**Individuals Facing Financial Hardship During COVID-19 Can Now Apply Directly for Eyeglasses Through New Eyes**

**Short Hills, N.J. (For Immediate Release) -** In response to people unexpectedly finding themselves financially struggling due to Covid-19, New Eyes for the Needy has opened its application process directly to individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. They can apply online for eyeglasses by visiting: <https://new-eyes.org/covid19-individual-application>.

Previously, only social service agencies were permitted to apply for eyeglasses on behalf of an adult, child or family.

“Given the devastating and unprecedented economic impact of coronavirus across the United States, we are committed to providing the most vulnerable amongst us an easy and efficient way to obtain eyeglasses,” said Jean Gajano, Executive Director, New Eyes for the Needy. “We’ve extended the validity of an eye prescription from 12 to 24 months, to accommodate as many people as possible. These are individuals who need clear vision to find a new job as the economy reopens, and for children to have a better homeschooling experience.” Through New Eyes, children receive two pairs of eyeglasses: one to keep at home, and one for school (or both for home, given many students are homeschooling).

Proof of financial need must be submitted to apply, such as verification for SNAP benefits, unemployment insurance, and/or notification of layoff or furlough due to COVID-19. New Eyes does not pay for eye exams.

Individuals who already have an established connection to a social service agency, must continue to apply for eyeglasses through their case worker. Homeless individuals should visit a homeless shelter for the staff to apply on their behalf.

Applicants, once approved, will receive eyeglasses within two weeks.

The number of adults at risk for vision loss has increased over the past 15 years, yet, at the same time, eyeglasses have become less affordable, according to a recent study published by JAMA Ophthalmology. The average price for eyeglasses in the United States is $196, according to Vision Service Plan.

In comparison, a family of four, at the minimum, spends an estimated $135.10 to $154.80 per week on groceries, according to the USDA Food Plan for April 2020.

For U.S. families in need who struggle to pay housing, food and childcare bills, purchasing a pair of eyeglasses becomes a luxury rather than a necessity.

New Eyes has served the most vulnerable during the Great Depression, World War II and the Great Financial Crisis of 2008. Help us continue to serve during today’s crisis, by making a donation to our U.S. eyeglass program: <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/NewEyesfortheNeedy/donate.html>

**ABOUT NEW EYES FOR THE NEEDY**

New Eyes for the Needy, founded in 1932, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization based in Short Hills, NJ, dedicated to improving the vision of children, adults and families in the United States and abroad. With more than 10 million Americans lacking access to prescription eyeglasses, New Eyes is dedicated to using technology, business partnerships and a thriving volunteer base to bring one of the most basic human needs – clear vision – to those in need.

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