Planning a Successful American Red Cross Blood Drive:

A Coordinator’s Guide
Welcome!

Thank you for hosting an American Red Cross blood drive. When you coordinate a blood drive, you join the Red Cross family and become part of something much bigger than yourself. Through your efforts, volunteer blood donors will help save patients’ lives.

The enclosed information will help you through the process of planning your blood drive. We will work closely together to discuss the specifics of your drive, provide support and answer your questions. I want you to be as successful as possible, so if you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact me.
Why is hosting a blood drive so important?

- A blood drive is a commitment to helping meet the needs of seriously ill or injured patients.
- Meeting your blood drive goal is critically important because patients are counting on the blood we have committed to collect.
- Blood products are essential for the treatment of accident victims, surgical and sickle cell disease patients, those receiving cancer treatments, premature babies and others.
- Every day in the U.S., roughly 41,000 blood donations are needed. That means nearly every two seconds someone needs blood.
- Every donation may help save up to three lives.
- It's simple: There is no substitute for blood.

What is your role as a blood drive coordinator?

- To help save lives!
- To serve as the connection between your company, organization, school or community and the Red Cross, while also gaining support from your group’s leadership.
- To get people excited about your blood drive and ask them to join your team.
- To spread the word about blood donation in person and through the use of Red Cross materials and messaging.
- To ask people to give blood.

Using social media:
Work with your Red Cross account manager for ideas on how to publicize your drive using social media.

Blood drive coordinator Bev with her daughter, Kim, and granddaughter, Sanai.

Bev has been a Red Cross blood drive coordinator and blood donor for nearly 30 years. Her daughter, Kim, is alive to see her own daughter grow because seven units of blood were available when she began hemorrhaging after Sanai’s birth. Bev helps ensure blood is available when patients need it.
**Blood drive planning**

**Getting started: Twelve to ten weeks before the drive**

**Verify your blood drive goal:**
To meet patient needs, you and your Red Cross account manager will determine a realistic number of pints to collect. Your goal will help us determine the resources needed for your drive.

**Verify your date and time:**
Reconfirm the scheduled date and time of the blood drive. Discuss any factors that may impact your success with your Red Cross account manager (shift schedules, internal events, etc.).

**Verify the site:**
Verify the blood drive site will be:
- Clean, comfortable and inviting; heated or cooled in advance to ensure donor comfort; and well lit.
- Large enough to provide adequate confidentiality.
- Easily accessible to donors, with ample parking and restrooms available.
- Accessible to Red Cross staff for equipment loading/unloading with adequate parking.

**Please be sure to:**
- Refrain from any construction/renovation/abatement work nearby on the day of the blood drive that might cause unpleasant odors or sounds.
- Avoid using any chemical products (cleaning products, paint, floor waxes, etc.) that may create irritating vapors that may linger during the blood drive. If such chemicals have been used, please ensure the types of chemicals used are disclosed prior to the drive.
- Please ensure heating, ventilation or air conditioning can maintain a comfortable temperature. Donors who are uncomfortably cold may have a harder time giving a successful donation while donors who are uncomfortably hot may be more likely to experience headache, nausea or fainting after donating.

**Use of donor giveaway items:**
Donor giveaway items are encouraged. Please talk with your Red Cross account manager about any plans for offering incentives, giveaways or drawings at your blood drive. All incentives (giveaways, drawings, etc.) should be approved by the American Red Cross before they are advertised for your blood drive.
Building a winning team: Six to four weeks before the drive

Form a recruitment team.

Recruitment team members can help with these tasks:

- Publicizing the drive.
- Recruiting and scheduling donors.
- Recruiting volunteers to help the day of the drive.
- Assisting at the blood drive.

It’s recommended that you have one recruiter for every 25 people you need to ask to donate blood. Recruiters should be outgoing individuals who are comfortable asking people to donate blood. Recruiters should be available about four weeks prior to the blood drive.

Remember to include senior leadership and influential community members on your team. These individuals may be some of the most motivating recruiters.

Recruit volunteers.

The size of your drive will help determine the number of volunteers needed. Volunteer opportunities include:

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<th>Helping with setup</th>
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<td>Be available about one hour prior to the drive start time or as designated.</td>
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<td>Be able to lift up to 40 pounds (supplies, donor beds, work stands, etc.).</td>
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<td>Be available for one hour after the blood drive closes or as designated.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Greeting donors (Training provided on site)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Be available 15 minutes prior to the start of the blood drive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome donors.</td>
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<td>Maintain donor sign-in sheet and/or appointment log.</td>
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<td>Call scheduled donors who do not show to remind them of their appointments.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assisting donors in the refreshment area (Training provided on site)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Be available 15 minutes prior to the start of the blood drive.</td>
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<td>Serve food and drinks to donors after their donation.</td>
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<td>Report any signs of a donor not feeling well to Red Cross staff.</td>
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<td>Thank donors for their donation and encourage them to make their next donation appointment.</td>
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Getting the word out: Three weeks to one day before the drive

Ask donors to make a blood donation appointment.

There are many ways that you can ask donors to make a blood donation appointment. We recommend using a combination of the methods below.

1. **Ask them face-to-face.** Most people who haven’t given blood say it’s because they have never been asked to donate. Face-to-face contact is harder to object to than other types and provides an opportunity to address specific questions and briefly educate the donor on the donation process.
2. **Call donors and potential donors.** If your organization has hosted blood drives before, your Red Cross account manager can provide you with a list of phone numbers of eligible donors who have given at your location in the past.

3. **Send emails.** The blood drive management system on redcrossblood.org allows you to send email invitations for your blood drive. See the reference material on Page 10.

4. **Share with your social networks.** Post your drive details on Facebook and Twitter to reach people you may not otherwise be able to contact.

5. **Post publicly.** Distribute blood drive announcement materials throughout the organization or community. Discuss both the obvious places and the not-so-obvious places to put promotional materials. Just remember to be creative. Send a letter, memo, email or announcement from senior leadership. Post an article in your organization’s newsletter or community’s newspaper.

6. **Educate.** Ask your Red Cross account manager to give an educational presentation for your organization.

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### Additional recruitment tools:

- **Online recruitment:** Log in to the blood drive management system on redcrossblood.org to send emails to promote your drive (see Page 10 for details).
- **Online resources:** Visit [redcrossblood.org/recruitmentresources](http://redcrossblood.org/recruitmentresources) to find tools to help make your blood drive a success.
- **Red Cross recruitment materials:** Your Red Cross account manager will provide you with printed materials for your blood drive.

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### Appointments, appointments, appointments:

**Schedule specific appointments to meet your sign-up goal.**

People are more likely to donate if they have a set appointment.

- Your Red Cross account manager will show you how convenient and easy it is to manage appointments using the online blood drive management system.
- A paper appointment schedule can be provided to those who do not have Internet access.

Scheduling donors by either method is important because it will make for the most efficient use of time and reduces the wait time for donors.

**Acquaint yourself with basic donor eligibility criteria.**

Your Red Cross account manager can provide basic information about common donor eligibility questions. For other questions, direct potential donors to the Red Cross website at redcrossblood.org or have them call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).
Donors can schedule appointments for your blood drive by:

- Contacting you.
- Calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).
- Going to redcrossblood.org.
- Downloading the Blood Donor App.

Log in to the blood drive management system to:

- Schedule donor appointments.
- See who has scheduled appointments online.
- Change or cancel donor appointments.
- Print a paper copy of your drive schedule.

More information about the blood drive management system is available on Page 10.

Final countdown: Three days to the day of the drive

Remind donors personally.
If you use the blood drive management system, it will automatically send reminders to scheduled donors who have provided their phone number or email address. Please take the time to call the remaining donors and remind them of how important it is to be on time for their appointment. Patients count on the success of each and every blood drive to help make sure blood is available whenever it is needed.

Reconfirm arrangements and appointments.
This is the time to reconfirm last-minute details such as site arrangements, refreshment area items, donor appointments and volunteer assignments. Ensure the room is emptied of any furnishings before Red Cross staff arrive. Print a copy of the blood drive schedule for the registration table. Your Red Cross account manager can make arrangements for an appointment schedule for your next drive to be placed in the refreshment area so that you can encourage donors to schedule their next appointments.

Coordinate details with your Red Cross account manager.
Someone on your team should arrive at the blood drive site well before the first scheduled appointment to greet staff and help get the site ready. Display clearly marked signs to indicate the blood drive location to donors. Make sure volunteers are comfortable with their assignments. If you have an opening in the donor appointment schedule, it’s not too late to recruit someone to fill in. And remember to thank all of your donors.

Have a plan in place for contacting no shows.
If donors do not present to donate at their scheduled appointment time, delegate the role of calling no shows. Propose an open appointment time. If an open appointment time doesn’t work, ask if they are willing to be a standby donor. Backfill the appointments if necessary. Keep your list of eligible donors handy so that you can call additional donors to fill available appointments.
A job well done: One day to one week after the drive

Post results as soon as possible.
Make the results public so everyone knows their hard work paid off. If you reach your goal, it’s worth a special celebration. Regardless of the amount of blood collected, the people in your organization deserve recognition.

Thank your donors.
A thank you note, memo or email from you and other leaders in your organization or community will make everyone feel great about participating. Take pictures and post them or recognize results in your newsletter.

Thank your team.
Thanks should also go out to your team. A word from senior leadership and a personal word from you will let them know that their efforts were appreciated. By acknowledging everyone who helped, you’ll build a good foundation for the next blood drive.

Complete the sponsor survey.
You will receive an email with a link to take a brief sponsor survey. Your feedback is important and will help us better serve you and other blood drive coordinators.

A look back and a look forward: One week after the drive

Hold a team meeting for feedback.
Plan to bring your recruitment team together one more time to review the entire process. Did you make your goal? What went well? What needs improvement? What would you change? This meeting should take place while details are fresh in everyone’s minds.

Review the drive with your Red Cross account manager.
Your Red Cross account manager will discuss the blood drive results with you and review what went well and what could be improved. If you didn’t reach your goal, review the possible causes. This will help your organization in the future and help the Red Cross better serve you with your future blood drives. And don’t forget to book your next blood drive.

On behalf of the approximately 2,700 hospitals served by the American Red Cross and the patients whose lives are in their hands, THANK YOU!

Avery was just 4 days old when she had her first heart surgery to repair a heart defect. She had a second surgery by the time she was 6 months old. Blood donations sustained her through both of those surgeries.
Managing confidential donor information

Blood donor lists
As a blood drive coordinator, you’ll have access to lists of Red Cross blood donors and their contact information. You will receive a new and updated blood donor list for each drive. All information on these lists is confidential. You may use it only to communicate with and recruit potential blood donors for a Red Cross blood drive. You may not disclose or share the list with anyone else, except to a person within your organization who needs it to help recruit potential blood donors. Once you have finished using the list, you must return it to the Red Cross or destroy it using a shredder or other method to make the information unreadable.

Instructions for editing blood donor lists
From time to time, you may hear from a donor that their contact information is different than what we have on file, that they are unable to donate for a period of time or that they wish to be removed from the blood donor lists. We ask that you help us keep our donor records up-to-date by modifying the list as you learn of these changes. This will help ensure you receive the most up-to-date contact information and we minimize calls to donors who have requested not to be contacted.

To make changes to donor contact information, simply make a note on the list using the following guidelines.

| If a donor has moved: | ▪ Provide the new address if you have it.  
                        ▪ If you do not know the new address, just note that the donor has moved. |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If a phone number is invalid: | ▪ Redial to make sure you dialed correctly.  
                           ▪ Call information or check the phone directory to see if there is a new number available.  
                           ▪ Provide the new number, if available, or write “no number found” on the list. |
| If a donor asks that their name be permanently removed from recruitment lists: | Please note “permanent removal” and provide a reason for removal. For example:  
                                                                                  ▪ Deceased.  
                                                                                  ▪ Age, trouble donating, medication, cancer or other health problem.  
                                                                                  ▪ Getting too many calls.  
                                                                                  ▪ Has been in Europe longer than the allowed time.  
                                                                                  ▪ Dissatisfied donor.  
                                                                                  ▪ Told by another blood center not to donate. |
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<tr>
<th>If a donor is unable to donate:</th>
<th>Please note “temporary removal” and provide a start date and reason why donor is unable to donate (Red Cross will determine the length of removal based on the reason and the start date). For example:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Out of country.</td>
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<td>• Traveled to a malarial area.</td>
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<td>• Tattoo.</td>
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<td>• Pregnant.</td>
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<th>If a donor does not want to receive recruitment for a certain time frame:</th>
<th>Please include a reason and a date when recruitment can resume. For example:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Donor requested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attending college.</td>
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| If a donor no longer donates at your site or for your sponsor group: | • Note “disassociate” on the list. |

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<th>If a donor’s name has changed or is incorrect in our records:</th>
<th>• Print the new or corrected name legibly on the list.</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Instruct donors to provide adequate identification to collections staff during registration at their next donation opportunity.</td>
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**Editing tips:**
- Use red ink, if possible.
- Print legibly.
- Clearly note changes on the same row as the donor record.
- Provide as much specific information as possible.
- Cross out incorrect information by drawing a single, straight line through the information so the original wording is still legible.
Using the blood drive management system on redcrossblood.org

The blood drive management system provides a convenient tool for you to plan your blood drives.

Our online blood drive management and scheduling system allows you to:

- Schedule and view your blood drives.
- Manage donor appointments.
- Create and update donor information.
- View drive activity for current and past drives scheduled in the system.
- Track results for your blood drives.
- Communicate with current and prospective donors via email.

For login steps for the blood drive management system, see the information sheet located in your folder.

Visit redcrossblood.org/help/bdc to find a video demonstration and other helpful tools for the blood drive management system.
Planning at a glance
Getting started (12 to 10 weeks before drive)
Verify your blood drive goal.
Verify date and time of drive.
Verify the site.

Building a winning team (6 to 4 weeks before drive)
Form a recruitment team.
Recruit volunteers for the drive.

Getting the word out (3 weeks to 1 day before drive)
Ask donors face-to-face to make a blood donation appointment.
Call donors and potential donors.
Send emails.
Share with your social networks.
Post publicly.
Educate.
Schedule specific appointments to meet your sign-up goal.
Acquaint yourself with basic donor eligibility criteria.

Final countdown (3 days to day of drive)
Remind donors personally.
Reconfirm arrangements and appointments.
Coordinate details with your Red Cross account manager.
Have a plan in place for contacting no shows.

A job well done (1 day to 1 week after drive)
Post results as soon as possible.
Thank your blood donors.
Thank your team.
Complete the sponsor survey.

A look back and a look forward (1 week after drive)
Hold a team meeting for feedback.
Review the drive with your Red Cross account manager.
Common blood donor objections and how to respond

Donating blood takes too long. I’m too busy.
I understand our daily lives can be very hectic, but the need for blood is constant for patients. Can you arrange an hour out of your schedule to help save lives?

I’m too scared. I am afraid of needles.
That’s natural. Almost everyone is apprehensive the first time they donate. Pinch the fleshy, soft underside of your arm. That pinch is similar to what you will feel when the needle is inserted into your arm. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may tell a Red Cross staff member; they are accustomed to helping donors through this process.

They don’t want my blood.
If you were deferred the last time because of your pulse, temperature, blood pressure or iron count, it was probably a temporary condition. These four health checks are always made before you are permitted to donate. Please try to donate again or call 1-800-RED CROSS to ask specifically about your eligibility.

My blood type is so common. I only need to donate once a year.
All blood types are needed every day, regardless of whether they are rare or common. Patients come in all types, too. In some emergency situations, type O blood can be given in place of other blood types. Large quantities of type O may be needed by accident victims and premature infants who need blood therapy.

Giving blood may not be good for me.
The mini-physical and health history you will receive on the day you donate can help ensure you are in good general health. No one is allowed to give blood if it is known that it will harm them.

I had difficulty donating last time.
We always want our donors to have a positive experience. Make sure you tell the Red Cross staff about your previous experience so you may receive special attention. In most cases, you will be able to give again without difficulty.

I only want to be contacted for emergencies.
Blood must be available, processed and tested before a critical situation. The need for blood by severe burn patients, accident victims and cancer patients is an emergency for them. We must always be prepared for emergencies to help all patients in need.

Remind donors to:
• Drink an extra 16 ounces of water or nonalcoholic fluids before donating.
• Eat a healthy meal before donating. Avoid fatty foods, such as hamburgers, fries or ice cream.
• Get a good night’s sleep.
• Take the time to enjoy a snack and a drink in the refreshment area immediately after donating.
Frequently asked questions

Who can donate?
Individuals who are 17 years of age and older (16 with parental permission in some states), meet weight and height requirements (110 pounds or more) and are in general good health may be eligible to donate blood. Please bring your Red Cross blood donor card or other form of photo ID when you come to donate. Your medical history and donor eligibility will be evaluated by Red Cross staff at the blood drive.

Can I give blood if I have traveled outside the U.S.?
Most travel is not a reason for deferral. However, there are some areas of the world that are at increased risk for certain diseases. Visit redcrossblood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS or ask the Red Cross staff for more information about specific destinations.

Can I get a disease from donating?
There is no known way of contracting any infectious disease by donating blood. All equipment used to collect blood is sterile, used once and then discarded. Blood is collected by a staff of professionals who protect the safety of the donor.

How long does it take?
When appointments are made in advance, the process takes about an hour. The actual donation takes about eight to 10 minutes. The actual donation time for a double red cell donation is slightly longer and takes about an hour and a half from start to finish. Time is needed for registration, a mini-physical, health history interview and refreshments following your donation.

How much blood is taken?
For blood donations, a little less than a pint of blood is drawn. Your body will replace the fluid loss in about 24 hours. Red blood cell replacement will begin immediately but will take four to six weeks for completion.

Do I get paid for donating blood?
It is believed that the blood supply is the safest it can be if individuals do not receive monetary payment. As a sign of our commitment to quality and ensuring the safest possible blood products, the Red Cross only accepts blood donations from volunteers according to Food and Drug Administration regulations and guidance. Volunteer blood donations are the only source of blood transfusions to hospital patients.

How will I feel after donating?
Most people feel just fine. Eating a balanced meal and drinking plenty of fluids before your donation, thinking positively about your donation and knowing what to expect will all help. Regular activity can be resumed following the donation, although you should avoid heavy lifting for the remainder of the day.

How often can I give blood and platelets?
You can give blood every 56 days, double red cells (two units at one time) every 112 days or platelets up to 24 times per year.
Tips for a successful blood drive

General tips

• Maintain contact with your Red Cross account manager throughout the process. Your account manager is there to support you.

• Make sure you schedule your drive on a day with no conflicting activities or events.

• Confirm and reconfirm site arrangements to ensure the site is ready for the Red Cross collections team the day of the drive.

• Organize a recruitment team to help you recruit donors and help the day of the drive.

• Require scheduled appointments and follow the time slots allotted by your Red Cross account manager.

• Keep track of your sign-ups and keep your Red Cross account manager informed of your progress.

• Strive to achieve your goal as the Red Cross must make sure that an adequate blood supply is always on the shelf, ready to help patients in need.

• Have a plan in place for contacting no shows.

• Have a backup plan just in case something comes up.

Recruitment tips

• Ask potential donors face-to-face so that everyone is asked personally. It is, hands down, the most effective form of recruitment.

• Give lots of encouragement to new participants and volunteers.

• Be prepared. Have your deferral information and recruitment materials handy so you can answer basic questions about giving blood.

• Advertise, advertise, advertise. Don’t be limited by just using posters and fliers; get creative and utilize all promotional and/or recruitment channels available.

• Determine any opportunities for your Red Cross account manager to make a presentation to potential donors to kick off the appointment scheduling effort.

• Send cards, emails or make phone calls three days before the drive to remind donors of their commitments.
More ways to help

We greatly appreciate our partnership with you and hope you will continue your commitment by joining the millions of other American Red Cross volunteers across the country. These volunteers help provide ongoing support in the areas of Armed Forces Emergency Services, Disaster Services, Health and Safety Services and International Services.

Armed Forces Emergency Services
The Red Cross Movement began on the battlefield. Today, that same spirit is present wherever United States military troops are located. The Red Cross provides reporting and communication services through a network that links members of the military anywhere in the world with their loved ones back home.

Disaster Services
Every year, the Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters, including house or apartment fires, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hazardous material spills, transportation accidents, explosions and other natural and man-made disasters. The Red Cross provides information about disaster preparedness that reaches millions of Americans.

Preparedness and Health and Safety Services
The American Red Cross is the nation’s leading provider of preparedness training. Every community is safer thanks to the more than 4.3 million people a year who receive Red Cross training and information in first aid, CPR/AED use, water safety, babysitting and other skills. For more than 100 years, the Red Cross has helped keep people and their families safer as part of the organization’s mission of emergency prevention and preparedness.

International Services
American Red Cross International Services works as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the world’s largest humanitarian network, to restore hope and dignity to the world’s vulnerable people by bringing emergency relief to disaster victims and improving the basic living conditions of those in chronically deprived areas of the world.

A gift of financial support
A gift of any size supports the lifesaving mission of the American Red Cross, whether it’s responding to a disaster, collecting lifesaving blood, teaching skills that can save a life or assisting our military members and their families. Visit redcross.org for more information.