



## LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired 2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan

### Message from the CEO and Strategic Planning Chair

Dear LightHouse Community,

As we embark on the journey into the future, we want to take a moment to share with you the significance of our newly developed strategic plan – the LightHouse 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.

This plan reflects the culmination of efforts by our Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) chair, Kathryn Webster, the Board of Directors, and members of the committee, who have diligently worked to shape the roadmap that will guide us through the coming years. We would like to express our gratitude to each SPC member for their invaluable input and dedication in crafting this comprehensive plan, and for the wonderful dedication and knowledge of the Lyons-Newman Consulting team for embarking on this journey with us and becoming a wonderful partner.

This strategic plan is more than just a document; it represents our shared vision for a brighter future and outlines the steps we must take to get there.

This strategic plan is not just a static document; it is a living, breathing testament to our commitment to the blind, visually impaired, and Deafblind community. We will continuously review, adapt, and refine our approach to ensure that we remain agile and responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve.

Together, as a united community, we will bring this strategic plan to life and achieve our vision of a world where those we serve flourish. Your support, engagement, and feedback will be invaluable on this journey, and we encourage you all to actively participate in its execution.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and belief in our mission. We are confident that with the LightHouse 2023-2028 Strategic Plan as our compass, we will continue to make a profound difference in the lives of blind, visually impaired, and Deafblind individuals for many years to come.

Warmest regards,

Kathryn C. Webster

Strategic Planning Committee Chair

Member of the Board of Directors

Sharon L. Giovinazzo

Chief Executive Officer

## Our Vision

A world where blind and low vision people flourish.

## Our Mission

To promote independence, community, and equity created by and with blind and low vision people.

## Our Values

- **Blindness Positivity:** We take pride in our ability to navigate our lives as blind and low vision people.
- **Disability Justice:** We recognize the inherent worth of every person and commit to advancing equity and interdependency.
- **Inclusion:** We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to belong and live to their full potential, encompassing their identities, backgrounds, and abilities.
- **Excellence:** We provide the highest-quality services and products and we continuously learn, improve, and innovate.
- **Empowerment:** We encourage self-determination, independence, and autonomy.
- **Compassion:** We make efforts to understand one another and we treat every person with dignity and respect.

## Whom We Serve

LightHouse serves all blind and low vision people. We are committed to serving people at the intersections of multiple identities including all races, ethnicities, genders, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, ages, socioeconomic statuses, veteran statuses, worldviews, and backgrounds. Additionally, we recognize that many people may have overlapping disabilities in addition to blindness or low vision. Given the greater need among those living with multiple disabilities, we dedicate resources necessary to serve and uplift people with multiple disabilities. In particular, we recognize that the Deafblind community is a unique community and culture with a unique experience. We know that this community is underserved, and we are committed to engaging with this community to address inequities.

## Our Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Strategies

### **Strategic Priority: Cultivate and innovate our services and programs.**

**GOAL 1:** LightHouse's services and programs are responsive to the blind community's needs and support people of all ages and phases of living with and adjusting to blindness to find new and positive ways for nurturing holistic wellbeing.

#### **Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Conduct quarterly focus groups with the people we serve to solicit actionable qualitative and quantitative feedback on LightHouse's programs and areas of improvement
- Integrate components of interdependence and equity in each program, and develop interdisciplinary care models for the people we serve
- Expand our program and service offerings across California and other states
- Expand our brain-based blindness services (e.g., assessments for CVI, O&M training, and living skills), with a focus on the evaluation of individual needs, and provide services as needed directly or through partnerships. Assess the feasibility of developing a brain-based blindness center
- Develop a comprehensive Deafblind program (e.g., employment and workforce services, and creation of an innovative, comprehensive Deafblind curriculum integrated with ILS technology)
- Develop programs for community member-led skills training for blind and low vision people
- Develop partnerships to offer mental health services including therapy, resources, and supports to blind and low vision people and their families
- Build mentor and user group relationships with access technology vendors and startups
- Offer an Enchanted Hills spring break camp for children nationwide who attend schools for the blind
- Create a mentorship program for family members and parents to learn from blind mentors on how best to advocate for their blind children's needs
- Provide mentorship programs for professionally trained staff (Certified O&M instructors, recreational therapists, etc.) to support their continued learning
- Provide resources to the people we serve to discover and rediscover recreational activities, social engagements and supportive programming that enhance physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing
- Create an information hub for allies, families, and support programs to assist their members of the blind community to continue accessing inclusive events, organizations, and programming throughout the Bay Area
- Provide opportunities for professionals from within and outside the disability community to consult with and collaborate with LightHouse to advance their inclusive programming

#### **Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- Feedback received from the people we serve is regularly used to improve all of our programs and services
- The people we serve and their family members have access to resources that provide useful information about relevant programs and services

- The people we serve have all the programs and services they need to live with and/or adjust to blindness, whether provided directly by the LightHouse or through a referral or partnership with another organization

**GOAL 2:** Each of LightHouse’s programs produce programmatic and organizational outcomes and maximize their contribution toward financial sustainability.

**Strategies (Goal 2):**

- Train leaders on how to develop and maintain business plans for each program/service area
- Create and deploy business plans for each program/service area that include funding and sustainability considerations and set revenue goals for each year
- Integrate individual program/service area business plans with organization-wide business and operational plans
- Practice good financial stewardship

**Signs of Success (Goal 2):**

- A business plan has been developed for each program
- Each program has annual participation goals
- With ELT support, each program has a clear understanding of current and potential future revenue sources (e.g., grants, fees, donations) to support operations
- Each program operates at (or above) the breakeven point for revenue versus expenses

**GOAL 3:** Local, state, and national legislation and policies support the blind community, high-quality services, and LightHouse’s organizational sustainability.

**Strategies (Goal 3):**

- Develop an advocacy agenda that details our policy priorities and identifies the role we want to play in advocacy
- Inform, participate in, and shape legislation and policy making at the local, state, and national levels
- Build relationships with influential legislators, policy makers, and pro bono lobbyists
- Build bridges with other blindness organizations to approach advocacy efforts as a united front
- Work with pro bono lobbyists to advocate for funding and legislation
- Advocate for brain-based blindness (e.g., CVI) and blindness services to be part of medical doctors’ training

**Signs of Success (Goal 3):**

- LightHouse has a clear legislative plan that influences policy-making decisions

## **Strategic Priority: Reach and serve diverse communities.**

**GOAL 1:** There is a combined 25% annual increase of people who access our services that identify as AAPI, Latinx, Black, Indigenous, Deafblind, LGBTQ+, and people with multiple disabilities, brain-based blindness (e.g., CVI), and their families.

### **Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Update our systems and intake process to track demographic data and create a baseline understanding of the identities of the people we serve. Allocate staff resources to input and track this information
- Increase our community outreach and education, especially among diverse populations
- Conduct more marketing (e.g., public service announcements), including radio, television, and social and other media outreach, especially for AAPI, Latinx, Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities and for those with brain-based blindness (e.g., CVI) and Deafblind communities
- Foster intentional relationships and partnerships with blindness organizations (e.g., Guide Dogs), community-based/cultural organizations, and medical providers
- Develop and launch a paid, bilingual internship program in partnership with the Department of Rehabilitation
- Provide information in other languages (starting with Spanish and Cantonese) on our website, social media platforms, and other collateral
- Provide our services in Spanish, Cantonese, and American Sign Language (ASL), using translators and translated outreach materials
- Create a plan for enhancing and expanding Deafblind services, including a CoNavigator and SSP program, and integrate them into existing programs
- Create a subcommittee of Deafblind individuals to receive periodic feedback on programs and services

### **Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- Demographic information (including demographic information necessary for grants and funders) is collected through a thorough intake process and tracked in a database system
- Each person we serve has a customized training/services roadmap so that they receive all the services they need
- LightHouse's website is available in Spanish and Cantonese
- There are interpreters and support providers in place for all of the people we serve who need them

**GOAL 2:** LightHouse's culture and practices are disability-led, inclusive, anti-ableist, and aligned with our accessibility framework, serving as a model for other organizations.

### **Strategies (Goal 2):**

- Create, distribute, and follow an internal accessibility policy
- Solicit an outside third-party agency to evaluate accessibility of our organization
- Cultivate relationships with community organizations/groups that work with marginalized communities to recruit more staff from these communities

- Support recruitment of people from marginalized communities into our field (e.g., teachers of people with visual impairments [TVIs] and orientation and mobility specialists [O&Ms]) and implement programs to retain these staff members
- Provide coaching and training opportunities to support staff growth and development
- Develop an accessibility framework to define, guide, and set standards on how LightHouse approaches cross-disability accessibility at the LightHouse
- Require staff to attend an anti-ableism training once per year and offer this training to the broader community

**Signs of Success (Goal 2):**

- LightHouse has a robust internal accessibility policy and framework that is recognized and followed by all staff
- LightHouse continuously makes improvements to internal accessibility based on the policy and framework
- Staff continuously practice and implement what is learned in our annual anti-ableism training
- LightHouse's annual employee survey displays a reduction in ableism across the organization
- Our staff is as diverse as the people and communities we serve

**Strategic Priority: Design, refine, and build training for the people we serve, their support systems, our staff, and the community.**

**GOAL 1:** Blind and low vision community members are prepared for work and life.

**Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Develop a plan to source, screen, publish, and market information and resources for the blind and low vision community on our website and beyond
- Develop and launch a technology certification center to provide training (e.g., for programming, Microsoft Office, and Google Suite)
- Provide blind and low vision people with the training and resources needed to obtain jobs
- Expand our employment services
- Create additional workforce development programs for adults
- Create a peer training program where our staff train their peers, other staff, and newly blind people
- Assess staffing needs and assign appropriate staffing to do this work

**Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- LightHouse has a robust training intake assessment that identifies all training needs for each person we serve, and they are provided with all the training they need
- People we serve and staff are provided with the counseling and support they need to progress their skills and feel confident
- LightHouse is known as a place of employment opportunity for the people we serve
- We have taken inventory of the curriculum we already have and determined what curriculum we want to create
- We have adequate staff capacity to implement new curriculum

**GOAL 2:** Members of the blind and low vision community, trainers, and staff are knowledgeable about the latest and best practices for serving the blind community and promoting blindness positivity.

**Strategies (Goal 2):**

- Provide and procure robust professional development and training opportunities for staff, trainers, and the community, including diverse instructional learning in synchronous and asynchronous modalities
- Contribute to resources that support others in our professions (i.e., train the trainer)
- Provide trainings to develop literacy on LightHouse tools (e.g., SharePoint, OneDrive, Outlook, Salesforce, etc.) to support staff to perform the requirements of their role
- Provide continuing education that helps incorporate best practices in our services
- Provide opportunities for staff to present at workshops and conferences

**Signs of Success (Goal 2):**

- Feedback is collected regularly (e.g., through an annual survey) from the people we serve and used to understand training needs of different constituents and improve trainings we offer

- LightHouse's budget supports staff training opportunities aligned with best practices
- Staff have the tools they need to successfully complete all of their routine work tasks (e.g., computer training, understanding of brain-based blindness, etc.)
- Staff feel comfortable speaking on and taking on tasks where they may not have expertise but have adequate knowledge

**GOAL 3:** New curricula and coursework is developed for our programs and we collaborate with similar agencies to develop, share, and adopt best practices.

**Strategies (Goal 3):**

- Create, refresh, and standardize curricula for all current and new programs
- Build partnerships with other organizations that already have curricula or training developed as well as employers, internship programs, and other community organizations
- Launch a curricula committee to lead the design of new curricula and create an operational plan to determine what curricula we will develop (e.g., for a 3 to 6 month comprehensive residential training program, Changing Vision Changing Lives [CVCL] program, technology training, Deafblind support, O&M, and/or low vision training)
- Create a curriculum for and then expand training for medical rehabilitation staff and families
- Create a vocational rehabilitation curriculum and seek necessary certifications

**Signs of Success (Goal 3):**

- Partnerships have been formed (e.g., with New View) to collaborate on new curricula
- We have adequate staff capacity to build and implement new curricula in multimodal formats in a variety of instructional contexts
- New curricula are aligned with best practices and is attentive to the many ways that people learn both in person and remotely

**Strategic Priority: The Board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) leverage their resources and contribute to organizational sustainability.**

**GOAL 1:** The ELT and Board collaborate to leverage resources, including major donor and other funds, resulting in a 10% funding increase year-over-year.

**Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Build a 6-person business development task force composed of both board and staff members to develop business in all service areas
- Expand our funding sources (e.g., from LightHouse Industries and donors)
- Rebrand and relaunch our capital campaign and secure \$1M in seed funding
- Update the branding and messaging of LightHouse Industries' chemicals business
- Create a fund-development plan separated by fund type (major donors, earned revenues, foundation, etc.)

**Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- LightHouse has expanded its commercial and government businesses and uses the revenue to help address budget deficits
- The business development task force greatly contributes to increasing LightHouse's resources
- LightHouse has powerful marketing that effectively targets specific market segments

**GOAL 2:** Board members are champions and subject matter experts, or connected with subject matter experts, in areas representing each of LightHouse's programs and strategic priorities.

**Strategies (Goal 2):**

- Recruit board members representing specific areas of expertise
- Engage board members to participate in annual anti-ableism training

**Signs of Success (Goal 2):**

- The board has expanded and includes philanthropists and additional members with specific expertise
- Board implements anti-ableism practices

**GOAL 3:** The ELT is an empowered team of leaders that coach and motivate staff, leaders, and teams to achieve their highest potential.

**Strategies (Goal 3):**

- Provide training for the ELT and all supervisors on coaching and management, including strategies for ensuring that transparency and reciprocal communication with staff is embedded into the agency culture
- Provide training for staff on all expectations and tools needed for implementing the strategic plan, including prioritization
- Coach managers to identify skill needs and seek training for staff
- Cultivate practices of transparency and openness among the ELT
- Collect employee feedback for continuous improvement

**Signs of Success (Goal 3):**

- High levels of staff job satisfaction
- The ELT feels more approachable to staff and exemplifies accountability, which cascades down to LightHouse employees
- Staff feedback is sought after in each department on a quarterly basis and used to improve operations

## **Operational Priorities to Support the Strategic Plan**

### **Operational Priority 1: Set and expand metrics and expectations across the organization.**

**GOAL 1:** Processes, metrics, and expectations across the organization are clear, promote accountability and performance, and set up the LightHouse staff for success.

#### **Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Build and refine our operational processes for all programs using the Quality and Outcomes framework to promote clarity and transparency
- Create a business and marketing plan for each business unit
- Cultivate a robust knowledge management system to document key information and learnings (e.g., internal processes, employee retention strategies, partner development strategies)
- Hire more case managers and social workers
- Design opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration and cross-training
- Hire project management staff and get project management consulting/training to establish an agency-wide project management competency
- Design an onboarding process for all LightHouse staff, including training on department-specific skills needed
- Centralize our relationship management, procurement, pre- and post- award management, and contract management

#### **Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- All LightHouse leaders have received training on developing and using business and marketing plans
- A business and marketing plan has been implemented for each business unit, with collaboration across departments
- An internal knowledge system has been created to document LightHouse key learnings
- LightHouse has a business intelligence dashboard to inform decision-making (by 2028)
- LightHouse has made key hires to add additional capacity and capabilities to the staff (e.g., an additional case manager, project managers)
- Communication, collaboration (e.g., Teams), and project management tools are widely used across the organization
- LightHouse has departmental liaisons who coordinate across departments
- LightHouse has an efficient, clear onboarding process for all staff positions, with department-specific training provided as needed
- LightHouse has a clear understanding of the costs of programs and funding sources
- LightHouse has centralized our relationship management, procurement, pre- and post-award management, and contract management tools

**Operational Priority 2:** Optimize our income streams to enhance financial flexibility and work toward financial self-sufficiency.

**GOAL 1:** Balance our earned revenue with our expenses and operate with no draw from the corpus of our investments.

**Strategies (Goal 1):**

- Create annual development plans with strategies for obtaining more revenue from major donors, planned giving, local, state, and national government contracts, and other sources

**Signs of Success (Goal 1):**

- Developments plans have been created and implemented
- LightHouse staff regularly track and report all expenses (e.g., time, travel etc.) through our financial tracking system
- We have a clear understanding of all sources of revenues and expenses
- We have an effective, streamlined process to analyze raw data to make timely decisions
- LightHouse has achieved a balanced budget

## Appendix

### Term Glossary

- **Accessibility:** Refers to the design and provision of products, services, environments, or information in a way that allows people of all abilities to access, understand, and use them without encountering barriers
- **Accessibility framework:** A definition of the structure of LightHouse’s accessibility and usability priorities around data availability, functional availability, and operational parity
- **Anti-ableist:** Refers to a stance or approach that opposes and actively works against ableism. Ableism is a form of discrimination, prejudice, or social bias against individuals with disabilities, whether visible or invisible. It can manifest in various ways, including stereotyping, stigmatizing, or marginalizing people with disabilities, as well as treating them as inferior or incapable due to their impairments
- **Constituent:** Refers to an individual, group, or entity that is an essential part of a larger whole or is represented by another person or organization
- **Cross-disability:** A term used to describe an approach, perspective, or concept that addresses and encompasses the needs, experiences, and rights of individuals with various types of disabilities. It acknowledges that disability is a diverse and multifaceted phenomenon, and individuals with disabilities may have different impairments, conditions, or challenges
- **CVI or Brain-based blindness:** A type of visual impairment that occurs due to damage or malformation of the visual processing areas in the brain's cortex. Unlike other visual impairments that result from problems with the eyes themselves, CVI is a neurological condition that affects how the brain processes visual information received from the eyes
- **Deafblind:** A term used to describe individuals who have both significant hearing and vision impairments. People who are Deafblind experience a unique form of dual sensory loss. Due to the combined sensory loss, Deafblind individuals face unique challenges in communication, mobility, access to information, and participation in daily activities. However, it's important to note that each Deafblind person's experience is individual and may depend on the specific nature and severity of their impairments
- **Goal:** A broad primary outcome. Goals should be “SMARTIE”: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound, Inclusive, and Equitable
- **Inclusivity:** Refers to the practice of creating environments, policies, and practices that embrace and accommodate the diversity of individuals and groups. It aims to ensure that all people, including people of any race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, worldview, veteran status, or other characteristics, feel valued, respected, and empowered to fully participate and contribute
- **Intersectionality:** Refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and other forms of identity and oppression. It recognizes that these various aspects of identity do not exist independently but rather intersect and interact with each other, shaping an individual's experiences and social position in complex ways
- **People we serve:** This phrase encompasses all of the clients, students, program participants, campers, and patients that participate in LightHouse’s programs and services

- **Program:** A set of organized activities, services, or initiatives designed to meet the needs of individuals who are blind, visually impaired, and Deafblind. It's important to note that specific programs and services may vary and evolve over time
- **Quality and outcomes framework (QAO):** Our Quality and Outcomes Framework seeks to make LightHouse's work clear and known to the organization, allowing us to move toward ever greater efficiency and efficacy in all we do and everything the people we serve learn
- **Service:** A service can be defined as a specific action, assistance, or support provided to meet the needs, interests, or welfare of individuals or the community at large
- **Strategic priority:** Broad end toward which efforts and actions are directed
- **Strategy:** Approach taken to achieve a goal
- **Values:** Principles and beliefs that guide how an organization enacts its mission. They are more than aspirational desired qualities. They are inherent strengths, lived and breathed by the organization