



From Deferral to Opportunity



**A RESOURCE FOR SUPPORTING AND
ENGAGING DONORS**



Grant funded research by The Foundation for America's Blood Center.
Insights and strategies based on 2024 Gulf Coast Blood donor research.

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Introduction: Why Deferrals Matter

Donor deferrals are an essential safeguard for both donors and patients, ensuring that blood collection is safe and effective. However, while necessary, deferrals can also create challenges.

For donors, being told “no” can feel discouraging. Many donors report feeling disappointed, frustrated, or even rejected. For blood centers, deferrals risk disengaging valuable supporters who may hesitate to return—or may not return at all.

Deferrals also present a unique opportunity. With the right approach, they can become a moment of education, encouragement, and redirection. Donors who cannot give blood today may still contribute in meaningful ways, including through research donations and ongoing engagement.

This toolkit is designed to help blood centers:

- Understand donor perceptions and knowledge gaps around deferrals.
- Implement effective communication strategies to reduce negative feelings.
- Introduce research opportunities and alternative pathways to keep donors engaged.
- Equip staff with the language, tools, and training needed to turn deferrals into opportunities.

The goal is simple: no donor left behind.

The Data-Driven Approach

To better understand donor experiences, two large-scale surveys were conducted in 2024:

Part 1: Deferrals

Focused on how donors perceive and experience deferrals, including emotional impact, communication preferences, and likelihood to return.



Respondents
532 donors



Criteria

All had experienced at least one temporary deferral in 2023

Part 2: Research & Cell Therapy Contributions

Explored donor understanding of medical research, motivations for participation, and potential barriers.



Respondents
875 donors



Criteria

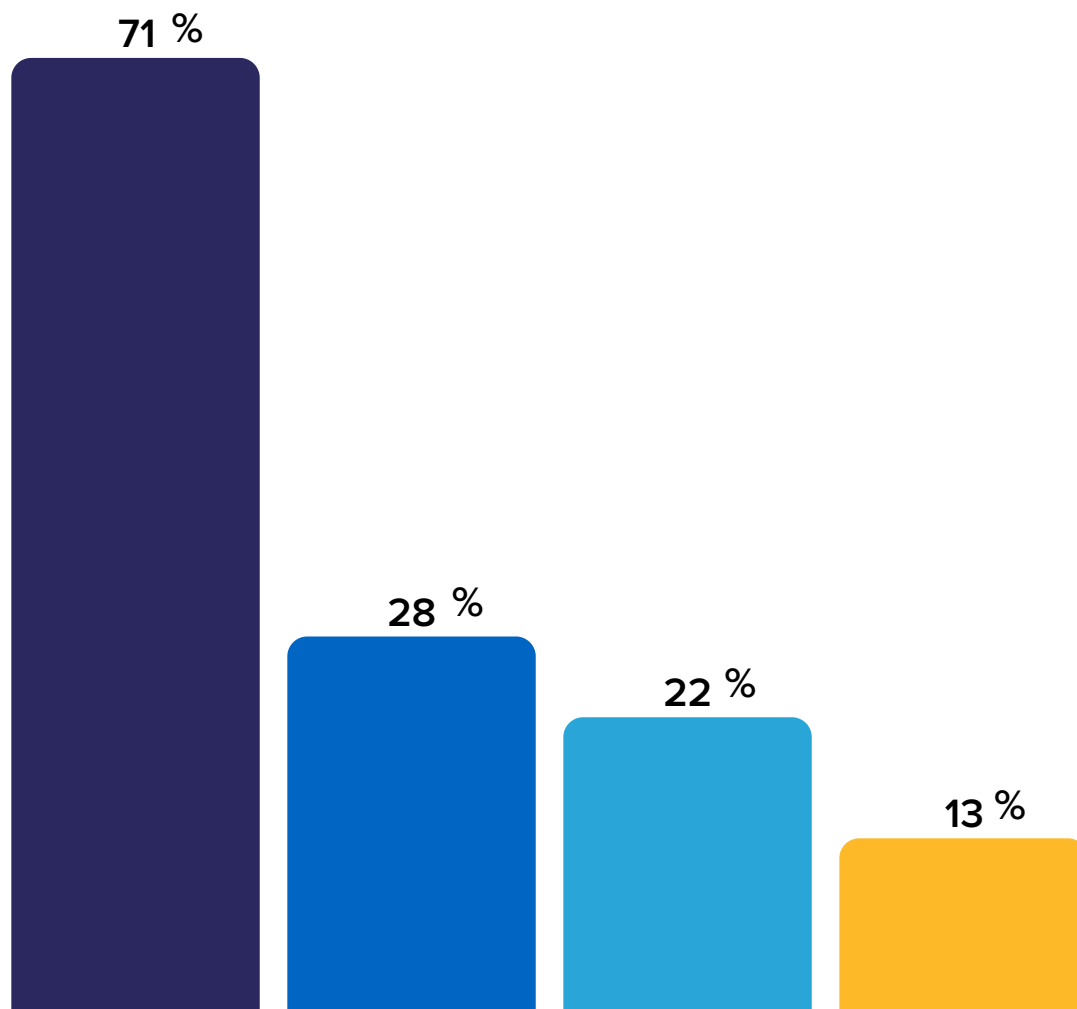
Recent donors
(within 90 days)

Together, these surveys provide a robust picture of donor sentiment, knowledge gaps, and opportunities for improving donor engagement across the blood community.

Key Findings: What We Learned from Donors

Donor Emotions Around Deferral

- Disappointed
- Committed to try again
- Disheartened
- Rejected



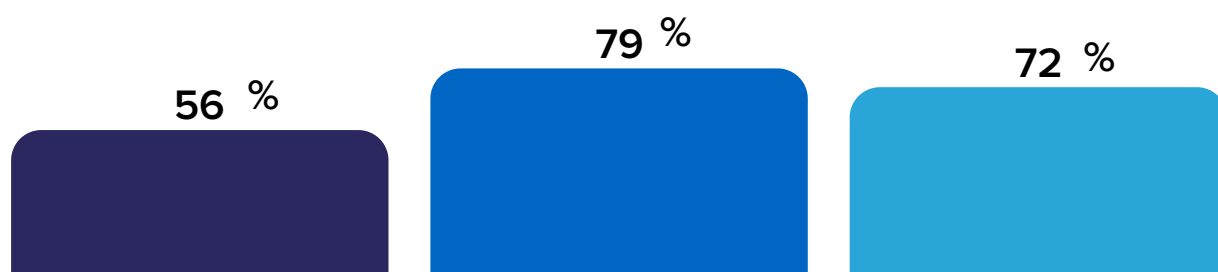
Deferral is often experienced as rejection, underscoring the need for empathy and positive reinforcement.

Key Findings: What We Learned from Donors

Our research revealed that deferrals are more than operational hurdles, they deeply shape how donors feel, whether they return, and how they perceive the blood center. The findings highlight specific gaps in communication that directly influence donor loyalty.

Communication Gaps

- Received follow-up support
- Requested simple language
- Preferred in-person explanation



Communication breakdowns at the moment of deferral risk long-term donor loss.

- 72% preferred an in-person explanation at the time of deferral.
- 79% requested simple, jargon-free explanations.
- Only 56% reported receiving follow-up support

Key Findings: What We Learned from Donors

Only 3% of the United States population donates blood, and donor presentations continue to decrease across the industry. The problem is significant, with nearly 2.5 million individuals in the U.S. deferred each year. Of individuals presenting to donate, approximately 20% are deferred.

Return Likelihood

- Hesitant or unlikely to return
- Extremely likely to return



- 56% said they were extremely likely to return.
- 25% were hesitant or unlikely—often citing fear of rejection or wasted time.

This means that out of the 2.5 million individuals deferred each year, approximately 625,000 donors are hesitant or unlikely to return- a critical group we must better support and re-engage to change perceptions of deferral and strengthen long-term donor retention.

Key Findings: What We Learned from Donors

From both quantitative data and open-ended donor feedback, several consistent themes emerged that blood centers can act on immediately:

Improve In-Person Communication

Train staff to provide clear, compassionate explanations at the time of deferral.

Address Emotional Impact in Follow-Up

Develop follow-up protocols that acknowledge donor disappointment and reinforce appreciation.

Expand Health & Education Resources

Create easy-to-understand materials that explain common deferral reasons, health requirements, and tips for becoming eligible in the future.

Enhance Clarity on Deferral Purpose

Educate donors on the health and safety rationale behind deferrals to reduce misunderstandings and negative perceptions.

Provide Additional Opportunities to Contribute

Offer alternative ways to help, such as research donations, volunteer roles, or advocacy opportunities so that donors still feel they are making an impact even when deferred.

Recommendations for Blood Centers

Enhance In-Person Communication

Train staff to deliver compassionate, clear explanations of deferrals.

Empathetic delivery matters

Staff should acknowledge the donor's disappointment and immediately reinforce their value to the community.

Clarity over jargon

Use simple, reassuring language that explains the deferral reason and timeframe for eligibility.

Personalized messaging

Connect the donor's history (e.g., "your last donation helped patients in our community") to keep the focus on their positive impact.



Recommendations for Blood Centers

Strengthen Follow-Up

Provide immediate written information and send eligibility reminders by email or text.

Timely reminders

Send messages when the donor's deferral period is ending, so they feel remembered and invited back.

Multi-channel outreach

Combine email, SMS, and app notifications for broader reach and consistent reinforcement.

Check-in touchpoints

A short “thank you” or wellness message during the deferral period helps donors feel supported, not forgotten.



Recommendations for Blood Centers

Offer Alternative Opportunities

Allow deferred donors to contribute to research donations, volunteer roles, or ambassador programs.

Research pathways

Invite donors to give a small blood sample for medical research when full donation isn't possible.

Volunteer or advocacy roles

Offer opportunities such as sharing their story, recruiting others, or assisting at events.

Stay connected programs

Newsletters, educational webinars, or center tours keep donors tied to the mission even if they can't donate.



Recommendations for Blood Centers

Educate with Transparency

Create plain-language materials explaining deferral reasons and research uses, while being upfront about risks, benefits, and privacy.

Why deferrals exist

Frame deferrals as a safety measure for both patients and donors, not as a rejection.

Accessible explanations

Provide clear handouts or digital resources that donors can take home and review later.

Normalize the experience

Share statistics that many donors face temporary deferrals, reducing feelings of isolation.



Recommendations for Blood Centers

Express Gratitude: Reinforce Donor Value

Gratitude is one of the strongest motivators for donors to return after a deferral. A simple message of appreciation can reframe the experience, remind donors that their effort still matters, and inspire them to stay engaged.

Why Gratitude Matters

- 44% of donors cited gratitude from the blood center as a key motivator to donate again.
- Positive reinforcement and clear next steps are among the top factors influencing return.
- Even small gestures, such as thank-you notes or recognition messages, make a lasting impact.

Recommendations for Blood Centers

Recognize Effort, Not Just Success

Acknowledge donation attempts, reinforcing that the effort itself is valued.

Celebrate every attempt

Thank donors for showing up, regardless of outcome, reinforcing their commitment to helping others.

Highlight continued value

Frame their contribution (time, intent, willingness) as essential to sustaining the blood supply.

Milestone recognition

Send digital badges, certificates, or small thank-you tokens to deferred donors, just as you would to active donors.



Resources: Scripts, Strategies, and Samples

Deferral Recognition Ideas

Ways to Show Deferred Donors They're Valued

- Handwritten or digital notes that acknowledge the donor's attempt and reinforce their importance to the mission.
- Small, meaningful items such as water bottles, pins, or keychains with uplifting messages (“Every Effort Counts” or “Still Saving Lives”).
- Testimonials of donors who turned deferrals into research contributions or advocacy roles. Highlight these in newsletters, social media, or lobby posters.
- Deferred Donor Loyalty Points
- Invite deferred donors to volunteer or serve as peer advocates, showing that their contribution is bigger than any single donation.
- Celebrate not just donations, but attempts.

Feedback & Communication

Clear and compassionate communication is one of the most powerful tools blood centers have to reduce donor frustration and encourage future return. Donors consistently expressed a preference for real-time explanations, accessible resources, and follow-up in the channels they already use.

In-Person Explanations

- 72% of donors prefer receiving an explanation at the time of deferral.
- A personal, face-to-face conversation reassures donors, provides an opportunity for questions, and reduces feelings of rejection.

Supporting Materials

- 30% of donors find pamphlets helpful.
- Handouts or digital resources allow donors to revisit information at their own pace.

Feedback & Communication

Preferred Communication Channels

- 66% prefer email
- 51% prefer text
- 6% prefer phone calls
- 5% prefer mailed letters

Key Insight

While in-person conversations are essential, ongoing communication should be multi-channel, with emphasis on digital platforms.

Takeaway

The most effective communication is both immediate and readily accessible.

- Provide clear explanations during the deferral.
- Reinforce the message with concise, easy-to-understand resources.
- Maintain engagement with personalized follow-up across preferred channels.

Future Education and Clarity

Donors emphasized the need for education that is simple, accessible, and actionable. While most understand that deferrals exist to protect both patients and donors, many still struggle with unclear explanations, technical jargon, or uncertainty about what might change their eligibility in the future.

Simple Language

79% request straightforward, jargon-free explanations.

Verbal Clarity

48% prefer in-person explanations with time for questions.

Donor Change

49% want a clear explanation of what could change to make them eligible in the future.

Educating and Supporting Donors

Education Strategies

Clear, transparent education empowers donors and helps sustain long-term engagement.

Consider implementing these approaches:

Tiered Educational Materials

Provide information at varying depths to meet donors where they are:

- Quick-reference cards or posters for donors who want a snapshot.
- Brochures or FAQs for those who want detail.
- Digital deep-dives (videos, web articles, webinars) for donors seeking comprehensive understanding

Real-World Impact Stories

Use testimonials, patient spotlights, and case studies to illustrate how research donations fuel medical breakthroughs. Personal stories make research relatable and tangible.

Seamless Integration into Workflow

Offer research donation options immediately after deferral to prevent donors from leaving discouraged. Position it as an “on-the-spot” alternative rather than a separate, burdensome process.

Acceptable Reasons to Defer Donors- Donor Beliefs

While education helps, there are circumstances where temporary or permanent deferrals are necessary to protect both donor and recipient safety. And donors don't always understand the reasoning.

Data show that donors believe the acceptable reasons for deferrals are:

- 83%- due to blood recipient safety concerns
- 83%- due to donor safety concerns
- 70%- involve blood center policies and eligibility criteria
- 70%- align with FDA regulations and recommendations
- 2%- due to other factors

Highlighting that fewer donors believe the agencies and blood center policies causing the deferral are “as good” of a reason as it is for their safety or the patient’s safety.

Tips when communicating donor deferrals at the time of donation:

- Avoid blaming the FDA or other regulatory agencies.
- Instead, focus on the donor or the patient’s safety.
- Use compassion.
- Provide specific actions the donors can take to become eligible.
- Equip your team with scripts to demonstrate how to have the conversation.

Acceptable Reasons to Defer Donors- Donor Beliefs

Help staff understand how each of the deferral types fall into the various donor belief buckets:

Recipient Safety

- Recent travel to regions with transmissible infections
- Risk behaviors or exposure to communicable diseases
- Signs of illness, fever, or infection at the time of donation
- Medications or treatments that could impact blood safety

Donor Safety

- Low hemoglobin or hematocrit levels
- Recent illness, surgery, or vaccination
- Certain chronic health conditions or medications
- Age, weight, or other eligibility thresholds

Blood Center Policies and Eligibility Criteria

- Donation intervals for various procedure types
- Prior donation reactions or complications

FDA Regulations and Recommendations

- Regulatory requirements for infectious disease screening
- Guidelines for high-risk exposures or medical history
- Adherence to evolving FDA recommendations

Understanding these reasons for deferral equips staff to communicate clearly and compassionately with donors.

Resources: Scripts, Strategies, and Samples

Sample Staff Script (General Deferral)

“Thank you so much for coming in today. I know it can feel disappointing not to donate, but your health and safety come first. The good news is that this is temporary, and you’ll be eligible again on [date].”

Sample Staff Script (Deferral + Research Option)

“Thank you so much for coming in today. While you aren’t eligible to donate blood at this time due to [reason], your willingness to help does not go unnoticed. We have another meaningful way you can make a difference—by providing a small sample for medical research. Many donors find this is a powerful way to support patients and science while waiting to donate again.”

Sample Staff Script (Closing with Encouragement)

“We truly value your time and commitment. Even when deferred, you are a vital part of our donor family. Thank you for helping us save lives.”

Resources: Scripts, Strategies, and Samples

Email Template: Follow-Up After Deferral

Subject Line: You Still Make a Difference!

Dear [First Name],

Thank you for taking the time to come in and attempt to donate. While you weren't eligible to give blood today due to [deferral reason], your commitment does not go unnoticed. Most deferrals are temporary, and you'll be eligible again on [date]. We'll send you a reminder when that time comes.

In the meantime, you still have opportunities to help:

- Research participation: You can support medical research and help advance treatments.
- Spreading the word: Encourage friends and family to donate on your behalf.

Your effort matters. Whether donating blood or supporting research, you are part of a community that saves lives.

With gratitude,

[Blood Center Name]

Post-Deferral Pathways

Deferrals can feel discouraging for donors, but they also create opportunities for continued engagement. It's important to understand what donors themselves have shared about how they want to stay connected and contribute.

Donor Perspectives on Deferral

- 39% of donors want an explanation of future opportunities or other ways to contribute.
- 64.9% reported they are most willing to contribute to medical research if already donating blood.
- 23% of participants had previous experience with medical research, showing many are already open to alternative pathways.

Research Donations: An Untapped Opportunity

Research pathways can turn a “no” into a meaningful “yes.”

- 73% said they were motivated by the chance to advance medical treatments.
- 59% felt research aligned with their original motivations for blood donation.
- 86% expressed interest in contributing to research in some form.
- 78% reported high trust in medical research institutions, reinforcing confidence in this pathway.

Post-Deferral Pathways

Areas of Greatest Donor Interest

When asked which research areas felt most compelling, donors highlighted:

- Cancer treatment – 75%
- Regenerative medicine – 58%
- Stem cell research – 56%
- Genetic disorder treatments – 53%

These insights show that donors connect strongly with research that has tangible, life-saving potential.

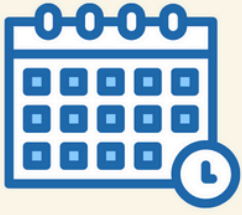
Why Cancer Treatment Research Matters

Donors connect most strongly with causes that have a clear, life-changing impact. Cancer treatment stands out as one of the most compelling areas of research.

By supporting cancer research, deferred donors can:

- Help accelerate discoveries that bring new therapies to patients faster.
- Contribute to treatments that improve survival and quality of life for millions.
- Stay engaged with a mission that aligns with their original motivation to save lives.

Social Media Ideas: Normalizing Deferrals



Guess
What?

GETTING DEFERRED IS ONLY TEMPORARY.
WE VALUE YOUR EFFORT AND COMMITMENT
TO HELPING OTHERS.
WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON!



Guess
What?

A DEFERRAL DOESN'T MEAN "NO", IT ONLY MEANS
NOT TODAY. COME BACK AND SEE US AGAIN!



Guess
What?

ITS THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS. JUST BECAUSE
YOU TRIED AND WERE UNABLE TO GIVE, JUST
KNOW WE APPRECIATE YOU TOO!



Guess
What?

ITS A BUMMER TO GET DEFERRED. BUT IT HAPPENS
SOMETIMES. REMEMBER- A DEFERRAL IS USUALLY
ONLY TEMPORARY. SEE YOU SOON!

Social Media Ideas: Normalizing Deferrals

Marissa
 26
 blood donor
 gets deferred sometimes
 travels
 started donating in high school
 loves to help where she can
 prefers chocolate chip cookies
 knows her donation can help cancer patients

TRAVIS
 27
 started donating in college
 runs marathons
 cat dad
 donates every 2-3 months

RUBY
 32
 book lover
 recently began donating to support medical research
 motivated by breakthroughs in regenerative medicine and cancer care
 loves the sense of purpose in contributing
 prefers donating early in the morning before work

James
 34
 works in IT
 started donating after a family member needed transfusions
 father of two
 has learned a lot about the science of blood donation
 balances family life, work, and community service
 enjoys oatmeal raisin cookies after donating

Social Media Ideas: Normalizing Deferrals

David 42


engineer

weekend cyclist

loves encouraging friends to donate with him

started donating in his mid 30's

occasionally deferred for travel or minor health reasons, but always returns



Carlos 55


community blood drive regular

small business owner

says donating keeps him connected to his community

first donated after an employee was injured in an accident

loves to eat popcorn as his post donation snack



Lane 65

retired nurse

has been donating for more than 40 years

longtime platelet donor

encourages her children and grandchildren to donate

enjoys graham crackers and a cup of tea after giving



Maurine 88

retired art teacher

long time blood donor

Motivated to share her story

can no longer donate blood due to health restrictions

her life has been saved and supported by countless donors over the years



Post-Deferral Pathways

Donor Impact Beyond the Chair

When donors are deferred from giving blood for transfusion, participation in research becomes a powerful alternative.

By supporting cancer research, deferred donors can donate samples to:

- Help accelerate discoveries that bring new therapies to patients faster.
- Contribute to treatments that improve survival and quality of life for millions.
- Stay engaged with a mission that aligns with their original motivation to save lives.

Growing Interest in Cellular Therapy Donations

Over 86% of donors expressed openness to learning more about cellular therapy donations. These therapies use blood and stem cells to strengthen the immune system against cancer, offering targeted treatment options and advancing the future of personalized medicine.



**THE GULF COAST
WAY: TURNING
INSIGHTS INTO
ACTION**



The Gulf Coast Way: Turning Insights Into Action

When handled with care, deferrals can shift from moments of disappointment to opportunities for impact. Offering research donation pathways is one of the most effective ways to achieve this. Through small blood sample collections, deferred donors can support critical research in cancer, regenerative medicine, and genetic disorders.

This model:

- **Reinforces that every donor matters.**
- Reduces feelings of rejection by offering an alternative.
- Strengthens loyalty by keeping donors engaged while they wait for eligibility.
- Provides a scalable, cost-effective solution for blood centers.

Instead of ending at “You cannot donate today.” the message becomes:

“You can still make a difference right now.”

The Gulf Coast Way: Turning Insights Into Action

At Gulf Coast Blood, we believe every donor journey matters. Our research on deferrals revealed both the challenges and opportunities in keeping donors engaged. From these insights, we created the **No Donor Left Behind** (NDLB) initiative — a program designed to transform deferral from a stopping point into a stepping stone.

What Sets the Gulf Coast Way Apart

Proactive Compassion in Every Interaction

We go beyond a simple “no” by equipping staff with scripts, empathy training, and follow-up tools. This ensures every donor walks away with clarity, dignity, and encouragement to stay connected.

Pathways Beyond a Traditional Blood Donation

We offer deferred donors alternative opportunities such as research sample donations, cell therapy contributions, volunteer roles, and advocacy channels. These options reinforce that every donor can contribute to lifesaving impact, even when temporarily deferred.

The Gulf Coast Way: Turning Insights Into Action

What Sets the Gulf Coast Way Apart

Education With Honesty and Transparency

We provide plain-language resources that explain why deferrals occur, what they mean for donor health, and how research donations are used. This builds trust and positions Gulf Coast Blood as a partner in both personal wellness and community health.

Recognition That Values Effort, Not Just Outcomes

Every attempt is honored. Donors who face deferral still receive gratitude, follow-up, and reminders of their importance to the mission. This simple acknowledgment has proven to strengthen loyalty and increase return rates.



Resources: Donor Resource Sample

YOU CAN STILL

SAVE LIVES BY DONATING

TO FURTHER RESEARCH

By donating a small amount of blood for research, you can help unlock new treatments and fuel medical advances that improve lives!



Blood components can lead to new treatments like regenerative medicine, cancer therapies and immunotherapy.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

○○○

Your donation to research can help with medical breakthroughs!

- **Fight Cancer** – Fueling new treatments and personalized therapies
- **Tackle Alzheimer's** – Helping scientists understand memory loss
- **Uncover Genetic Mysteries** – Revealing inherited conditions early
- **Boost Immunotherapy** – Powering the body's natural defense
- **Improve Medicine Development** – Making new medicines safer, faster

The Gulf Coast Way: Turning Insights Into Action

A Scalable Model for Other Blood Centers

The No Donor Left Behind initiative is a philosophy that turns disappointment into engagement, and rejection into retention.

Other blood centers can adopt elements of NDLB by:

- Training staff to lead with empathy and consistency.
- Creating clear follow-up pathways tailored to donor preferences.
- Offering research and volunteer options as immediate alternatives.
- Developing recognition strategies that value effort as highly as success.

By prioritizing connection at every step, the No Donor Left Behind model demonstrates that a temporary deferral never has to be the end of a donor's story. Instead, it can be the start of a deeper relationship built on trust, purpose, and shared impact.

Educating and Supporting Donors



Education Strategies

1. Transparency at Every Step

- Build trust by openly communicating:
 - Why samples are needed.
 - How they will be used.
 - Safeguards for donor privacy and data security.
 - Examples of past outcomes and future potential.

2. Normalize Research Contributions

- Incorporate research donation language into general communications (emails, social media, lobby materials) so donors see research as part of the overall donation journey—not a consolation prize.

3. Ongoing Education Touchpoints

- Send follow-up updates after research donations showing “here’s what your sample helped support.”
- This reinforces value, strengthens loyalty, and builds anticipation for future contributions.

Educating and Supporting Donors

Themes That Resonate

When donors are deferred, the right message can shift the narrative from frustration to empowerment.

The following themes consistently connect with deferred donors:

You Still Matter

Reassure donors that their willingness to give is just as important as the collection itself. Highlight that every attempt reflects compassion and community spirit.

Research Saves Lives Too

Elevate the value of research pathways by showing how blood samples accelerate breakthroughs in cancer treatment, regenerative medicine, and genetic therapies. Frame research donations as equally critical to patient outcomes as transfusions.

Real Impact

Bridge the gap between action and result. Share how one vial of blood can support multiple studies or lead to innovations that impact millions of patients over time.

Community Contribution

Appeal to altruism and shared values. Emphasize that deferred donors are part of a collective movement to advance science, improve medicine, and protect future generations.

Resources: Research

FAQ's For Staff

1. Why are we changing our focus to blood research?

Blood donations have helped care for patients in local hospitals for more than 50 years; now we can help contribute to finding cures by expanding our vision. Our mission remains the same.

2. What types of studies or medical research might donor blood contribute to?

Research projects often focus on areas such as infectious diseases, autoimmune disorders, cancer treatments, and genetic conditions.

3. What type of donations are used in research?

Researchers, biotech and academia request a variety of products including sample tubes, leukopak, buffy coats, red cells, platelets, and plasma.

4. Is a donor's personal information linked to their blood sample?

Research samples are de-identified, meaning any personal details are removed before use. Donors' identities remain confidential.

5. Do donors need to give consent for their blood to be used in research?

Yes, donors consent at the time of donation.

6. Can a donor choose what kind of research their blood is used for?

We will attempt to match a donor's research interest to a study. However, once a donor consents to research use, their sample may be used in an approved study.

7. What ethical guidelines govern the use of donated blood for research?

Research is regulated by institutional review boards (IRBs) and government agencies to ensure responsible use of donor samples.

8. Will a donor be informed if a health concern is found in their blood?

Research studies do not provide individual health results to donors. However, all donated blood is screened for infectious diseases before being used. If a concerning result is found during screening, the donor is notified.

9. Will this change affect the availability of blood for current patients and hospitals?

Our commitment to hospitals remains a priority, and transfusable products will continue to be the primary focus of our collections.

10. Will there be changes to current staffing, roles, or responsibilities?

Staff in all areas will be trained in new procedures and talking points to ensure we maintain compliance and can answer donor questions

Resources: Scripts, Strategies, and Samples

THE DONOR JOURNEY



YOU ARRIVE TO DONATE

You'll be greeted by a blood center employee and checked in



HEALTH SCREENING

If eligible- You donate blood
If deferred- Staff explains why and when you'll be eligible again



RESEARCH OPTION

Deferred donors can choose to give a small blood sample to advance medical research



FOLLOW-UP & RECOGNITION

You'll receive reminders when you're eligible again- and a thank you for your support



CONTINUED IMPACT

Whether through blood or research, your contribution helps patients and advance medicine

**DEFERRAL ISN'T THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY.
IT'S ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Resources: Scripts, Strategies, and Samples

A GUIDE FOR DISCUSSING THE GULF COAST BLOOD EXPANSION INTO BLOOD RESEARCH

WHAT IS A LEUKOPAK DONATION?

A **leukopak donation** is a special type of blood donation that collects white blood cells used in **cutting-edge medical research and treatments**. Unlike standard blood donations, leukopak donations involve **leukapheresis**, a process that collects your white blood cells while returning the rest of your blood components to your body.

WHY ARE LEUKOPAKS IMPORTANT?

Leukopaks are made of white blood cells needed for medical research and cell therapy development, including:

Cancer immunotherapy

Drug discovery

Autoimmune disease studies

WHO CAN DONATE?

- ✓ At least 18 years old
- ✓ In good health
- ✓ Meet pre-screening requirements

HOW ARE LEUKOPAKS COLLECTED?

The donor comes for pre-screening 2 to 7 days prior to collection.

For the collection procedure, an apheresis machine is used to collect blood using a 2-arm procedure.

The machine collects white blood cells and returns the remaining blood components (red blood cells and plasma) to the donor.

The collection process typically takes 3 to 4 hours.

WHERE ARE THESE SPECIAL PRODUCTS COLLECTED?

Leukopaks are collected in Cellular Life Solutions at our Headquarters location.

WHY DONATE?

- Make a difference by supporting groundbreaking research in cancer, autoimmune diseases, and immunotherapy.
- Earn rewards for each visit.

Conclusion

Deferrals don't have to mean lost donors.

By reframing the experience, blood centers can show donors they still matter, offer them alternative pathways to contribute, and ultimately strengthen long-term donor loyalty.

The key is education, empathy, and opportunity. When combined, these elements ensure that no donor feels left behind and that every individual has the chance to make a difference.

This approach doesn't just benefit donors; it strengthens the entire blood ecosystem. Blood centers that embrace transparent communication, meaningful follow-up, and alternative engagement pathways will not only improve retention, but also cultivate donors who feel seen, appreciated, and motivated to return.

At Gulf Coast Blood, the No Donor Left Behind philosophy has shown us what's possible when we honor every donor's intent to give. By recognizing effort, offering alternatives, and keeping the door open, we transform a temporary "not today" into an enduring "you still matter."

The future of donor engagement lies in this mindset shift: moving beyond transactions to relationships, beyond single donations to lifelong partnerships. When blood centers lead with compassion and creativity, we ensure that every donor journey continues and that together, we can save more lives.

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If you have questions about the contents of this resource, please reach out to: Theresa Pina @ tpina@giveblood.org