



## From Start Up to Success: Supporting Eye Health and Vision Care Programs at Health Centers

The [Association of Clinicians for the Underserved \(ACU\)](https://www.acuclinicians.org/) with the support of the Centene Foundation for Quality Health Care is now accepting applications from federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and look-alikes (FQHC-LAs) to receive \$25,000 to assist with start-up costs and expansion of permanent and comprehensive eye health and vision care programs.

### **Project Background**

Underserved populations continue to face barriers to accessing vision care and prescription glasses due to cost, transportation, and limited access to vision services. FQHCs and FQHC-LAs are ideal for delivering vision care due to their focus on the delivery of integrated care for underserved populations. Vision care can be integrated into primary care visits to address the impact of poor health and disease on vision and to increase quality of life.

### **Project Goals**

- Increase the number of FQHCs and FQHC-LAs nationwide providing comprehensive vision services. Four (4) FQHCs/FQHC-LAs will be awarded \$25,000 grants for start-up or expansion of services.
- Raise awareness of the importance of providing comprehensive vision services to America's underserved population.
- Increase the success of health centers starting up or expanding services through direct training and technical assistance.

### **Grantees Receive**

- \$25,000 for the start-up or expansion of services of permanent and comprehensive eye health and vision care programs.
- Direct training and technical assistance from members of ACU's Vision Services Committee and other subject matter experts who will be able to provide guidance around troubleshooting start up or expansion issues.
- Flyers to promote a patient-story program. Each participating patient will receive a \$100 gift card.
- Press release templates to promote new or expanded services within your community.

## Eligibility

Must be an FQHC/FQHC-LA working to make comprehensive eye exams more accessible to underserved patient populations through direct service delivery.

OR

Must be an FQHC/FQHC-LA working to expand an existing vision care program to include comprehensive eye exams. For example, your program currently offers vision screenings and needs additional support to provide comprehensive eye exams.

## Grant Requirements

- Must use funds to establish permanent programs. These are defined as programs that are located at the health center site and operate year-round on a regular schedule. Some health centers, particularly those in rural areas, may apply for portable equipment to operate a flexible clinical model where services are made available at more than one site on a regular schedule.
- Must provide [comprehensive eye exams](#) as defined by the American Optometric Association. Grants will not be made available for programs that are limited to vision screenings and referrals.
- Must use funds to support the cost of new equipment and services necessary to establish or expand vision care programs. Funds may not be used to support salaries, contracted optometry or ophthalmology services, replacement equipment, or construction costs.
- Must have your vision care program operating and accepting patients within 6-months of receiving the grant.
- Must agree to share aggregated vision service data after 6- and 12- months of providing vision services. Please review the reporting template. Reporting timelines will be:
  - October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023: Data will be submitted to ACU by April 30, 2023.
  - April 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023: Data will be submitted to ACU by October 31, 2023.
- Must share an informational flyer with vision care patients to assist ACU in collecting success stories and recruit two (2) patients by October 31, 2022. Patients who volunteer to be interviewed by ACU will receive a \$100 gift card. Patient names will not be included in success stories.
- Must publish a press release by October 31, 2022 that will raise awareness of the new or expanding services available to patients within the community. ACU will provide a press release template.
- Must have one (1) representative from the health center attend a total of three project calls during the following months:
  - April 2022
  - October 2022
  - March 2023

The deadline to apply is **Monday, February 28th at 11:59 PM ET**. Grantees will be notified by late-March and grants distributed in April.

[Apply Here](#)

Health centers in the following states and counties are especially encouraged to apply: CA (Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Tehama, Tuolumne, Yuba counties), FL, IN, KS, NE, and TX.

For questions, please contact Luke Ertle, ACU's Program Director, at [lertle@clinicians.org](mailto:lertle@clinicians.org).