

## CABVI OFFERS HELP TO AFRICAN AMERICANS WITH VISION LOSS

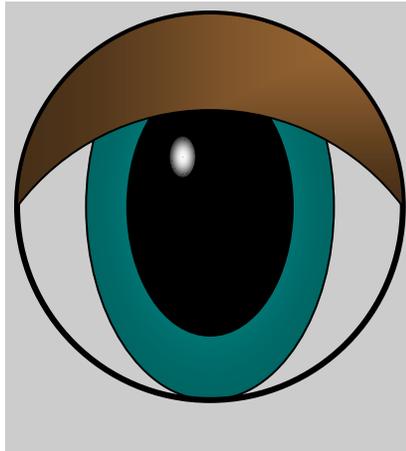
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The [Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#) (CABVI) *Underserved Outreach Program* raises the quality of life for African Americans who have vision loss and who have not received rehabilitative help due to a lack of awareness of the [services](#) available through CABVI. Targeted neighborhoods include: Avondale, Camp Washington, Evanston, Lower Price Hill, Mt. Auburn, Over-the-Rhine, South Cumminsville, Millvale, Walnut Hills and the West End.

"We know there are many people in our communities struggling day to day to make ends meet, whose problems are compounded by vision issues. It has long been a priority of this agency to make our services as accessible as possible for everyone who can benefit, and we're very appreciative to the [Greater Cincinnati Foundation](#) for helping us to make this latest effort possible," said John Mitchell, CABVI executive director.

At the helm of the program is Adrienne Ongolea, a social worker dedicated to working with underserved populations. In addition to providing casework services for people identified as needing eye care, CABVI strives to:

- Collaborate with medical professionals and organizations that serve African Americans
- Encourage African Americans who have vision loss



61,000

The combined population for the ten targeted neighborhoods

49,410

The population for the ten targeted neighborhoods classified as African American

1,729

African Americans individuals will be visually impaired or in need of vision rehabilitation services

to seek medical and social services

- Promote the services available to African Americans who have vision loss

### *Why are African Americans identified?*

Diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and sickle cell anemia have an excessive impact on African Americans and if not screened and properly treated, can cause blurry vision, low vision, or total blindness. Other eye problems that also lead to vision loss, such as macular degeneration and glaucoma, are more common in senior populations and often go untreated in uninsured and underinsured persons.

"I often see patients with vision loss as a result of the chronic diseases that are common in African Americans and other diverse populations," says Dr. Christopher Lewis, a physician at Alliance Primary Care. "Many times, patients attribute their vision loss to the aging process rather than the disease. In addition to prescribing medi-

cation and behavioral changes, I also encourage my patients to seek visual aids and counseling to help them to sustain an independent lifestyle."

According to the 2000 census data, the combined population for the ten targeted neighborhoods is slightly more than 61,000, with 81% (49,410) of the population are African Americans. Statistics published by the [National Eye Institute](#) indicate that 3.5% (1,729) of these 49,410 African Americans will be visually impaired or in need of vision rehabilitation services.

### *How does the program help African Americans with vision loss?*

A concentrated outreach effort assures that information on the importance of eye care, and of services available for those with vision loss, is received by all community organizations that work with those living in these target

## CABVI OFFERS HELP TO AFRICAN AMERICANS WITH VISION LOSS (CONT'D)



The *Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) Underserved Outreach Program* raises the quality of life for African Americans who have vision loss and who have not received rehabilitative help due to a lack of awareness of the services available through CABVI. Targeted neighborhoods include: Avondale, Camp Washington, Evanston, Lower Price Hill, Mt. Auburn, Over-the-Rhine, South Cumminsville, Millvale, Walnut Hills and the West End.

communities. In addition, professional casework services are being provided to help connect individuals with appropriate eye health care, vision rehabilitation services, and community organizations. The intent of this program is to educate independence for African Americans without resources in underserved communities.

Berdie Willis, a CABVI Underserved Outreach Program participant, has no sight in her left eye and only some sight in her right eye. In



Providing vision aids is one way CABVI helps people to lead active lives.

a session with her caseworker, the Evanston resident said, "I enjoy using my paperweight magnifier because it's so simple to use. My lamp magnifier helps me to read my mail and write checks."

### *About Cincinnati Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI)*

Since opening in 1911, CABVI has grown into one of the area's largest and most comprehensive nonprofits to serve people on a spectrum from having no sight to having low vision or who are print impaired. Today it helps more than 4000 people each year from infants to seniors. By making adaptive changes to someone's living, school, or work environment; and providing vision aids or rehabilitative, mobility, or computer training for clients; agency specialists help people to lead active lives. CABVI also makes news

and information accessible through its Radio Reading Services' around-the-clock broadcasts and Personalized Talking Print voice mail system.

For more information about CABVI and the *Underserved Outreach Program*, visit [www.cincyblind.org](http://www.cincyblind.org) or contact Adrienne Ongolea via telephone at (513) 487-4533 or via email at [Adrienne.Ongolea@cincyblind.org](mailto:Adrienne.Ongolea@cincyblind.org).

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