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Gulf Coast Blood, C2C and Stay Recruited Launch Workforce Academy to Train Next Generation of Healthcare Professionals

HOUSTON, Texas — [Gulf Coast Blood](#) announced the launch of Gulf Coast Blood Academy, a workforce development program designed to train the next generation of phlebotomists and support the region’s healthcare needs.

The Academy is a collaborative partnership with [Contact 2 Careers \(C2C\)](#), a local workforce development organization led by CEO Linda Fehoko that provides in-demand skills training and career pathways, and [Stay Recruited](#), a nonprofit supported by NFL Players Association President Reggie Rusk that helps young people access meaningful employment opportunities. Gulf Coast Blood, represented by Chief Administrative & People Officer Daniel Gandarilla, serves as the employer partner for the program.

Through scholarships, the program offers participants access to a seven-week training course, hands-on clinical experience, and a direct pathway into the healthcare field. The inaugural cohort of 15–20 students will begin training in May at C2C’s Greenspoint facility.

The three-way partnership played a key role in the successful launch of the Academy. Rusk supported recruitment efforts, helping connect young adults seeking stable, purpose-driven careers with opportunities in the healthcare field.

“Many young adults want to work in the healthcare field but don’t know where to start,” said Rusk. “Gulf Coast Blood Academy opens that door by providing training, support, and a real opportunity to build a career that serves the community and saves lives.”

Fehoko emphasized the importance of vocational training and strong employer partnerships. “When we partner with employers like Gulf Coast Blood, we can deliver meaningful training aligned with the skills needed for successful employment today and in the future,” she said.

“Through Gulf Coast Blood Academy, we are extending our mission beyond donation and into education,” said Gandarilla. “By investing in people, we are strengthening our ability to save and sustain lives.”

Participants must be 18 or older and hold a high school diploma or equivalent. Learn more at <https://www.giveblood.org/about-us/education/gulf-coast-blood-academy/>.

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Gulf Coast Blood is the sole provider of blood and blood components 24/7 to more than 170 hospitals and health care facilities in a 26-county Texas Gulf Coast region. Gulf Coast Blood is a nonprofit organization and is accredited by the Food and Drug Administration. For more information or to help save lives, visit [giveblood.org](https://www.giveblood.org).