

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Battle of the Badges Helps Strengthen Local Blood Supply This Summer

HOUSTON, Texas — [Gulf Coast Blood](#) is proud to recognize and thank the law enforcement officers, firefighters, donors and community members who participated in our [2026 Battle of the Badges](#) campaign, a weeklong friendly competition that helped strengthen the region's blood supply during the summer months.

Held June 29 through July 5, Battle of the Badges invited donors to support either Team Police or Team Fire by donating blood at any Gulf Coast Blood location or blood drive. The annual campaign encourages friendly rivalry between local police and fire departments while raising awareness about the ongoing need for blood donations.

Thanks to the support of local first responders and the communities they serve, 4,615 donors gave blood during the 2026 Battle of the Badges campaign period, helping ensure patients across the Gulf Coast region had access to lifesaving blood products when they needed them most.

The campaign came at a critical time, as blood donations often decline during the busy summer travel season due to vacations and changes in routine.



After a spirited competition, **Team Fire claimed the 2026 Battle of the Badges title with 1,654 credited donations**, while **Team Police contributed 1,336 credited donations**. Together, nearly 3,000 donors chose to support one of the two teams through the friendly competition. While Team Fire claimed the title, the campaign's greatest success was helping ensure lifesaving blood products remained available for patients across the Gulf Coast region.

"Every blood donation has the potential to save lives," said **Esmeralda Ancelmo-Walker, Gulf Coast Blood's Director of Donor Recruitment**. "We're incredibly grateful to the police departments, fire departments and community members who rallied behind this campaign. Their support helped ensure local hospitals had the blood products needed to care for patients throughout the summer."

Beyond the friendly competition, Battle of the Badges highlighted the continued commitment of first responders to protecting the communities they serve, both on and off duty. Whether responding to emergencies or encouraging blood donations, these men and women demonstrated their commitment to protecting and serving their communities.

Blood donations are needed every day for trauma victims, cancer patients, premature infants, and individuals living with chronic blood disorders. The success of this year's campaign helped Gulf Coast Blood continue meeting the needs of more than 170 hospitals and healthcare facilities across the Gulf Coast region.

Gulf Coast Blood thanks every participating fire department, police department, donor, volunteer and community advocate who made this year's Battle of the Badges a success.

To schedule a blood donation appointment or learn more about how to support the local blood supply, visit <https://www.giveblood.org>.



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.