
As a nonprofit 501(c) (3) corporation and United Way agency, we serve seven Southeast Michigan counties including Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston and St. Clair counties. The agency is accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving People with Blindness or Visual Impairment (NAC) and is certified to meet national standards for quality services, responsible management, and public accountability.
What Is GDABVI?
The Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired (formerly Upshaw Institute for the Blind) was established in 1961 to develop and expand community resources minimizing the causes and impact of blindness and visual impairments.

Since the beginning, our mission has remained the same: to provide quality, innovative services that increase self-reliance, productivity, and dignity for those with blindness or visual impairment.

Through teaching, training, and innovative technology, our comprehensive range of services enables blind and visually impaired individuals to cope with the daily challenges associated with blindness. In addition, GDABVI helps people develop and maintain self-confidence and independence.

We also act as a community liaison and consultant, coordinating services to satisfy the unique needs of our clients while helping to enhance their overall quality of life.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy
Vision Rehabilitation Therapy is designed to restore and sustain the highest possible level of independence for those with little or no vision.

Using a multidisciplinary approach, our expert team offers personal instruction and guidance in adaptive independent living skills, mobility, adjustment to vision loss, and technical training. We also provide links to community resources such as transportation, library services, support groups, and more.

To maximize results, we assess each client and create an individualized plan of care based on his or her unique circumstances. Personal instruction is available in a variety of areas, including:

Communication Skills - signature and handwriting, use of the telephone, instruction of recording equipment, Braille, and low-vision aids.

Orientation and Mobility - safe travel tips including sighted guide, white cane use, and outdoor mobility.

Daily Living Activities - money identification and management, telling time, food preparation, grooming, clothing, housekeeping, sewing skills, adapting home appliances, and even crafts.
Clinical Vision Rehabilitation Program

Low Vision is defined as severe vision loss with poor acuity or a very reduced field of vision, partial sight, or sight that isn't fully correctable with surgery, medications, contact lenses, or glasses. It can range from moderate vision impairment, such as tunnel vision or blind spots, to "legal blindness," which is described as almost total blindness.

The GDABVI Clinical Vision Rehabilitation Program partners with area eye care professionals to address the gap between medical diagnosis and treatment and the delivery of vision rehabilitation therapy.

Once a patient is evaluated, the doctor can determine if vision rehabilitation therapy may be beneficial. Many of our training techniques are covered by Medicare and can be done in the convenience of the doctor's office. Our other services are also available in the home setting, when ordered by the referring doctor.

Doctors can learn more by contacting the rehabilitation supervisor at GDABVI, (313) 272-3900.

Developing Lifelong Skills

Opportunities for Children

For any age, blindness need not limit one's ability to be successful, and this is especially true for children. At GDABVI, our goal is to encourage our youngest clients to enjoy the full excitement that life might afford any person. In doing so, we provide a safe environment where blind and visually impaired children learn and explore together.

Our educational programs stimulate children's natural desire to learn, stressing their independence and helping them achieve their highest level of independent function in a sighted world.

Our results speak for themselves. With the right encouragement, attitude, and skills, blind and visually impaired children can participate actively in typical childhood activities and contribute amply to society as adults.
Summer Day Camps for Ages 5 – 15
GDABVI offers summer day camps for elementary and middle school children. The primary goal of each camp is to provide an outlet for children ages 5-15 who are blind or visually impaired to participate fully in activities that help develop practical and lasting daily living skills. The secondary goal is to encourage each young person to develop a deeper understanding of him- or herself.

Back-to-School Carnival
The Back-to-School Carnival kicks off each new school year by bringing children, families, community organizations, and volunteers together to exchange ideas and share information about community resources. Here, blind and visually impaired children are also equipped with school supplies designed to help them succeed.

Community Programs
On an ongoing basis, GDABVI seeks community partners willing to adapt sighted programs to meet the needs of the blind or visually impaired. One outstanding example is a university-sponsored Ceramics Program that teaches therapeutic art skills to young students with vision loss.

Accessible Technology
The Technology Information and Resources Service provides information on a full range of adaptive equipment for educational purposes, job accommodation, and leisure and/or self-improvement pursuits.

Technology Blizzard
In cooperation with area educational organizations, GDABVI plans an Accessible Technology Fair for children and adults with visual impairments. Through presentations and a vendor exhibit, commercial and nonprofit groups share information about the latest assistive technology, products, and/or services designed to optimize independence.
Educating the Community

Engaging learners of all ages, GDABVI offers a community education component. Responding to the growing need for community awareness, GDABVI provides speakers and information to schools, senior centers, community groups, and individuals interested in learning more about eyes, vision, blindness, and its prevention. We also participate in area health fairs and expos, senior action days, and Project Healthy Living.

Literature on eye health and safety, understanding visual impairments, eye disorders, and vision rehabilitation services is available upon request. We also have a selection of video and audiotapes in our lending library.

Special Services

Support Groups

GDABVI staff help coordinate community or agency-based support groups for the visually impaired. GDABVI also hosts a Deaf Blind Club for people with this dual impairment.

Introduction to Blindness Workshops

Participants learn what impact blindness has on an individual. Using blindfolds and working under the guidance of GDABVI staff, interested parties can experience vision loss and learn what can be accomplished with the proper intervention tools and techniques.

Community Interface

GDABVI staff work closely with a variety of venues to make them more accessible to visually impaired visitors. For example, several museums have made displays more friendly for people with visual impairments following consultation with our staff.

Visit our website at www.GDABVI.org to learn more about our services and links to other resources for the blind and visually impaired. Our website is accessible to everyone, sighted and visually impaired.

Call our office at (313) 272-3900 to request information packets, order a display, arrange for a speaker or learn about any of our available programs and services, and how you might lend your support to our mission.
Financial Support

The Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired is supported by United Way for Southeastern Michigan, government contracts, and private donations. GDABVI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization designated by the Internal Revenue Code.

Partial funding for services to persons over the age of 60 is provided by the Older Americans Act through the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and Area Agencies on Aging 1A, 1B, and 1C, and by individual contributions.

See the Difference Your Gift Can Make

To fulfill our mission, GDABVI relies on the generous financial support of caring individuals, like you, who understand and appreciate the impact of our programs and services on the communities, and individuals, we serve.

Giving Hope, Giving Help

There are several ways to support the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired:

Annual Contribution: Consider writing a check to GDABVI as part of your charitable giving and tax planning strategy.

Tribute Gift: Make a commemorative donation in honor or memory of family, friends, loved ones, and special occasions.

Estate and Planned Giving: A bequest in your will can accomplish your philanthropic goals and be as simple as stating: "I give and bequeath to the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired ___% of my total estate (or $__). GDABVI is a not-for-profit tax-exempt organization located in the County of Wayne and having its principal address 16625 Grand River Avenue, Detroit, MI 48227."

For more information about any of these giving options, the tax benefits associated with each, or for help in determining which method of giving best suits your needs and financial plan, please call the GDABVI Development Office at (313) 272-3900 or consult with your financial advisor.

To make a tax-deductible contribution please mail your check payable to:

G.D.A.B.V.I.
16625 Grand River Avenue
Detroit, MI 48227

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Southeast Michigan's Resource
Promoting Independence through Vision Rehabilitation

Serving people with visual impairments in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, Livingston and St. Clair counties.