially those involving many organizations, may require as much as a year of planning and background work. For other activities, the upfront work can be done in as little as 3 months (see the sample implementation plan below). Be reasonable and consider contingencies in putting together a realistic plan with deadlines that can and will be met.

You will need a timeline that identifies benchmarks for completing each of the activities in your plan, leading up to the date of your event or the date for making a public announcement about your initiative (launch or kickoff date). Set a reasonable target date that allows time to make adjustments. Consider what other activities are happening at around the same time that will either compete with or support your event. Working backward from the date you have selected to the present, develop a timeline based on the example given later in this section. Plan followup activities, such as measuring media coverage or participation by working ahead from the date of your event.

### Three Months Before Your Event:

- ❖ Select the date, time, and duration of the event
- ❖ Register your event at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/)
- ❖ Contact local media organizations to secure promotional opportunities
- ❖ Obtain licenses and permits
- ❖ Send a promotional mailing to potential participants (organizations and individuals)
- ❖ Send announcements to community calendars
- ❖ Secure speakers, talent, and staff, as necessary
- ❖ Secure the location
- ❖ Reserve equipment.

### Two Months Before Your Event:

- ❖ Tailor related materials in the Healthy Vision 2010 Community Action Guide and Handbooks to the needs of your event and audience
- ❖ Create an event flyer or poster
- ❖ Pretest materials with your target audience and their caregivers

- ❖ Follow up with vendors, speakers, media contacts, and coordinators to ensure you are on schedule
- ❖ Review your budget and resources
- ❖ Send print public service announcements (PSAs) to the media, along with samples of any other materials you will use to promote your event.

### **One Month Before Your Event:**

- ❖ Confirm speakers, talent, facilities, and equipment.
- ❖ Print and distribute promotional materials.
- ❖ Send the updated event outline to the media.
- ❖ Call news media representatives to determine whether they want private interviews. Arrange space and time.
- ❖ Review logistics, including transportation for speakers, food and beverages for volunteers, and delivery of materials to be distributed
- ❖ Prepare a checklist of essential tasks that need to be monitored the day of your event: talent/speakers, waiting and interview areas, adequate supplies, equipment checks, and media management (see the Media Guide beginning on page 65).

### **Day of the Event:**

- ❖ Keep communication lines available for emergencies
- ❖ Follow your plan
- ❖ Review your checklist of essential tasks
- ❖ Monitor event workers and coordinate tasks
- ❖ Have fun promoting healthy vision!

### **After the Event:**

- ❖ Send thank-you notes
- ❖ Follow up with the media
- ❖ Track your progress
- ❖ Review what worked and didn't work; list lessons learned
- ❖ Get feedback from partner organizations.

## Implement Your Plan

Communities experiencing the most success in addressing health issues have involved representatives of many sectors of their community: public health, health care, businesses, local governments, schools, civic organizations, volunteer health organizations, faith organizations, park and recreation departments, and other interested groups and private citizens. Collaboration has become almost synonymous with success. Healthy Vision 2010 projects offer numerous opportunities for partnering and leveraging resources. Look at the contact forms you filled out when you were gathering information about the eye health needs in your community. Identify which ones can fill the resources needed to implement your plan.

See the section Choose Community Activities or the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks to see specific ways in which some organizations may help. Here are some general suggestions:

- ❖ Faith-based institutions, neighborhood associations, and recreational centers may provide space for meetings, displays, or events into which you can incorporate your vision messages. Other collaborators may help with equipment, staff, services, and financial support.
- ❖ Community service agencies may be implementing programs in your community that are relevant to your project.
- ❖ Local organizations may share an interest in your Healthy Vision 2010 objective. (Check the vision organizations listed at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).)
- ❖ National organizations, state and territorial health departments, and key national associations of state health officials who are working on other focus areas of Healthy People 2010 may add a vision component to their programs. Links to these organizations are available on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).
- ❖ Local agencies and organizations that serve the target audience may be interested in adding a vision component.
- ❖ Local nonprofit health organizations, social service agencies, civic and volunteer groups, fraternities and sororities at nearby colleges and universities, associations, and businesses might like to participate. They can donate funds, volunteers, or provide services.

## Approach People About Working With You

Each potential person or organization that you want to involve in your program may require a somewhat different approach. For example, you may want to involve someone you know from your church who is also on the board of a scouting group from which you are recruiting volunteers. This approach will be less formal. In another case, you want the president of a locally based, national toy manufacturer to let you use one of their products in your program. You will need additional time to contact him or her to ask for help, and your approach will be more formal.



Before your first meeting with a potential partner, review the Healthy Vision 2010 Speaker's Guide. The Speaker's Guide is available to print out at [www.healthyvision.org/](http://www.healthyvision.org/), or it can be ordered by calling the National Eye Institute at 1-800-869-2020. When meeting your contacts, identify one or more compelling facts or comments that will resonate with their workforce, concern, or objective such as—

- ❖ **Approaching a sports equipment shop manager**—"Did you know that more than 90 percent of eye injuries could be prevented with the use of properly fitting protective eyewear?"
- ❖ **Approaching a service organization representative**—"When I realized (give statistic) older adults in our community are visually challenged, I felt I had to do something to make life easier for them."
- ❖ **Approaching a school nurse**—"I was shocked to learn how many children in this area did not have a vision screening before they entered elementary school."

Share some highlights of your research on what the community needs.

During your conversation—

- ❖ Ask whether the organization has participated in similar programs in the past. If possible, find out any positive or negative feedback so that you can better position your request.
- ❖ Talk about some of your specific needs and how the organization might contribute.
- ❖ Ask about the interests/mission of the organization and ask how you can support their efforts.

- ❖ Ask what businesses, worship and activity centers, parents, and caregivers might want to become involved in planning vision-related programs in your community.
- ❖ Ask where members of the target audience work, worship, socialize, obtain health care, and access information.
- ❖ Ask whether your potential partner is aware of other organizations/ agencies/programs already providing eye health care to the target audience. Is his or her organization involved in outreach and education?
- ❖ If you think the organization makes a good match, ask the person or representative of the organization to become a part of your planning committee or to otherwise support your program (through funding or by acting as an intermediary to your target population).
- ❖ If prospective partners commit right away, ask about a good day of the week and time when they might be available for the first committee meeting. Tell them you will call or e-mail them about the date and location.
- ❖ If they need more time to think about it, let them know how important their contribution can be to the success of the program. Make sure they know their group will be credited in all event or program materials, and indicate that you will follow up.

## **Set up a planning committee**

Many community activities begin with a steering committee or planning committee. Members help strategize, provide resources, and participate in the promotion, development, and implementation of the program. They lend knowledge, skills, and experience, and they provide credibility and connection to the target audience.

Use your contact list to decide how each person fits into your program. When you call, remind your contacts of your earlier conversation about the vision needs in your community and your ideas about a project or program for improving eye health. Tell them what you have learned in the meanwhile and how you think they can help with your program. Review the section titled Approach People About Working With You. Then invite them to serve on your planning committee.

If the committee invitation is declined, ask about other ways the organization might be willing to help. For example, could they contribute money, post or distribute information, make in-kind contributions such as photocopying services or meeting space, or provide some type of giveaway?

Before your first meeting, review your list of contacts who have committed to becoming planning committee members, and ask yourself whether you have invited everyone who should be included. For example—

- ❖ Are target audience members represented, along with the organizations that serve them?
- ❖ Are eye care professionals represented?
- ❖ Are parents, caregivers, and others who influence the behavior of the target audience represented?
- ❖ Are key sectors of the economy included—small and large businesses, volunteer organizations, faith-based communities?
- ❖ Is your local health department represented?
- ❖ Is the membership culturally, geographically, and socioeconomically diverse?
- ❖ Are there people who may have competing agendas?
- ❖ Are your resource needs represented?

Select a time and location that accommodates as many of your committee members as possible and let them know well in advance. Be sure to tell them how long the meeting will last and the basic agenda items. After people agree to be on your committee, you probably can handle routine communications by e-mail, such as sending a reminder about the meeting.

Create an organized, meaningful agenda. Begin with introductions. Indicate what you want to accomplish during this first meeting. Present a summary of your findings and collect comments about your tentative recommendations. Allow time for brainstorming. Be certain about how you think you and your committee might be able to make a positive change in your community, but be open to new ideas. By participating in decisions, committee members will feel they have more of a share in the outcome.

More than one meeting may be required to get agreement among committee members on program elements and the timeline, and to define the roles of committee members and potential partners. More information may be needed. People may need to check with their organizations to get approval to participate. Be patient. Committees are more effective when every member is consulted, encouraged to participate, and most important, given an assignment.

The committee should meet regularly to report progress and stay on track. Subcommittees or task forces might be necessary to address specific program elements such as media outreach.

## **Develop materials**

You outlined materials needed for your program in your plan. Now that you have clearly defined goals, partners, a plan, a key message, and resources, you can begin to develop those materials for your target audience, partnership organizations, the news media, and special groups such as elected officials. You may not need to develop materials from scratch. You may be able to use materials already developed by the NEI or another organization, or you may be able to adapt them for your particular target audience and project.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you develop materials:

- ❖ Develop or adapt themes to work for your target audience in your community
- ❖ Decide what materials will best convey your message
- ❖ Pretest your materials with your target audience
- ❖ Revise as appropriate before printing large quantities of your materials
- ❖ Develop a method for tracking the number of products used
- ❖ Develop a method for tracking how many people took the desired action
- ❖ Decide on other measures of success such as media coverage.

## **Leverage community resources**

One of the key steps in developing an effective eye health program is mobilizing people and organizations. By leveraging the resources in your community, you can build a stronger Healthy Vision 2010 program. You can enhance your efforts in reaching your target audience, and thereby improve your chances of success.

Suggestions for involving various sectors of your community are listed below. Some suggestions may not be relevant to the project you are planning. However, they may prompt you to think of other activities that might work well in your community.

## Get businesses involved

- ❖ Suggest that businesses print materials to support your program. Businesses can create, print, and distribute messages to their employees.
- ❖ Provide program-related inserts for companies to include in utility bills, bank statements, and shopping circulars.
- ❖ Develop an eye health placemat/tray liner for restaurants. Messages also can be printed on receipts, takeout food containers, and napkins. These suggestions are more likely to be successful with local restaurants and corporate and school cafeterias than with large food chains that obtain their supplies from a national supplier.
- ❖ Develop Website messages and links that promote your program and ask local organizations and businesses to post them on their Websites and link to your Website.
- ❖ Encourage businesses to record the radio PSAs in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks and play them as on-hold messages on their telephone systems.
- ❖ Provide the newsletter article and PSAs in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks to local newspapers, magazines, and businesses for use in their publications.
- ❖ Participate in an existing health fair sponsored by a shopping center. If a fair doesn't exist, suggest the center host one as a public service. Or start small and ask the center to allow you to set up an informational display.
- ❖ Provide eye health information to supermarkets to hand out to customers taking nutrition tours. Such tours are offered for customers with health concerns such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and for people who shop with food stamps to help them make healthy food choices.
- ❖ Arrange with a business that produces or sells novelties to print leave-behind reminders for program participants, or giveaways for other events.

## Get employers involved

- ❖ Encourage businesses to establish a healthy vision information center in employee cafeterias or in health and human resources offices. They can distribute the messages and materials copied from the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks and the Healthy Vision Month (May) materials through these information centers.

- ❖ Arrange a cooperative vision screening program between a business and an eye care professional. The eye care professional can conduct an onsite exam, and the business can offer incentives for employees to have followup eye exams or receive eye health services.
- ❖ Ask human resources managers to distribute the appropriate brochure or brochures from the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbook series at employee health seminars and meetings, new employee orientations, and preretirement planning sessions.
- ❖ Work with insurance coordinators to include an eye health component for employee health education or benefits programs. Suggest printing an article from a Healthy Vision 2010 Handbook in the company's newsletter.
- ❖ Offer to arrange protective eyewear seminars for employees. An eye care professional or a local sales representative from the protective eyewear company can demonstrate proper use and fit of different types of eyewear. Distribute Healthy Vision 2010 materials about eye safety practices and the early detection of vision problems.
- ❖ Encourage service organizations or unions to include Healthy Vision 2010 messages in their newsletters.
- ❖ Provide artwork from the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks for employers to insert in paycheck envelopes and other communications materials.
- ❖ Suggest that employers link to [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/) and distribute Healthy Vision 2010 messages to employees through company e-mail and Intranet sites.
- ❖ Provide Healthy Vision 2010 or Healthy Vision Month messages for businesses to post on their Intranets at appropriate times. Possible messages include back-to-school vision screening reminders for parents and eye exam reminders for people at risk for glaucoma.
- ❖ For employees with unused funds in their medical flexible spending account near the end of the year, suggest they use unspent funds for vision screenings for their children or for a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

### **Get health centers involved**

- ❖ Contribute artwork for messages to health care centers for them to include in newsletters and other communications for patients and their families. Look at designs and text in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks and other print materials on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).

- ❖ Encourage local health education programs to incorporate eye health messages in their existing programs, particularly programs for people with health problems, such as diabetes, that put them at higher risk for vision problems.
- ❖ Suggest that health centers offer limited-time coupons that are redeemable at participating eye care professionals for reduced-fee comprehensive dilated eye exams.
- ❖ Give health centers copies of the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks that focus on your objectives. Encourage them to copy the brochures and make them available at health fairs and other health promotion events. Suggest they print the article and the PSAs in their newsletter.
- ❖ Develop in-service training seminars for medical, health, and social service agencies. Ask hospitals to include information about eye diseases in continuing medical education programs.
- ❖ Suggest that social workers talk with new parents about observing their child's vision to identify potential problems early.
- ❖ Ask health care centers, clinics, and hospitals to record and use the radio PSAs in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbook for their telephone on-hold messages.
- ❖ Suggest that health care centers, clinics, and hospitals record and play eye health messages on the televisions in patients' rooms and waiting areas. Eye health messages that can be recorded appear in each of the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks. PSAs are available from the National Eye Institute at 1-800-869-2020.
- ❖ Provide copies of the Healthy Vision 2010 brochures that focus on your objective to drug store and hospital pharmacies. The brochures can be put in prescription bags, especially with prescriptions for children's, diabetes, and high blood pressure medications. Also ask the pharmacist whether he or she can print messages on prescription receipts.

### **Get involved with special events**

- ❖ Schedule events that coincide with health observances such as Healthy Vision Month in May or others listed in the calendar of health observances at [www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp](http://www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp)
- ❖ Take advantage of community events such as fairs, parades, festivals, sports tournaments, and health runs/walks. Focus on events that attract people in your target audience.

- ❖ Gather a list of people who visit healthy vision or health care exhibits, booths, or fairs, and send reminder cards with healthy vision messages.

### **Get local government officials involved**

- ❖ Contact the office of your mayor or Governor. Explain the critical eye health issues in your community and ask him or her to proclaim an eye health awareness week or month during Healthy Vision Month in May, or as part of another health observance. Have members of your target audience present for the reading of the proclamation. The proclamation can be an event of its own, or it can be part of a larger program designed to last throughout the day, week, or month. Review the Media Guide to learn how to work with the news media to cover this event. A sample proclamation is provided on page 49.
- ❖ Ask local fire and police departments to copy and distribute the brochures in the Healthy Vision 2010 Handbooks that focus on your objective at their community events. Add local emergency numbers. Use other materials at these events that are available from the NEI and other organizations that support your objective. A listing is available at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/).
- ❖ Provide retirement and assisted-living communities with posters and brochures available from the NEI. Use the brochure in the appropriate Healthy Vision 2010 Handbook and add the contact information for local eye care professionals. The brochure can be inserted in the newsletter that the communities send to residents and prospective residents. The article can be used in a newsletter, placed on a bulletin board, or posted on a Website.
- ❖ Encourage a local library to set up an exhibit on eye health, highlight eye-related books, or distribute brochures, especially during Healthy Vision Month in May.
- ❖ Help a shopping mall, community center, library, or other public facility host an eye health poster contest (for students) or an art exhibit (for older adults) and offer donated prizes. The event could offer vision screenings and information about eye health.
- ❖ Contact public transportation companies (buses and subways) and private transportation services (taxis) and ask them to offer free passes to and from a comprehensive dilated eye exam. Taxi services could offer free off-peak transportation by appointment.

- ❖ Work with eye care professionals to develop a directory or a referral service that offers vision rehabilitation services for people with low vision.
- ❖ Recommend that worship centers in your community host vision-related support groups, or tie in vision problems with other support group issues.
- ❖ Plan a Healthy Vision night at a game of a local sports team. Tailor it to address the area of greatest need in your community. Distribute discount coupons for the event through offices of eye care professionals, schools, and other venues. Set up information tables with low vision adaptive devices. Half-time activities could include having the mayor read a proclamation, or presenting prizes for a healthy vision poster contest you organized at a school or other location.
- ❖ Work with the local cable company or the video department at a local college to develop a PSA that could be played on the scoreboard at games.

## Sample Proclamation

For more information about [organization's] screenings, please contact [spokesperson's name] from [name of your organization] at [telephone number and/or e-mail address].

Healthy Vision 2010 [Day/Week/Month]

The Healthy Vision 2010 program is part of the Nation's prevention framework, Healthy People 2010. Healthy Vision 2010 encompasses a set of 10 important objectives that outlines ways for improving our eye health.

Vision is an essential part of everyday life, affecting how we learn, communicate, work, play, and interact with the world. Yet, millions of Americans live with visual impairment, and many more remain at risk for eye disease and preventable eye injury.

Many people remain unaware of good eye health practices, and all are at risk for vision loss. As many as 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease. Many eye diseases rob people of vision, mainly because the diseases have no symptoms. However, there is hope.

Having healthy vision means getting regular comprehensive dilated eye examinations, which is often the only way to detect the early stages of eye diseases. Having healthy vision also means getting vision screenings at appropriate intervals for children, and protecting your eyes at home and work.

Having healthy vision for millions of Americans with low vision means taking advantage of special services, training, and low vision devices to make the most of remaining vision. Low vision is when someone has a visual impairment that cannot be corrected to the normal range with contact lenses, prescription eyeglasses, or surgery. Taking these steps helps to ensure that people see their best throughout their life.

The eye health of this community, the overall health, in fact, can be enhanced with early detection through comprehensive dilated eye exams and timely treatment. Prevention education can also help increase the likelihood of people getting timely eye exams and treatment.

In recognition of the importance of achieving the Healthy Vision 2010 objectives to reduce visual impairment among all Americans, I, [name], [title] of [state or city], do hereby proclaim [day/week/month] as Healthy Vision [day/week/month]. I urge everyone to make eye health a priority.

Signature [mayor, Governor]

## Measure Your Success

You can benefit from the lessons learned and improve future efforts by collecting information about your activities:

Track the number of materials distributed to your audience, the media coverage of your activities, and the number of people who attend or respond to your promotional activities. If the numbers seem low, try to find out why and make adjustments.

- ❖ Check to ensure that deadlines were met and resources used efficiently. Look for more effective methods.
- ❖ Ask intermediaries, organizations, volunteers, and other participants what worked well, what improvements can be made, and what they would be willing to do next.
- ❖ Conduct informal interviews with people who attended your activity to determine whether your message was meaningful to them and whether they will change their eye health behavior as a result.
- ❖ Publicize and promote your successes with a news release.
- ❖ Review your budget to see where you over- or underestimated costs.

## Apply Lessons Learned

Answer the following: How can the project be improved? Assessing your accomplishments can help you determine where to make adjustments. You will then be in a better position to continue the important work you have started toward making vision a health priority in your community. Look at each aspect of your plan and decide what should be changed, deleted, or enhanced.

A thorough review of lessons learned may reveal that you should—

- ❖ Modify procedures, shift resources, or look for more effective ways to distribute materials. For example, you find that the senior center is always out of materials when you go to deliver more. You could develop a system to call your outlets on a regular basis. Provide the number for outlets to call when supplies run low on the materials.
- ❖ Involve some new organizations. For example, the middle school vision screening program got many children involved, but the children who needed followup exams didn't receive them. Maybe you could have participants of a mentoring program take the children for their followup visits.

- ❖ Decide to be more ambitious or less ambitious, or just modify your timeline. For example, your 1-day event didn't draw the number of participating organizations you had hoped for. You can scale back or allow more time to negotiate with organizations.

Repeat what worked best, but don't hesitate to try new approaches. For example, your activity or event is a huge success. Instead of staying with what now seems like a sure thing, use the momentum to branch out into other activities, neighborhoods, or populations. Revisit the original information sources you used to identify your community needs and see whether any changes have been reported. For example, an economic downturn can mean more unemployed people without health insurance who have unmet eye health needs.

Tackle a problem whose solution will help you in the future. For example, if patients are not showing up for eye exams, you may need to have more frequent appointment reminders, or provide transportation.



# Examples of Programs and Ideas for Programs







## Examples of Programs and Ideas for Programs

Each aspect of eye health education offers unique opportunities and challenges, from developing the idea, to “selling” the program, to hosting an event, to evaluating the results. The first section of this appendix presents examples of challenges faced and lessons learned by recipients of Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards. The second section offers additional ideas for programs.

### Healthy Vision 2010 Community-Based Programs

The National Eye Institute has funded projects under the Healthy Vision 2010 Community Awards Program. The awards provide funding for community-based eye health education and promotion programs targeted to children, people with diabetes, farmworkers, older adults, and multicultural populations.

The Community Awards projects mirror vision objectives in Healthy People 2010, and demonstrate substantial diversity in terms of eye health topics, age groups, racial/ethnic populations, geographic areas, types of activities, and partnerships. (Visit the Healthy Vision 2010 Website to read about all the current projects: [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/)).

The projects, launched in early 2003, have reported preliminary results, challenges, and lessons learned, to date. Highlights are presented here to illustrate the range of activities and the importance of designing programs and materials for the target audience. As these projects are completed and more projects are funded in the coming years, the expanded knowledge base will provide even more examples of effective community-based programs.

## Sample Program

### Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives:

**28-1 Dilated eye examinations.**

**28-5 Impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.**

**28-6 Impairment due to glaucoma.**

**28-7 Impairment due to cataract.**

**Target Audience:** African Americans, African Caribbeans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

**Title of Project:** Community Outreach to High-Risk Populations.

**Sponsor of Project:** New England Eye Institute, Boston, Massachusetts.

**Overall Purpose:** To implement and evaluate a direct outreach and patient education effort to increase the use of eye health services at four community health centers.

**Project Elements:** Sponsoring nine outreach events, at which verbal risk assessments were performed. Patients who failed the risk assessment were tracked and referred. Culturally appropriate materials were also distributed to prospective patients.

**Challenges to Date:** Difficulties in scheduling followup exams and ensuring patient followup. (Only 46 of 102 appointments were kept.)

**Lessons Learned to Date:** More effort is needed to ensure followup care.

**Interim Conclusion:** Educating immigrant populations about the importance of eye health may contribute to reducing morbidity from treatable or preventable eye and vision problems.

## Sample Program

### Healthy Vision 2010 Objective:

#### 28-2 Vision screening for children.

**Target Audience:** Underserved children and adolescents in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

**Title of Project:** Vision Screening and Education.

**Sponsor of Project:** KU HealthPartners, Inc., Kansas City, Kansas.

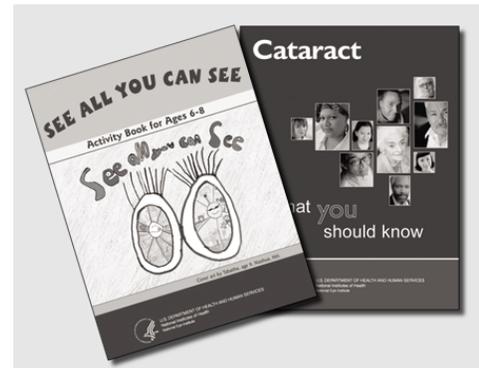
**Overall Purpose:** 1) To provide basic vision screenings for all children and adolescents ages 2 through 14 in child care and after-school programs at three facilities, and 2) to educate children, adolescents, and families on the importance of eye health and the significance of ongoing vision screening.

**Project Elements:** Developing relationships with community and national service organizations, including the Kansas Optometric Association; sponsoring vision-screening events; and gathering support from a variety of public and private-sector organizations.

**Challenges to Date:** Developing bilingual materials, identifying referral sources for children requiring further vision testing, and establishing age-appropriate vision-screening protocols.

**Lessons Learned to Date:** The project plan must include adequate resources for referral.

**Interim Conclusion:** Early identification and correction of vision problems in children, especially in medically underserved areas, can prevent problems that are more difficult to treat.



## Sample Program

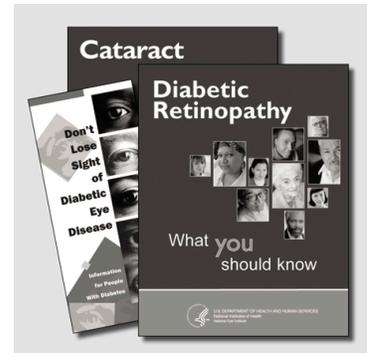
### Healthy Vision 2010 Objective:

#### 28-5 Impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.

**Target Audience:** People with diabetes.

**Title of Project:** Vision Education Program.

**Sponsor of Project:** Hill Health Corporation, New Haven, Connecticut.



**Overall Purpose:** To educate people with diabetes about the need for regular comprehensive dilated eye exams, and the importance of preventing diabetic retinopathy.

**Project Elements:** Presenting curriculum and materials to health education staff, sponsoring one-on-one and group educational sessions with patients, participating in diabetes health fairs, sending direct mail to patients, providing bulletin board displays, conducting focus group research, performing chart audits to assess referral, and encouraging provider in-service assistance.

**Challenges to Date:** Lack of understanding among staff about the importance of completing and providing tracking reports, and a lack of understanding among patients about the importance of getting regular comprehensive dilated eye exams.

**Lessons Learned to Date:** Patients who are unaware of the importance of getting comprehensive dilated eye exams are more difficult to recruit to educational interventions. Access to such patients through an existing diabetes education program is easier.

**Interim Conclusion:** Patients may be aware of comprehensive dilated eye exams and may have received a referral for an exam, but they must also understand the importance of prevention through such an exam, which will help increase followup action taken.

## Sample Program

### Healthy Vision 2010 Objective:

#### 28-8 Occupational eye injury.

**Target Audience:** Farmworkers at risk for eye injury.

**Title of Project:** ¡OJO! con tu vista [Take Care With Your Sight] Part II-Visual Prevention Resources for Diverse Farmworker Communities.

**Sponsor of Project:** Rural Women's Health Project, Gainesville, Florida.

**Overall Purpose:** To develop English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole companion posters and pocket handouts on eye injury prevention and the use of protective eyewear by farmworkers.

**Project Elements:** Holding discussions with five collaborating organizations; participating in the development of draft materials to blend collaborators' new findings with the project's older materials; inviting people to the national farmworker health listserve to complete a brief eye injury survey; following up with interested people in Illinois, Idaho, Georgia, Arizona, Florida, California, and Texas; and partnering with a new farmworker eye awareness project in southern Florida.

**Challenges to Date:** Difficulties in mobilizing collaborators and conducting research during the busiest time in the farmworker work cycle; complexities associated with developing multicultural, bilingual, and multipurpose messages and materials.

**Lessons Learned to Date:** Keep the overall project design and specific components as simple as possible. Use visual as well as written communications, especially on survey questionnaires.

**Interim Conclusion:** Input from the target audience is important in developing effective, trustworthy messages and materials.

## Sample Program

### Healthy Vision 2010 Objective:

#### 28-10 Vision rehabilitation services and devices.

**Target Audience:** Nonlegally blind older adults.

**Title of Project:** Visually Impaired Elders Project.

**Sponsor of Project:** Massachusetts Association for the Blind, Brookline, Massachusetts.

**Overall Purpose:** To provide community-based education, functional assessment, and rehabilitation services that address the needs of an underserved population: older adults with diminishing eyesight, as well as the professionals who serve them and the families who support them.

**Project Elements:** Collaborating with more than 35 organizations, including the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging; performing functional vision assessment in the home environment to determine a person's functional rehabilitation needs; providing information and education about age-related vision loss, available resources, vision screenings, ongoing use of eye health services, and community programs; introducing helpful visual and nonoptical aids and training in their use; providing training in adaptive visual and nonvisual techniques to promote independence, personal safety, and self-sufficiency; and giving referrals to community-based services and programs.

**Challenges to Date:** Inadequate staff capacity to meet the needs of all eligible older adults; difficulties in reaching low-income and minority groups, especially non-English-speaking populations.

**Lesson Learned to Date:** Develop collaborations with people and organizations that can help overcome language barriers.

**Interim Conclusion:** Older adults with vision impairment can benefit from low vision services and maintain their independence.

## Healthy Vision Program Ideas

### Low-Literacy Programs Targeting Adults

Adult literacy programs sometimes seek additional public service education to add to their curricula. Find such a program and ask whether you may develop a lesson plan on eye health for their volunteer tutors.

Develop a vision lesson plan for your own literacy program. Find out about the students with whom you will work and learn about their social issues and barriers to health and healthy vision.

If you are targeting tutors who will work with students, use the Speaker's Guide as a foundation to make a presentation on a specific vision objective. Ask an eye care professional to participate. Suggest that tutors promote the program with flyers distributed at places where the students work, worship, or shop. Remember to develop partnerships with local organizations that can provide exams, prescriptive lenses, and rehabilitation services.

### Programs Targeting Students of Ophthalmology and Optometry



Schools of medicine and optometry may provide vision screenings and followup care to underserved preschool children (ages 2 to 5 years). Some schools team with groups such as a community health center that serves the families of uninsured migrant workers, an American Indian preschool program, or a church-run preschool serving African Americans.

Contact a school of medicine or optometry and offer to help develop a program. When developing the program, be sure to address barriers such as language, culture, and location so that outreach is enhanced.

Arrange transportation for students to screening sites and advertise the times and dates. Use print and audiovisual materials to inform parents about the importance of vision screening for young children.

### Programs Targeting Clinical Health Workers

Coordinate peer-initiated training for primary care physicians, dentists, and other health care professionals practicing in low-income, minority, and other underserved communities. Ask eye care professionals practicing in hospitals, clinics, and community health centers to provide a diabetic eye disease tutorial for their colleagues.

## Programs Targeting Adult Sports and Recreation Participants

Many adult athletes of today grew up in an environment where protective eyewear was unattractive, uncomfortable, and for many sports, unessential. Until recently, many sports did not have specifically designed protective eyewear.



Delivering safety messages to this audience means using the appropriate existing organizational structures. You may wish to begin with your county recreation department's health and fitness coordinator. Recreation departments can also team with country clubs, public sports facilities, and sports equipment stores.

The Protective Eyewear Handbook encourages adult athletes to use correctly fitting, sport-specific protective eyewear whenever they play or practice. The message is that whatever the level of expertise or type of activity, every sport carries some risk of eye injury.

Another outlet is a local direct-mail coupon provider. Approach sports/recreation equipment and apparel stores about placing discount coupons for protective eyewear in a direct-mail coupon package. Encourage the stores to set up special displays that allow athletes to see the range of attractive, comfortable protective eyewear now available. Provide the store with names of local optometrists or ophthalmologists who could hold clinics and demonstrations for sports shop owners and club or team athletes. Eye care professionals can explain the differences in sport-specific eyewear and can offer fittings that demonstrate the importance of proper fit for adequate safety.

Talk with local affiliates of national recreational sports associations. They can encourage their coaches and team captains to urge adult athletes to use protective eyewear, and to serve as role models for others.

## Programs Targeting Older Adults

Many times, vision rehabilitation organizations wish to take services into communities, but may need a little help. You can provide it. Arrange an event with local community centers, senior housing centers, pharmacies, and in conjunction with senior discount days at department stores. Suggest that a rehabilitation professional or a specialist in low vision from a vision rehabilitation organization show a video on low vision, provide a presentation, hand out information, and set up initial appointments for low vision examinations.

Encourage participating locations to post notices about the event. Contact the local newspaper to advertise the event as a community service. Contact optometrists and ophthalmologists and encourage them to display posters and distribute flyers to promote the event. On the day of the event, with your help, the vision rehabilitation organization might set up a display that includes a video monitor with an adaptive screen. Encourage the organization to include as many hands-on exhibits as possible. Audiences love to see and touch examples. Don't forget about the range of talking video games and board games that younger people may be interested in playing with their visually impaired family members or friends. Large-print playing cards and other games are available. Simulation glasses will help everyone better understand the challenges of low vision.

You want the audience to leave with better information and an understanding of the range of training and devices available to help with day-to-day tasks such as grooming, cooking, identifying money, keeping financial records, managing medications, and traveling safely. People who need adaptive devices and training (and their families, friends, and caregivers) need to understand the many ways that people with low vision can more actively participate in everyday social activities.

## Programs Targeting the Public

You may participate in fairs, festivals, and exhibitions, or in local events celebrating national or local holidays.

Events may be kicked off with a fun race or other fundraiser. If a fundraising activity is not already part of your local event, you may try to get one organized. Perhaps you can organize one yourself to raise money for screenings, eyeglasses, or other services for a target population in your area. The following are examples:

- ❖ **Health Fair:** Set up a table or booth that displays Healthy Vision 2010 information, visual adaptive devices, and vision-simulation glasses. These glasses simulate how people see with different visual impairments and are available from the National Eye Health Education Program partnership organizations such as Lighthouse International.

Think about activities for children such as a simple obstacle course or maze through which they may navigate while blindfolded. Provide prizes and items with healthy vision messages to children who complete the maze or activity.

- ❖ **Vision Van:** Invite an organization to provide vision screenings and distribute coupons for discount eye exams. Also note any comments provided by the vision screeners.
- ❖ **Costumes:** Rent a costume or design one for a mascot, who can circulate throughout the park passing out invitations to come to the booth for a gift and a fun game.
- ❖ **Giveaways:** Provide adults and children with giveaway gifts, such as magnifying glass key chains. Local merchants or promotional merchandisers may help offset the costs if you print their logo or information on the giveaways.

## Programs Targeting Employers

Establish a relationship with a local employer. Use the human resources department to suggest scheduling in-service trainings or information meetings to get the word out to make vision a health priority.

Annual insurance open enrollment is a good opportunity to recruit employees to participate in a vision insurance plan. Suggest the human resources specialist contact an employee who has had a personal family experience with visual impairment and who might be willing to give a brief talk about his or her experience. This talk may encourage others to use the vision benefit or elect the vision benefit option on their insurance plan.

The slide presentation and talking points in the Speaker's Guide may be adapted to a specific issue for the audience. For example, use the transparencies and talking points on workplace eye safety or on the importance of regular eye exams for the employee's entire family.

# Media Guide







## Media Guide

The media has an enormous influence on our society by shaping public opinion and even changing it. Thus, the media can play a vital role in educating Americans about ways to lead longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

This Guide is filled with useful facts, information, and talking points that you can use to develop media materials to raise awareness about eye health in your community.

Healthy vision programs benefit when the media helps deliver health-related messages to the public. As you carry out your own community-based program, develop positive working relationships with the print and broadcast professionals and organizations in your community. These relationships will be important in making the media your ally, not your adversary.

The information that follows will help you generate news media coverage for Healthy Vision 2010. Three steps are key—

- ❖ Outline your program objectives
- ❖ Develop a media list
- ❖ Use the media to help implement your program.

## Outline Your Program Objectives

Always have clear objectives in mind before you approach members of the media to promote your healthy vision program. Questions that may help you determine what you want to accomplish include—

- ❖ Do you want to change public attitudes?
- ❖ Do you want to find funding sources for your program?
- ❖ Do you want to influence local leaders?
- ❖ Do you want to get people to participate in an activity?

Your answers to these questions will determine your messages and the media avenues most effective in conveying them.

Follow a methodical approach as you create your plan for promoting healthy vision. Imagine yourself being interviewed by a media representative who is reporting on your program.

Take time to think about what you want to change, the people with influence who may implement that change, and how you may get your message to the people who can make change happen. Your objective should be specific, measurable, and achievable. For example, consider the following questions and possible answers, and then write up your own answers in the spaces provided.

**What do I want to accomplish?**

Thinking too general: I want every person in our community to have an eye exam every year, appropriate vision correction, comprehensive vision preservation treatment, and any and all resources needed to live comfortably with the best level to which his or her vision can be corrected.

Thinking too vague: I think people should be concerned about their vision.

Thinking just right: I want to raise awareness in our community about the importance of using regular professional eye health services appropriate to each person's age and other risk factors.

**My thinking: I want to**

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**Whom do I need to reach with my message to accomplish my objectives?**

Choose one message for each audience:

- ❖ Service providers: Eye care and other health professionals.
- ❖ Decisionmakers: Local business leaders, government officials, school administrators, teachers, and coaches.

- ❖ Caregivers: Parents, grandparents, and faith community members.
- ❖ Recipients: Parents, grandparents, children, and patients.

### **Where, when, and how can I reach my target audience with my message?**

- ❖ Television: Local access and local news programs.
- ❖ Radio: Interview, public service announcements, and commentary.
- ❖ Print: Opinion editorial (op-ed), story, interview, and local angle.
- ❖ Meetings: Kiwanis, town council, and PTA.
- ❖ Other: Health fair or community event, such as a swim meet.

Regardless of what you want to promote, your answers to these simple questions will guide your activities toward making the media a partner.

## **Develop a Media List**

Use the Media Information Contact form on the next page to develop an up-to-date media list that includes—

- ❖ Local newspaper, television, and radio news reporters who cover health, community news, and other stories of interest for or about your target audience.
- ❖ Editors at associations, faith communities, and other newsletters/newspapers that target your audience.
- ❖ Hosts and producers of local television and radio/news shows.
- ❖ Radio and television personalities.
- ❖ Public service and advertising directors at television and radio stations, newspapers, and magazines.
- ❖ Others who are interested in your message.

If you know people at local associations or advocacy groups who work with the media, ask for copies of their mailing lists. Check your local library for the trade and community publications that list local and regional media. Compile a list of names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for members of the media you wish to contact.



1. Begin making phone calls. Introduce yourself as a community leader taking a national program into your community.
2. Mention that you will be sending out information about eye health events and news on a regular basis and would appreciate coverage. Invite the contacts to call you when they are working on stories about visual impairment.
3. Offer to provide background materials, additional statistics, interviews, and other interesting perspectives.
4. Follow up with a personal letter that includes your business card or contact information. Keep reminders on hand, such as key chain magnifying glasses or magnets, to send to people in appreciation for covering your program, and to maintain awareness of healthy vision. Keep a record of your media contacts.

## **Use the Media To Help Implement Your Program**

With the plan, motivating messages, and an up-to-date media list, you are on your way. Here are some tips on how to communicate successfully with the media.

### **Using Factsheets and Background Materials**

Reporters will ask for factsheets or background materials on your program. Have these materials ready before you make the first contact.

Factsheets for each vision objective are available on the Healthy Vision 2010 Website at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/) and in the Handbooks published by the National Eye Institute.

Factsheets, brochures, and other sample materials may be used as handouts at community fairs, conferences, and briefings. The materials may also be included in information kits and mailings.

### **News Release**

A news release, also known as a press release, is a short news story sent to print and broadcast reporters. A sample press release is provided on page 74.

A news release alerts reporters about something noteworthy so they can produce a story for local news, cable news, or the radio.

Use the sample news release or try the following tips to create your own.

## First paragraph

In one or two sentences, you should be able to answer all of these questions for your lead:

- ❖ Who is sponsoring your event or story?
- ❖ What do the events mean to the reader?
- ❖ When will your event take place, or when was this information made public?
- ❖ How can the reader get tickets?
- ❖ Why is this event or information newsworthy?

Whenever possible, include “est” words such as biggest, longest, and first to describe your event. Nevertheless, remember to be honest. Keep sentences short, with no more than two ideas per sentence.

Think of ways to include a local celebrity in your event, such as asking him or her to serve as guest host for the event or receive an award. Mention this person in your lead to attract people to read on.

A spokesperson might be someone who has had a personal experience with vision loss that makes a compelling story and relates to the vision objective your program addresses. This story may include a worker who lost his or her sight to an accident, a person who was affected by eye disease, a person with a family member who was affected by eye disease, or a person who discovered low vision rehabilitation services.

Don't forget to consider what will make a great picture in the paper, for example, a celebrity reading a large-print Handbook to a child.

Build on the lead. Stick to the point and keep it short—no more than five short paragraphs following the lead, about 1½ to two pages double spaced. These paragraphs will expand on each point in order of its importance.

## **Second paragraph**

What makes your message newsworthy? Is it timely, new information, or presented in a new way?

## **Third paragraph**

How does your event fit with your organization's mission? Include authoritative information, statistics, data, or research that supports your story.

## **Fourth paragraph**

What are you trying to publicize, demonstrate, or accomplish with your story or activity? A quote from an organization spokesperson or supportive celebrity fits well here as it personalizes the story and conveys excitement.

## **Fifth paragraph**

Wrap up with where and how to obtain more information, get tickets, or sign up to participate.

## Sample Press Release

Contact:

Organization Name:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

For immediate release

[ORGANIZATION] [YOUR ACTIVITY, EVENT, OR OUTREACH EFFORT]

[CITY/STATE]

[Reason this is important in your community]

[Your organization] is [provide a brief outline of your activities/events or outreach effort] on [date] to educate residents about [use the Healthy Vision 2010 objective that your event addresses]. Activities will include [add more specific time and length of event].

[State] has [use local statistics to explain why this issue is important in your community]. This problem is likely to become a major health crisis in the [state] as the baby boom generation ages. [Your organization's name and/or event] is aimed at informing [community's or state's] residents about who is at high risk for [state how this event will help to address the Healthy Vision 2010 objective that concerns you].

"The need for eye health education programs in [community or state] is urgent," said [spokesperson] of [your organization]. "Through our [event] we hope to make people aware of how early detection and treatment can prevent vision loss."

The leading causes of [this Healthy Vision 2010 objective] are [what the causes are]. Currently, large numbers of [target population] Americans are affected by [this problem], and these numbers are likely to increase in the next three decades.

These screenings are part of Healthy Vision 2010, the national prevention initiative sponsored by the National Eye Institute (NEI) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to reduce visual impairment among all people in our Nation during this decade.

[Your organization, if applicable] is a member of the National Eye Health Education Program, a Partnership established by the NEI to conduct eye health education programs throughout the country. [Insert information about activities being undertaken by your organization and/or resources available to people in your community who may want to have an eye exam.]

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## Media Advisory

A media advisory is a one-page announcement of an upcoming event sent to reporters a few days before the event. It is shorter than a news release. The objective is to get on the schedule of stories to be covered the day of the event. Like a news release, a media advisory will answer the questions who, what, when, where, how, and why.

After you have sent the media advisory to reporters—

- ❖ Follow up 2 days in advance with a phone call to the assignment desk at each media organization to be sure the advisory has been received.
- ❖ Ask whether anyone has been assigned to cover your event.
- ❖ Ask whether more information is needed or whether an interview is desired.
- ❖ Know which spokespeople are available for interviews.
- ❖ Set aside an aesthetically pleasing area of the event where reporters can conduct interviews.
- ❖ Know the time that visually interesting activities will take place, such as an award ceremony or keynote speaker's presentation.
- ❖ Know exactly where the reporters can park to get into and out of the event quickly.
- ❖ Know what equipment will be available for the media at the event, including electrical outlets, audio feeds from the podium, and lighting.
- ❖ Call the media early on the morning of the event to see whether your story is on the assignment schedule for that day.
- ❖ Ask what time the reporter(s) will be there.
- ❖ Let the media know that you will have someone available to greet them, take them to the media area, and assist them with setting up.
- ❖ Provide a media package containing the news release and materials such as photos of key people, speeches, and attendance information. In short, make covering your event as easy as possible.

Even if a bigger story breaks the day of your event, you can still encourage the media to cover your story by—

- ❖ Dropping the media package off or sending it by courier
- ❖ Faxing or e-mailing key information about the event
- ❖ Having your spokesperson available after the event for phone interviews.

The same principles for developing a news release and getting the media to cover your program apply to holding a news conference, conducting an editorial board meeting, or writing an op-ed or a letter to the editor.

## News Conference

Keep in mind that media representatives are very busy. Only hold a news conference if you have a good reason, such as—

- ❖ You have something truly newsworthy to announce, such as a new program, an important achievement, new statistics or research, or other information important to many people in your area.
- ❖ A local official or celebrity will be at the event to help make the announcement.

## Editorial Board Meeting

An editorial board is a group of staff writers and editors who meet regularly to discuss important issues in the community. You have likely read newspaper editorials in which a publication endorses candidates running for public office. The decision to endorse a politician is generally made after the editorial board has met with all of the major candidates.

If your issue is important to the community and has public policy implications, you may arrange a meeting with the board to talk about your concerns. Perhaps the board will write a supportive editorial. The newspaper's op-eds usually appear on the left side of the editorial page, next to the guest op-eds from community leaders and letters to the editor.

When you meet with the board—

- ❖ Be prepared to tell the board what you want as briefly as possible.

- ❖ Bring media kits such as the ones you develop for an event or story.
- ❖ Create talking points based on the Speaker's Guide or write some of your own.
- ❖ Bring one or more persons with you who can speak about the issue from different points of view.
- ❖ Prepare a draft op-ed article to leave with the board as a suggestion of what you are trying to say.

You may also want to write your own op-ed, letter to the editor, or community editorial. You may ask a community leader who supports your effort to author a guest editorial.

## Opinion-Editorial (Op-ed)

Op-eds tend to focus on issues that are of great importance to the broader community, such as community health and safety, pending legislation, and public policy concerns.

Guest op-eds from community leaders or experts on a particular issue appear on editorial pages, usually positioned to the right of the editorials written by the newspaper.

Prominent community leaders sometimes have their own op-eds published. You may be able to work with an eye care professional to draft an op-ed that will appear in his or her name.

When you write your op-ed, stick to the rules for news releases:

- ❖ Build on the lead. Stick to the point and keep it short: no more than five short paragraphs following the lead, which is about 1½ to two pages double spaced.
- ❖ Answer the who, what, when, where, how, and why of your position up front.
- ❖ Use statistics, data, or research that supports your position.
- ❖ Use quotes from published stories that support your opinion (be sure to give appropriate credit to the author and publication).
- ❖ Close with a call to action, something specific that people can do to support your position, such as voting for pending legislation, calling their representative, getting a comprehensive dilated eye exam, or helping someone else to get one.

## Letter to the Editor

Many letters are written to the editors of newspapers every day, but few are published. To increase the chances that yours appears—

- ❖ Determine the newspaper's policy about letters to the editor.
- ❖ Follow the rules for writing an op-ed—make your point, stick to the point, keep it short.
- ❖ Tie in with something current that will make your letter newsworthy, such as a story that was recently in their paper.
- ❖ Use facts to support your position.
- ❖ Offer a solution or action that can help.
- ❖ Make sure you are available and prepared to answer questions if an editor calls.
- ❖ Identify yourself. If you must ask for anonymity, explain why.

## Internet

Community organizations with Websites and technical support experts can market your event.

- ❖ Create a marketing plan. Think about what you want to do, make lists, and follow through.
- ❖ Include descriptive keywords that search engines and directories use to match your site with people who are looking for your information.
- ❖ Submit your site to search engines and directories such as Google, MSN, and Yahoo!
- ❖ Engage in viral marketing—post to friendly listserves and develop your own, include a “tell-a-friend” button on all pages, and add a signature file on all outgoing e-mail.
- ❖ Make sure to list your Website address in all conventional marketing efforts, such as community calendars and flyers.
- ❖ Suggest link exchanges with like-minded sites, including sites to which your intermediaries already link.
- ❖ Think about online advertising, Webrings, forums, newsgroups, and message boards.

For community organizations without Websites or technical support, many Internet service providers offer free Web hosting and even have online programs that help you put up a simple Website.

You can also use Websites of other organizations to promote your event. Remember to include your contact name and phone number.

- ❖ Add your event to all online community calendars
- ❖ Ask friendly sites to list your event
- ❖ Post to e-mail lists and newsgroups.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit

The Healthy Vision 2010 Toolkit is an interactive CD-ROM that includes Handbooks, the Community Action Guide, and the Speaker's Guide. These resources also are available on the Web at [www.healthyvision2010.org/](http://www.healthyvision2010.org/), and are targeted to those who want to make vision a health priority in their communities.

- **The Community Action Guide** includes a planning timeline, media materials, tips for involving your community, and more.
- **The Handbooks** each focus on a different Healthy Vision 2010 objective. They include community-based activity suggestions, newspaper/newsletter articles, public service announcements, and brochures to copy and to hand out.
- **The Speaker's Guide** contains presentations to engage and inform communities about eye health. PowerPoint, Word, and Acrobat versions of each presentation, along with speaker's notes, are included. Topics include injury and safety, eye disease, vision rehabilitation, and others.

## Healthy Vision 2010 Objectives

Healthy People 2010, the prevention framework of the Nation, challenges individuals, communities, and professionals to take specific steps to ensure that good health and long life are enjoyed by all. Healthy Vision 2010 refers to the vision objectives in Focus Area 28 of Healthy People 2010.

Following are the 10 vision objectives:

- 28-1 Increase the proportion of persons who have a dilated eye examination at appropriate intervals.
- 28-2 Increase the proportion of preschool children aged 5 years and under who receive vision screening.
- 28-3 Reduce uncorrected visual impairment due to refractive errors.
- 28-4 Reduce blindness and visual impairment in children and adolescents aged 17 years and under.
- 28-5 Reduce visual impairment due to diabetic retinopathy.
- 28-6 Reduce visual impairment due to glaucoma.
- 28-7 Reduce visual impairment due to cataract.
- 28-8 Reduce occupational eye injury.
- 28-9 Increase the use of appropriate personal protective eyewear in recreational activities and hazardous situations around the home.
- 28-10 Increase vision rehabilitation.
  - 28-10a Increase the use of rehabilitation services by persons with visual impairments.
  - 28-10b Increase the use of visual and adaptive devices by persons with visual impairments.

For copies and information, please visit [www.healthyvision2010.org](http://www.healthyvision2010.org).

