



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**June 30, 2026**

## **First Gulf Coast Blood Academy Class Graduates, Strengthening Local Healthcare Workforce**

**HOUSTON, Texas** — Today, [Gulf Coast Blood](#) is celebrating the graduation of the inaugural cohort of [Gulf Coast Blood Academy](#), marking a major milestone in workforce development and healthcare education efforts across the region.

Launched in partnership with [Contact 2 Careers \(C2C\)](#), a local workforce development organization focused on career pathways and in-demand skills training, and Stay Recruited, a nonprofit supported by NFL Players Association President Reggie Rusk that connects young adults with meaningful employment opportunities, **Gulf Coast Blood Academy was created to prepare the next generation of phlebotomists.**

After completing a seven-week training program that included classroom instruction and hands-on clinical experience, graduates are prepared to begin careers in healthcare and support Gulf Coast Blood's mission of providing lifesaving blood to patients throughout the region.

To celebrate this achievement, graduates will participate in a Signing Day ceremony, formally committing to begin their careers with Gulf Coast Blood.

The event will take place at **10 a.m. on Tuesday, June 30, at Gulf Coast Blood Headquarters (1400 La Concha Lane, Houston, Texas).**

"This inaugural class is the proof point of the Gulf Coast Blood Academy, an innovative approach to recruiting and developing the next generation of talent," said Nikhil Nayak, President and CEO of Gulf Coast Blood. "We're creating real opportunities for people to enter and grow in healthcare careers, and that investment will translate directly into better outcomes for patients and a stronger community."

The successful launch of Gulf Coast Blood Academy was made possible through the collaboration of workforce, community, and employer partners committed to expanding access to career opportunities. C2C provided workforce training and career development support, while Stay Recruited helped connect participants with pathways to meaningful employment.

Gulf Coast Blood plans to expand the Academy to meet future staffing needs and continue creating pathways into healthcare careers.

For more information, visit [giveblood.org/academy/](https://giveblood.org/academy/).

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### **About Gulf Coast Blood**

*Gulf Coast Blood is a leading nonprofit blood and biotherapies organization serving Greater Houston, the Texas Medical Center, and surrounding regions. As the area's only 24/7 blood provider, it supplies lifesaving products to more than 170 hospitals and healthcare facilities across 26 counties. With an expanded mission focused on donor experience, innovation, and community impact, Gulf Coast Blood is advancing its role as a*



*center of excellence in blood banking, biotherapies, and patient-centered care. Through industry expertise and strong community partnerships, the organization continues to lead efforts that strengthen the healthcare system and save lives across the Gulf Coast region.*