

# FOCUS

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AOA Focus

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## INSIDE OPTOMETRY

# MORE THAN \$65K IN GRANTS AWARDED FOR COMMUNITY VISION PROJECTS

**F**ourteen grants have been awarded from Optometry Cares®—The AOA Foundation to doctors of optometry and community groups to boost awareness and access to vision care for children.

The first-time Healthy Eyes Healthy Children (HEHC) grants for 2017 total \$65,245 and will help doctors reach more than 100,000 people in 12 geographically diverse states, from the Pacific Northwest to New England. The grants are funded by Essilor Vision Foundation, which also is supporting the program with in-kind lenses and laboratory services.

Optometry Cares awarded grants of up to \$5,000 each to doctors for projects that align with HEHC's goal: to spread awareness and increase vision services to address uncorrected refractive error in children across the country. More than 35 applications were received. Projects that were awarded grants include new and existing programs and emphasize community collaborations. Below is a listing of the recipients and a brief description of the project:

- **Complete Eye Care and Community Education for Children Living in Poverty and Attending Underperforming Urban Schools:** Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Achievement School District will



The goal of Healthy Eyes Healthy Children is to spread awareness and increase vision services to address uncorrected refractive error in children across the country.

deliver exams, glasses, follow-up care and community education to students.

- **EMA's Eyes:** The MAE Foundation, a sister not-for-profit organization of Aris Eye Care, will partner with Lakeview (Michigan) Community Schools and others to focus on providing comprehensive eye exams for schoolchildren and community-wide education on the importance of eye health and regular eye exams.
- **Children's Vision Education Project:** The Mississippi Vision Foundation seeks to raise awareness through a statewide public campaign on the necessity and availability of eye exams for infants through third graders. The campaign also will focus on increasing passing rates on third-grade reading assessments in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
- **Worcester Eyes:** The School of Optometry at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science and Worcester Public Schools will team up to provide no-cost, comprehensive eye exams and eyeglasses to children in need.
- **Seeing to Learn:** The project of Aldridge Eye Institute in Burnsville, North Carolina, is designed to ensure more children receive comprehensive eye examinations and care for eye diseases in Yancey and Mitchell counties. Partners include the Yancey County Literacy Council, Partners Aligned Toward Health, and Blue Ridge Partnership for Children.
- **Illinois Eye Institute at Princeton Elementary:** The goal of the project, by the Illinois College of Optometry, is to improve access to vision care for underserved students in Chicago entering and currently attending public schools, from preschoolers through 18 years old. Examinations will be at the optometry school's clinic, the six-year-old

Illinois Eye Institute at Princeton Elementary School.

- **GOSEE - Glasses and Optometric Services for Eye Health and Education:** Funds will be used to purchase vision equipment during optometric service days by the Rales Health Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Children's Center, in Baltimore, Maryland. The Rales Center coordinates comprehensive exams by the Maryland Optometric Association. The project focuses on underserved and special-needs children.
- **Schaeffer Vision:** The goal of the project, by Schaeffer Eye Center in Birmingham, Alabama, is to provide comprehensive eye exams and glasses to underserved children through a partnership with the YMCA after-school enrichment program for homeless children.
- **My First Eye Exam - Prototype:** The New Mexico Optometric Association will work with a team from Explora Science Museum to develop a hands-on experiential learning exhibit that will connect visitors to concepts related to optometry and help children and families experience components of a typical eye exam.
- **Mobile Vision Clinic:** The Ohio Optometric Association is supporting the efforts by the Mobile Vision Program, a current outreach program of the Toledo Lucas County Health Department to public school youngsters. The program provides comprehensive eye examinations, glasses and referrals for more acute and long-term care as needed.
- **Early Eye Care:** An Oregon doctor of optometry is working with the Casey Eye Institute at Oregon Health & Science University to improve access to vision care for underserved children in eastern Oregon by setting up a clinic.

Staffed by volunteers, the clinic would promote the importance of pediatric eye health and vision care.

- **Children's Vision Statewide Public Policy Action Plan:** This project is meant to address gaps in awareness and public policy that present impediments for underserved students in Nebraska schools to receive vision care. Symposiums for work groups, stakeholders, educators, school administrators and community resources are planned. The ultimate goal is a coordinated action plan for improving access to and delivery of care.
- **In-School Eye Exam (iSee) Program:** The iSee program provides comprehensive eye exams to students throughout Ohio after school nurses have identified students in need of a comprehensive, follow-up examination. The grant will purchase equipment for the program. The Ohio Optometric Foundation and school districts collaborate on providing exams and eyewear to students.
- **One-Sight Vision Center at Oyster School:** The Vision Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, currently provides comprehensive eye examinations, medical eye exams and optical services to students whose health needs are underserved. The grant helps provide student transportation from school to the city-operated vision center. Among its community partners are the Ohio Optometric Association and The Ohio State University College of Optometry.

Grantees for 2017 were notified in August. The next application cycle is expected to be in the summer of 2018. —Lorraine Kee