



Volunteer Program Idea Book

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES, SAVING LIVES

This idea book provides a guide to volunteer roles, recruitment, onboarding, engagement, and recognition. It is designed as a resource for blood centers worldwide to create meaningful volunteer programs. Featured programs: Gulf Coast Blood and Our Blood Institute.



Gulf Coast Blood

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Introduction

Volunteers are at the core of everything we do. Our mission, to save lives and strengthen our communities, cannot be achieved without the dedication of volunteers. They bring energy, compassion, and advocacy that inspire others to give and to serve

Volunteers help us:

- Connect with donors and the community.
- Create welcoming, meaningful experiences.
- Extend the capacity of our staff so we can reach more people.

This toolkit is designed to equip our team with resources, strategies, and best practices for recruiting, engaging, and retaining volunteers.

When we invest in our volunteers, we are investing in the strength and future of our mission.



Recruiting Volunteers

To provide the best experience possible, we have two Volunteer Coordinators dedicated to guiding volunteers through recruitment, onboarding, scheduling and ongoing engagement.

Volunteer Services Team Responsibilities:

- Recruit, interview, and train volunteers.
- Develop position descriptions and identify opportunities.
- Place volunteers across Blood Center operations.
- Track service hours and coordinate recognition programs.
- Organize activities, events, and newsletters.
- Serve as liaisons and advocates for volunteers.

Recruitment Strategies:

- Post roles on volunteer platforms
- Maintain a clear, engaging volunteer landing page with role descriptions and photos.
- Highlight volunteer stories on social media.



Onboarding Volunteers

Onboarding Process:

1. Application: Complete the online application.
2. Orientation: Learn about Gulf Coast Blood's mission, values, and volunteer expectations through in-person or virtual orientation.
3. Training & Placement: Receive role-specific training and get matched to the opportunity that best fits your skills and interests.
4. Ongoing Support: Stay connected through regular check-ins with Volunteer Coordinators.

Volunteer Qualifications:

- Minimum Age: 12 years old.
 - Ages 12–14: Must be accompanied by a trained parent/guardian.
 - Ages 15–17: May volunteer with parental consent.
- Completion of orientation is required before service begins.

How to Commit for Life as a Volunteer

- Volunteer frequently.
 - Connect with us and your community.
 - Spread the word.
-

Volunteer Roles: Making an Impact

The primary purpose of all volunteer roles is to create experiences that inspire others to save lives. Volunteers contribute to several areas at Gulf Coast Blood:

Volunteer Event Associates

- Support mobile blood drives and community events.
- Welcome and assist donors, distribute refreshments, and educate the public.
- Encourage enrollment in the Commit for Life program.

Volunteer Office Associates

- Provide a welcoming environment at Gulf Coast Blood locations.
- Assist donors, answer calls, offer refreshments, and support administrative tasks.

Volunteer Drivers

- Transport blood and blood products safely between facilities.

Speakers Bureau

- Share compelling stories about the impact of donations.
 - Speak to diverse audiences and complete public speaking training.
-

Volunteer Drivers: Delivering Life

Program Overview:

Volunteer Drivers provide essential transportation of blood products, enabling safe and reliable delivery services to hospitals.



Requirements:

- Valid driver's license, good driving record, background check.
- Completion of defensive driving training.
- Commitment of 2–4 shifts per month (minimum 4 hours per shift).

Benefits:

- Welcome package with T-shirt and badge.
- Donor Rewards points for volunteer hours.
- Bi-annual luncheons and recognition for milestones (e.g., 500 hours).

Safety & Accountability:

- Mandatory defensive driving training.
 - Clear incident reporting procedures with Risk Management support.
 - All volunteers follow company operational hours and shift protocols.
-

Keeping Volunteers Inspired

Engagement Tactics:

- Bi-monthly newsletters with updates, opportunities, and volunteer recognition.
- Handwritten notes for birthdays, achievements, and holidays.
- On-site check-ins and first-time visits using F.O.R.D.
 - F.O.R.D. is a simple framework to guide meaningful conversations with volunteers.
 - F – Family → Ask about loved ones, children, or pets.
 - O – Occupation → Talk about their work, studies, or past careers.
 - R – Recreation → Explore hobbies, sports, or leisure activities.
 - D – Dreams → Learn about their aspirations, travel plans, or goals.

Annual Training & Community

Projects:

- Annual Volunteer Training: program updates, skills development, and recognition.
- Community projects (e.g., “Holiday Hugs”) allow volunteers to directly support patients.



Rewards for Dedication

At Gulf Coast Blood, we have found that recognition and tangible rewards are key to sustaining volunteer engagement and loyalty. Our program integrates volunteers into the existing Donor Rewards Program, ensuring that both donors and volunteers feel valued in similar ways.

This approach allows volunteers to redeem their points in our Donor Loyalty Store, which includes:

- Digital gift cards to national retailers and restaurants
- Exclusive branded merchandise
- Special seasonal offers

Earning Points

Volunteers earn points for hours served:

- Bronze Level (1–9 hours/year): 10 points per hour
- Silver Level (10–39 hours/year): 15 points per hour
- Gold Level (40+ hours/year): 20 points per hour

Additional Benefits for Volunteers

To further encourage retention, Gold-level volunteers receive:

- A complimentary Advanced Wellness Check
 - Invitations to the annual awards celebration, “A Celebration of Life”
 - Recognition for significant milestones, such as 500 volunteer driving hours
-

Resource: Volunteer Brochure



Volunteers are vital to our mission at Gulf Coast Blood. Find out how you can help!

VOLUNTEER QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Age: 12 years old. Those ages 12 to 14 must be accompanied by a trained parent or guardian at all activities. Those ages 15 to 17 can volunteer with parental consent.

All new volunteers must complete volunteer orientation prior to volunteering.

HELP SAVE LIVES IN THESE ROLES!

- Volunteer Event Associate
- Volunteer Office Associate
- Volunteer Driver
- Speakers Bureau

HOW DO I *Commit for Life* AS A VOLUNTEER?

- Volunteer frequently.
- Connect with us and your community.
- Spread the word.

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

We appreciate our volunteers and the time they dedicate to our community. As a thank you, volunteers can earn points in our Donor Rewards program every time they volunteer. Like donors, volunteers redeem points for eGift Cards to shop at their favorite places.

- **Bronze Level** (1 to 9 hours per calendar year) = 10 points per hour
- **Silver Level** (10 to 39 hours per calendar year) = 15 points per hour
- **Gold Level** (40+ hours per calendar year) = 20 points per hour.

Gold level volunteers are eligible to request a complimentary Advanced Wellness Check. They will also receive an invitation to our annual awards event 'A Celebration of Life' and a tour of Gulf Coast Blood HQ's operations.

THE PRESIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

The PVSA is an award that honors volunteers and recognizes their impact on their community. As a Certifying Organization, Gulf Coast Blood will present the award for Gold Level to volunteers who have met these requirements for their age group during the calendar year.

- Teens (ages 12-15) must complete 100+ hours
- Young Adults (ages 16 - 25) must complete 250+ hours
- Adults (ages 26 and up) must complete 500+ hours

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A BLOOD DONOR TO VOLUNTEER. IN FACT, IF YOU ARE INELIGIBLE TO DONATE, VOLUNTEERING IS A GREAT WAY YOU CAN STILL BE INVOLVED IN OUR LIFE-SAVING MISSION!

To keep track of your rewards, create a Digital Donor account by visiting giveblood.org. Click the **Login** button, choose the **Donor** option, and create a new account. If you are already a donor, use your existing account to keep track of your volunteer points. Your gift card reward will be distributed electronically, so make sure we have your current email address.

Visit giveblood.org/volunteer/ for more information. Questions? Contact our volunteer coordinators at (713) 791-6262 or volunteering@giveblood.org.



Follow us on social media

@commitforlife | #commitforlife

Holiday Hugs Promotion

Holiday Hugs is Gulf Coast Blood's annual tradition that combines blood donation with messages of comfort. These bears are delivered to patients across more than 170 hospitals in our 26-county service region.

Volunteer Participation

Volunteers play a key role in Holiday Hugs by:

- Preparing and sorting teddy bears for delivery
- Attaching handwritten donor messages to each bear
- Delivering bears to patients alongside our Reindeer Brigade

Partnership with BEAR (Be A Resource)

In collaboration with BEAR Houston, Holiday Hugs also provides new toys and gifts for children under CPS care, extending the program's reach beyond hospital walls.

Community Impact

- Brightens the holidays for hospital patients
- Encourages donations during a critical time of year
- Strengthens community partnerships through toy drives and giving opportunities



Make an Impact Today

Tips for Volunteers to Maximize Impact:

- Volunteer regularly and consistently. Reliability builds trust and strengthens our lifesaving mission.
- Share our mission with friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors. By spreading awareness, you help expand our reach and bring new donors and volunteers into the fold.
- Talk about why you serve and the difference you see. Personal stories inspire others more than statistics ever could.
- Celebrate every contribution. Big or small, each hour of service counts. Together, we create a ripple effect of generosity and lifesaving impact.



Why Volunteers Matter

Volunteers are more than helpers, they are mission partners.

Every hour of service represents a commitment to saving lives, building community, and ensuring hope for patients and families.

When we nurture and retain volunteers, we:

- Build consistency and reliability in our programs.
- Strengthen donor experiences, leading to deeper community trust.
- Multiply the impact of every resource we have.

Supporting our volunteers means supporting the heart of our mission. Together, staff and volunteers form a powerful team that ensures we can continue to deliver on our promise: saving lives and making a lasting impact.





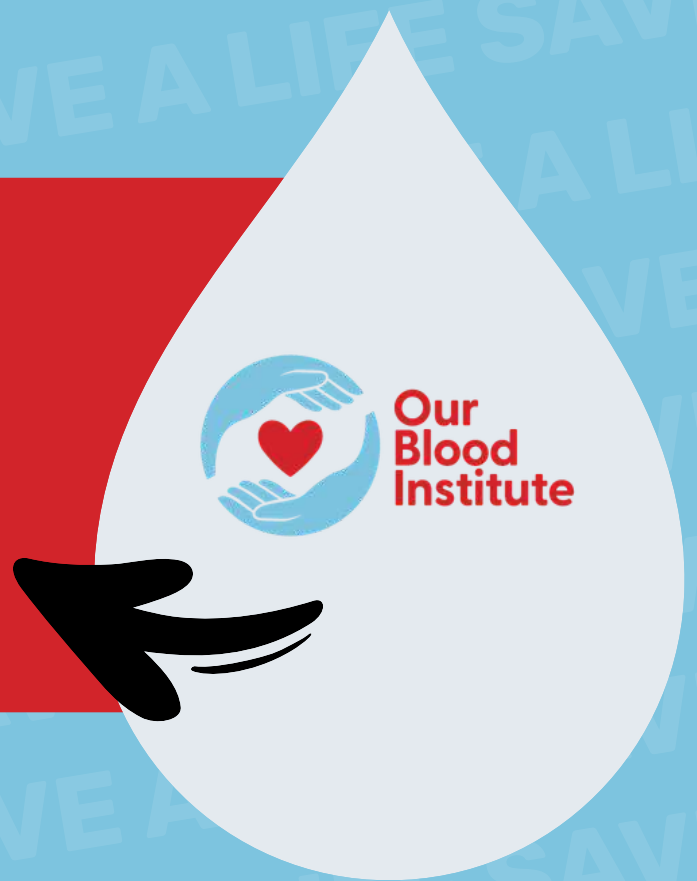
**Our
Blood
Institute**

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Volunteer

where your time
saves lives



Why Our Blood Institute

Volunteers are the heart of our mission, and we know it takes an entire community to support a healthy blood supply. If you're passionate about OBI's lifesaving mission, please consider volunteering!

Flexibility

Our volunteer program is flexible, and there are no minimum time commitments. We work to find opportunities that fit your schedule, with a variety of roles to fit any interest! If you are looking for a one-time volunteer opportunity, or you want to make a longer commitment to your community, we will aim to match your schedule and your skill set with our team.

We've got something for everyone who wants to make a difference with OBI!

How to get started

**Check our website for
volunteer opportunities available:**



Click or scan



WBBB

First-Time Donor Program

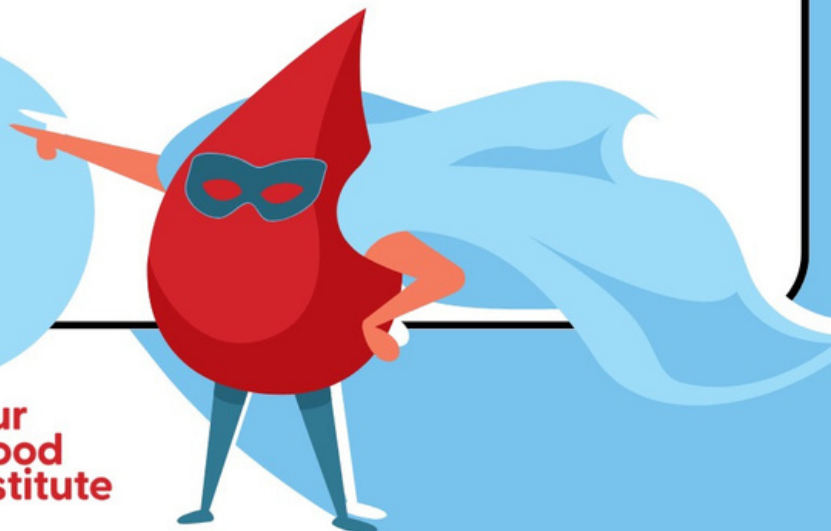
Volunteer Checklist

- Ask every donor:
 “Is this your first time saving lives with OBI?”
 - Give all FTD’s a sticker & write their first name on it so that we can identify them as our special guest!
 - Give the donor a brief overview of the 4 step donation process
(Check-In, Health Check, Blood Draw, Canteen)
 - Introduce the donor to *Donor Express* and ask them to begin their Donor Questionnaire
 - Ask the donor if they have any questions
- *All FTD’s will be provided a *What’s Next* flyer in screening

Let’s be sure our First-Time Donors feel **welcome, comfortable & confident** during their visit with us!



Our
Blood
Institute





Hi Volunteer!

Welcome! Thank you for volunteering today—your support is truly appreciated!
Please take a moment to review the following instructions to help ensure a smooth and successful blood drive:

1

Introduce Yourself & Ask for Help

- Please introduce yourself to the staff or supervisor for the day.
- If you have any questions or need help during the drive, the supervisor will be happy to assist you.

2

Unpack T-Shirt Bins

Inside the T-Shirt Bins, you will find:

- Blue Volunteer Toolkit
- Promotional t-shirts (give to successful donors)
- Vintage t-shirts (give to deferred donors)
- Promotional items like stickers and tattoos
- NextGen Hero Kits for kids

3

Blue Volunteer Toolkit

- Review all contents before the drive starts.
- Toolkit includes key reference materials, flyers, and forms.

4

Sign-In Table Setup

Set up these items neatly:

- Sign-in sheet and donor appointment list (given to you by the supervisor)
- Donor Express materials
- Parental Consent QR Code (if needed)
- Volunteer and Social Haus flyer (space permitting)
- Platelet Information flyer (space permitting)

5

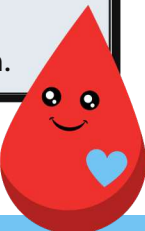
OBI Stickers

- Before the drive begins, ask the screening staff for the OBI Stickers:
 - Appointment stickers
 - First-Time Donor stickers
- At the end of the drive, return remaining stickers to the screening staff

6

End-of-Drive Wrap-Up

- Sign-in sheet, pens, & appointment list (give to supervisor)
- Pack up all stickers and materials to their original locations.
- Place NextGen Kits and leftover promo items into the T-shirt bin.
- Organize t-shirts into one stack by size (for easy processing).
- Return all displayed documents to the Volunteer Toolkit and pack in the T-shirt bin.



Please keep things tidy and organized to help our team process returns efficiently.
If you have questions, ask your supervisor or event coordinator.
Thank you again for your time and care today!

Quick Reference Setup Checklist

1

Introduce Yourself & Ask for Help

- Please introduce yourself to the staff or supervisor for the day.
- If you have questions or need assistance, the supervisor is your go-to person.

2

Unpack T-Shirt Bins

- Current promotional t-shirts (for successful donors)
- Vintage t-shirts (for deferred donors)
- NextGen Hero Kits (for children)
- Blue Volunteer Toolkit

3

Blue Volunteer Toolkit

- Review all contents (important info for the day)

4

Sign-in Table Setup

- Sign-in sheet, pens, & appointment list (retrieve from supervisor)
- Donor Express flyer (full sheet & tent) Parental Consent QR Code
- (if needed) Volunteer and Social Haus flyers (if space allows)
- Platelet Information flyer (if space allows)
-

5

OBI Stickers

- Retrieve the OBI Stickers (appointment, first-time donor) from the screening staff

Quick Reference Tear Down Checklist

1

Collect & Pack Up

- Sign-in sheet, pens, & appointment list (give back to supervisor)
- NextGen Hero Kits and extra promo items (into T-shirt bin)
- Flyers & Donor Express (back into Volunteer Toolkit)
- Sort remaining t-shirts into one stack by size (for easy processing) & return to bins

2

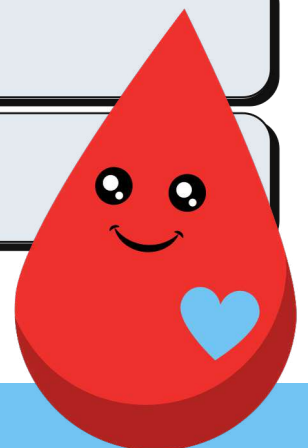
OBI Stickers

- Return remaining stickers to the screening staff

3

Return Everything

- Toolkit and bins go back to storage area



THANK YOU CREW

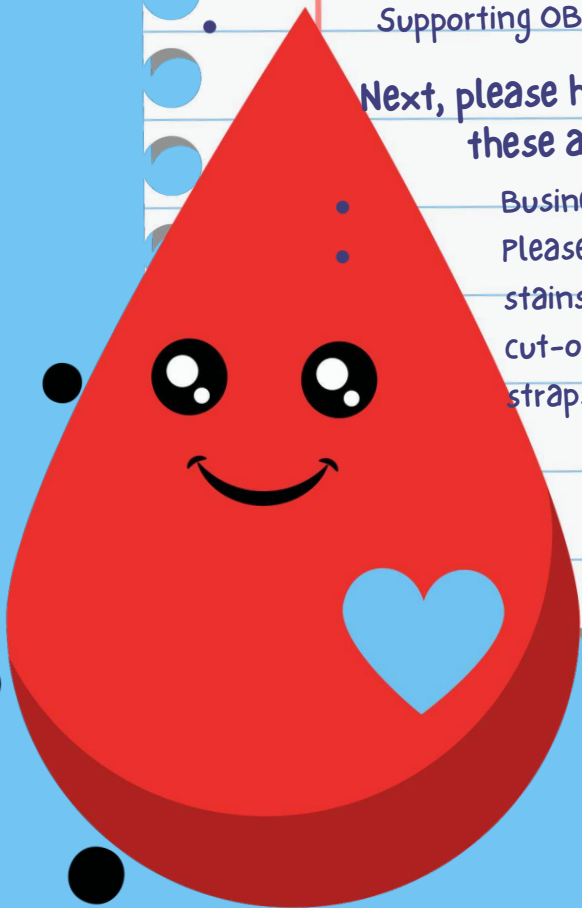
Some of the tasks you might help with at this drive include:

- Welcoming donors, overseeing the donor sign-in sheet, and maintaining the donor schedule
- Reminding donors to have their Photo ID ready for pre-screening
- Asking donors if they have donated before, and providing new donors with the First-Time Donor sticker
- Directing donors to complete our Donor Express questionnaire at obi.org before they go to screening (especially if there is a wait)
- Texting donors 30 minutes after a missed appointment to remind and welcome them to come anytime before the end of the drive
- Asking donors to download our new app (volunteer toolkit)
- Introducing donors to TIC TAC TRIVIA (volunteer toolkit)
- Giving donor thank you items (t-shirts) and other promotional items
- Giving deferred donors a vintage tshirt
- Supporting OBI staff and blood donors

Next, please help OBI maintain a professional image by following these appropriate staff and volunteer dress guidelines:

- Business casual attire is appropriate for volunteers
- Please don't wear the following: clothes with tears, holes, or stains; shirts with offensive and inappropriate writing; flip flops, cut-offs, or short shorts; tank tops, tube tops, or spaghetti straps; and excessively ill-fitting or revealing garments

Finally, the goal is to help blood donors have a positive donation experience, so they will want to donate again.



Greet The Donors:

- Hello Hero!
- We are so glad you are here today!
- Thank you for being here, we are happy to have you!

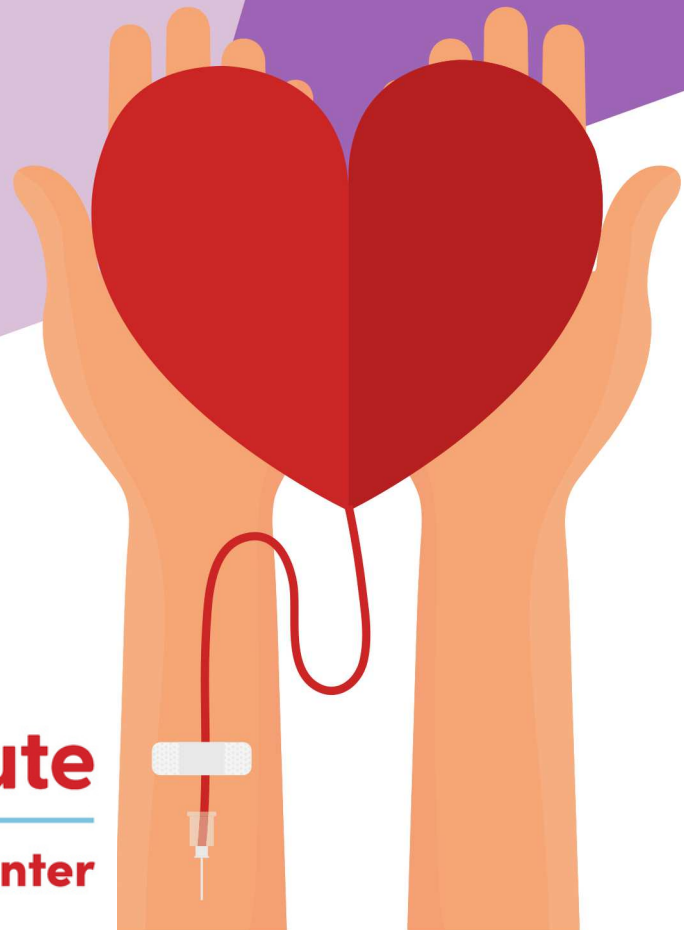


Our Blood Institute
Coffee Memorial Blood Center



Thank The Donors:

- Thank you for saving lives today!
- Thank you for being someone's lifeline!
- Thank you for being a life-saving donor!



Our Blood Institute
Coffee Memorial Blood Center