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*The Red Cross has been organizing the safe collection and distribution of blood and related products for many decades. This service is of vital importance to health care providers across the nation and around the world.*

Organizing a blood drive is one way you can contribute to your community. The Red Cross has established a minimum staff size of at least 300 people for a blood drive, you can still participate even if you don’t have that number of people in the area. Many smaller organizations band together and collaborate on setting up a drive and recruiting people from the general community to attend.

Three conditions must be met in order to host a drive:

1. There must be a suitable facility large enough to accommodate the intake/screening process,
2. The collection of blood, and
3. Administrative support to help schedule donor appointments.

The Red Cross will do the rest!

Preparation is key to the success of a blood drive. The Red Cross will work with your organization to advise the event through posters, flyers and public service announcements in local newspapers.

They will provide information on the importance of safe blood to the healthcare system of our country and will help answer questions such as:

* Is donating blood safe?
* How is blood collected?
* What happens to it after leaving the donation site?
* How is it stored?
* How much blood is taken?
* What use is blood and related products?

The benefits of hosting a blood drive are many including:

* It is a tangible way of showing your organization’s support for the local community.
* It provides positive visibility to your group and demonstrates a commitment to service and health.
* It provides a convenient way for your staff to participate in giving back to the community.
* It generates good will from inside and outside your organization by supporting the American Red Cross
* It’s a partnership where everyone wins.
* It feels good to be a part of helping to save lives

To learn more about organizing a blood drive go to: <http://www.redcrossblood.org/hosting-blood-drive>.