



How to Apply for an LCIF SightFirst Grant

SIGHTFIRST GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE AND CRITERIA

Mission Statement: The Lions Clubs International Foundation SightFirst program funds the efforts of Lions, nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, and others to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness through the support of eye health care delivery systems, training, and infrastructure development.



Lions all over the world are encouraged to renew their commitment to the blind by assessing the blindness situation in their own communities and determining how they can participate in the fight against blindness. As never before, Lions are reaching out to thousands, even mil-

lions of people already blind or at risk of becoming blind.

SightFirst is both a challenge and an opportunity for Lions to expand their efforts in supporting projects that have a profound affect on blindness.

What is a SightFirst Project?

LCIF SightFirst funding supports projects that fill the gaps between what is being done and what needs to be done to curb the rapid growth of preventable and reversible blindness. The complete SightFirst Grant Criteria and Regulations are printed on the last two pages of this publication.

Key Components of a SightFirst Project:

- **Addresses a leading cause of blindness.** SightFirst projects are designed to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness in a country or region.
- **Established at national or regional level.** SightFirst projects are developed at the national or multiple district level to maximize the extent of the project's impact. Lions work with the ministry of health or the appropriate level of government to coordinate the project within the framework of a national blindness prevention strategy. This coordinated effort assures that there is no duplication of existing blindness prevention programs.
- **Involves professional expertise and resources.** SightFirst projects have the support of the ophthalmic community and others involved in blindness prevention. These partnerships optimize effectiveness and promote quality assurance.
- **Cost effective.** Needed eye care services are provided at the lowest possible cost. The LCIF SightFirst grant is often one of several funding sources; other sources include local Lions, other blindness prevention organizations and the govern-

ment. Costs can be reduced with the donation of equipment, services, and the utilization of existing resources.

Ophthalmologists and other personnel often provide services on a volunteer basis or at a reduced rate.

- **Utilizes appropriate technology.** A SightFirst project offers basic eye care services to large numbers of people, using approaches to blindness prevention that have proven most effective for that area of the world. Projects that use high technology to treat few people are not usually eligible for funding. Also, projects involving scientific research will not be funded.
- **Provides a measurable outcome.** A project proposal includes clearly defined objectives and goals (e.g., perform a specific number of cataract surgeries in one year, add 25 beds for eye care to a hospital to increase patient volume by 100 percent, train a specific number ophthalmic personnel over a two-year period, etc.). A monitoring and evaluation component must be included in the project plan to determine that objectives are met.
- **Targets underserved populations.** SightFirst projects target the poorest of the poor, those who would otherwise not have access to eye health care. Funding is not available for projects that serve patients who could receive similar care through private or government health programs.
- **Requires sustainability.** A SightFirst project is structured and managed so that activity continues once LCIF SightFirst funding is complete. For example, a proposal to expand an eye hospital includes a commitment from the government or other organization to provide operating expenses and staffing support. Long-term administrative costs of a project are not covered by LCIF SightFirst funding.
- **Involves Lions.** Lions actively participate in all levels of development and implementation of a SightFirst project. The project plan includes clearly defined roles for Lions at the project site and for management and administration. Once funding is complete, Lions remain active to assure that the resulting program continues to have an impact on blindness.



SightFirst Leadership

Multiple District SightFirst Chairman and Committee.

A successful SightFirst-funded project requires strong leadership at the district and multiple district level. The SightFirst committee chairman and members are selected by the council of governors (for a multiple district) or the district governor (for single districts). To provide continuity, the SightFirst chairman and committee are appointed for two or more years.

The SightFirst committee is responsible for the coordination of all multiple district or district SightFirst activity. An important first step is to thoroughly assess the current blindness situation in the area, then determine how Lions can provide solutions. Early in the development of a project, the SightFirst chairman and committee begin working with the government, ophthalmic community and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to maximize resources.

Project Committee. During project development, a project committee should be created for the life of the project to assist and support programmatic, financial and follow-up responsibilities. This committee should include the immediate past district governor, the current district governor, and the vice governor, in addition to the Lions who have been directly involved in the development of the project.

This committee also has the responsibility of submitting, with the project application, three names each for the position of project chairman and grant administrator. After funding is approved, the project chairman and grant administrator serve as co-chairs of the project committee and retain these positions for the duration of the project.

Project Chairman. This Lion is nominated by the project committee and confirmed by the SightFirst Advisory Committee (SAC). This person is responsible for coordinating the day-to-day administration of the project. The project chairman should be appointed early on so that he/she is involved in the development of the proposal and therefore are familiar with all areas of the project.

Major Causes of Blindness

SightFirst projects are developed around regional priorities for blindness prevention. Depending on the area to be served, projects may address one or more of the following leading causes of blindness:

- Cataract - clouding of the lens of the eye.
- Trachoma - a contagious infection marked by scar formation and granulation within the eye.
- Onchocerciasis - river blindness, an infection carried by parasites.
- Xerophthalmia - vitamin A deficiency blindness, found primarily in children.
- Glaucoma - pressure within the eye that can lead to blindness.
- Diabetic Retinopathy - a complication of diabetes.

While projects targeting other causes of vision impairment (e.g., eye banks for corneal transplants, vision screening for school children, collecting used eyeglasses, etc.) are encouraged at the local level, they are not usually funded through SightFirst.

Grant Administrator. The grant administrator is also nominated by the project committee and confirmed by the SAC at the time of project approval. This Lion serves as the grant administrator for the duration of the project. Responsibilities include receiving, disbursing and accounting for grant funds. As co-chairman of the project management committee, the grant administrator works with the project chairman to monitor project progress, prepare reports for LCIF SightFirst and request funds in a timely manner.

Technical Advisor. To assist Lions with the many medical, technical and logistical aspects of project development and implementation, SightFirst technical advisors are contracted by LCIF to serve specific regions. The technical advisor works closely with the multiple district or district SightFirst chairman and is a liaison between the project and LCIF. These blindness prevention experts serve as an important link to local and national governments, nongovernmental organizations and the local ophthalmic community.

While it is the responsibility of the Lions to prepare the project plan and complete the grant application, the technical advisor is a valuable partner in the project development process. The technical advisor consults on blindness prevention needs and solutions and assists with the development of a work schedule and appropriate budget, ensuring that the project is cost-effective and utilizes technology appropriate for local conditions. The completed grant proposal must be endorsed by the technical advisor. Once a project is approved, the technical advisor remains involved in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

SightFirst

Grant Criteria and Regulations

Mission Statement: The Lions Clubs International Foundation SightFirst program funds the efforts of Lions, nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, and others to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness through the support of eye health care delivery systems, training, and infrastructure development.

1. Grants shall be considered for projects that:
 - a. result in a measurable reduction in the number of people with reversible blindness or the number of people who are at risk of becoming blind.
 - b. respond to major causes of blindness and crucial unmet needs at national or regional levels.
 - c. utilize existing professional expertise and resources whenever possible and develop professional expertise and resources, where necessary, to attain the objectives of the project.
 - d. employ cost-effective strategies using technology appropriate to local conditions.
 - e. serve many people who would otherwise not be served.
2. SightFirst projects shall not support predominantly pure scientific research.
3. Local Lions should be personally and actively involved in the project. Whenever appropriate, Lions' volunteer resources shall be utilized in support of project objectives. Where possible, the Lions name should be used in conjunction with the project, and request for authorization to use Lions name must be submitted, if necessary.
4. The project must reasonably ensure continuing financial support after involvement by LCIF is concluded.
5. The project must have the acceptance, cooperation and support of the appropriate levels of government and be coordinated within the framework of a national blindness prevention strategy.
6. SightFirst grant funds are intended for projects in the developmental stages and are not intended to repay loans or to establish reserve funds.
7. The SightFirst Technical Advisor assigned to the region will assist the local Lions in developing a project that meets SightFirst project criteria. All SightFirst project proposals must be approved and signed by the SightFirst Technical Advisor.
8. Requests for funds must be submitted on a SightFirst Grant Application Form for review by the SightFirst Advisory Committee. The project budget should clearly detail all project income and expense including allocations by item and detail. It should show all sources of income and expense, both received and projected. Application forms must be received in the LCIF SightFirst office, in completed form, at

least 60 days before a scheduled meeting of the SightFirst Advisory Committee in order to be placed on the agenda for consideration by the committee.

9. Grant proposals may originate from any district (single, sub or multiple). Applications must have the endorsement of the single or sub-district cabinet or the council of governors as evidenced by the submission of the minutes of the meeting at which the application was certified.

A SightFirst Project Committee shall be formed for the duration of the grant to assist with programmatic, fiscal and follow-up responsibilities. Said committee will be composed of the immediate past district governor, the current district governor and the vice governor. For multiple district projects, a comparable committee shall be formed consisting of the immediate past council chairman, current council chairman and the incoming council chairman or (if the incoming council chairman is not named) one other official in accordance with the particular multiple district's constitution and bylaws.

In the case of a project continuing beyond the fiscal year in which said committee has been formed, the committee shall change so that the three members are the immediate past district governor, district governor and vice governor for the new fiscal year, with comparable changes in the case of multiple district projects. This same procedure shall be followed each succeeding year until completion of the project.

A grant application originating from a single district must be endorsed with the signature of the district governor. A grant application originating from a sub district, which is part of a multiple district must be endorsed with the signatures of the district governor, multiple district council chairman, and multiple district SightFirst chairman.

When a grant application originates from a multiple district, it must be endorsed with the signatures of the multiple district council chairman and the multiple district SightFirst chairman.

The SightFirst Project Committee shall submit three names in order of the Lions' preference for the position of project chairman with biographical material, including background and experience of each one, to the LCIF office. This shall be included with the SightFirst grant application. The person selected may be a past international officer or a past multiple district or district officer of Lions Clubs International, although this is not a prerequisite. These biographies shall be reviewed by the LCIF office, and final selection of the project chairman shall be made by the LCIF chairman with the concurrence of the SightFirst Advisory Committee.

Preparing the Grant Application

Preparation of the grant application begins after positive discussions concerning the project have been held with the technical advisor, appropriate government officials, local ophthalmologists and the LCIF SightFirst staff. It is recommended that a brief abstract of the project be submitted to LCIF before work on the application begins.

For a project to be considered for SightFirst funding, an official SightFirst application form (LCIF-40) must be completed and submitted to the LCIF SightFirst Department. If possible, the application should be prepared in English, and the budget presented in U.S. dollars, indicating the exchange rate used. It is important to carefully read the criteria and regulations and answer each section completely. Supporting information should include blue

prints, current pro forma invoices for equipment, photographs, etc. The attached budget must itemize all sources of income and all anticipated expenses, specifying which expenses are to be funded by SightFirst and which are to be funded by other sources. Also, a plan of action, indicating who will do what and anticipated expenditures for each phase of activity is required.

The completed application is reviewed and endorsed by the multiple district council chairman and SightFirst chairman, the district governor (if a district project) and technical advisor. A specific letter of support from the appropriate level of government must accompany the application.

Selection Process

Completed SightFirst grant applications must be submitted to the LCIF SightFirst Department at least 60 days prior to the SightFirst Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting. The committee comprises Lions leadership and worldwide blindness prevention experts. Meetings to review applications are held three times a year. (Meetings are held approximately in August, October and April.)

Applications undergo a preliminary screening by the SightFirst staff and the SAC secretariat to assure that project proposals meet the specific requirements and provide adequate information for committee evaluation. Applicants may be asked for additional information and revisions by a specific deadline. Project applications providing all requested information are placed on the SAC agenda.

The SAC carefully reviews each application and recommends funding for those projects that meet the SightFirst grant criteria. The recommendation may be conditional, citing specific areas that must be clarified or revised before funding will be granted. The committee may ask that other applications be resubmitted following recommended revisions. Grant applications, especially for large or multi-year projects, are often reviewed by the SAC two or more times before the committee makes its decision. Final approval for funding of SightFirst projects is made by the LCIF Board of Trustees.

Each applicant is notified of the status of the grant application following the SAC meeting. Approved projects receive an award letter from the LCIF chairman, accompanied by instructions on project management and a grant agreement which must be signed by the grant administrator and project chairman.

Project Management

When a multiple district or district accepts an LCIF grant for a SightFirst project, they also accept a great deal of responsibility. Project success depends upon a good management team, co-chaired by the grant administrator and project chairman. Other project committee members are Lions or others with expertise in program or fiscal management or specific skills or background relating to the project. In addition, the IPDG, DG and VDG sit on the committee. The project committee coordinates activities with the multiple district or district SightFirst chairman and committee.

One of the first steps of implementation is the signing of the LCIF Grant Agreement that outlines the conditions of the grant. The Lions may also be asked to obtain memorandums of understanding from the government and other organizations involved in the project.

Specific responsibilities of the project management committee include:

Overseeing implementation. The project chairman manages the day-to-day implementation of the project, following the approved timetable and budget. Project activity is coordinated with the grant administrator to assure appropriate disbursement of funds.

Administering funds. The grant administrator maintains complete and accurate records of funds received and expenses incurred under the grant. Periodic requests for funding are submitted to LCIF according to a schedule specified in the grant agreement. A separate bank account, with two or more signature authorities, should be established for SightFirst project funds. Appropriate documentation to verify expenses must accompany funding requests. Expenditures must comply with the budget approved in the grant application.

Monitoring progress. The SightFirst project committee carefully monitors all grant activity throughout the project. Regular reports on project activity and plans for continuation are submitted to LCIF.

Evaluating results. Upon completion or mid-term for some multiple year projects, the project is evaluated to determine that all objectives have been met and that the project has had a measurable impact on blindness prevention.

SightFirst: Steps to Success

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Project complete. Evaluation concludes that objectives have been met, resulting in measurable impact on blindness prevention.

10

Project activity begins under supervision of the SightFirst project management committee. Regular reports and funding requests are submitted to LCIF SightFirst Department.

9

Applicants notified of grant awards. Approval may be conditional.

8

SightFirst Advisory Committee, comprising Lions leadership and worldwide blindness prevention experts, recommends projects to receive grants. Final approval given by LCIF Board of Trustees.

7

Applicants asked for additional information or revisions, if necessary. Project applications providing all requested information are placed on the SightFirst Advisory Committee agenda.

6

Preliminary review conducted by LCIF SightFirst Department staff and SightFirst Advisory Committee secretariat.

5

Completed grant application, with all required signatures, received by the LCIF SightFirst Department at least 60 days prior to the next SightFirst Advisory Committee meeting. The SAC meets three times a year (approximately August, October and April).

4

All parties agree to move forward with project. Official SightFirst Grant Application is prepared by Lions district (single, sub or multiple). A detailed plan of action, budget and timetable are included.

3

Multiple district SightFirst chairman coordinates project development with government, ophthalmic community, other organizations, regional SightFirst technical advisor, and LCIF SightFirst Department staff.

2

Project idea presented to multiple district SightFirst chairman and committee. Project development begins, carefully following SightFirst grant criteria.

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Lions club or district analyzes blindness prevention need for SightFirst project. Holds preliminary discussion with local authorities and potential partners.

10. Grants shall be made payable to the Lions district (single, sub or multiple) and shall be administered by a grant administrator. The SightFirst Project Committee shall submit three names in order of the Lions' preference, as well as biographical material, including background and experience in fiscal management on each one, to the LCIF office. This should be included with the SightFirst grant application. These biographies shall be reviewed by the LCIF office, and final selection shall be made by the LCIF chairman with concurrence of the SightFirst Advisory Committee.

The project chairman, grant administrator and SightFirst project committee shall work together to assure the execution of the granted project. They shall open a bank account requiring two signatures of project committee members, one of which must be the grant administrator, for disbursement of funds.

The project chairman and the grant administrator, when selected by the LCIF chairman, shall be requested to sign a copy of the grant agreement.

11. The roles of the grant administrator and project chairman regarding progress of the approved project plan shall be reviewed annually by LCIF, who retains the right to replace either position if such action is in the best interests of the project.
12. Projects shall carry a definite identification as having been made possible through LCIF and SightFirst.
13. Projects will not be considered in which Lions and/or their families receive preferential professional benefits or have proprietary interest.
14. Grant recipients are responsible for the submission of regular progress reports and a final report upon project completion. Appropriate forms will be provided to the grant administrator. The report form will request details concerning the results of the project and in particular, information concerning the exact use of funds made available through LCIF. Where feasible, the report should include photo-graphs, newspaper clippings and other documentation of work completed. A district failing to submit a final report will not be eligible to receive additional grants. For projects sustainable over a period of time, the grant administrator must submit progress reports on output for three years after LCIF funding ceases.



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