

Organizing a Blood Drive

The 9th condition of Bai'at states:

That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare.

Accordingly, our beloved Imam – May God strengthen him, emphasized us to focus on Ithar or social services. One such activity is a blood drive. It is convenient to plan and organize. Here are some guidelines that I have put together through my experiences in organizing blood drives.

Planning:

1. Plan for the drive at least 1 month in advance.
2. Consider Sundays when Jama'at or Auxiliary meetings are held. Narrow down two future dates.
3. Contact your local blood bank. There are several blood bank organizations in the US that vary based on region. Few common ones are Red Cross, Life South, We are Blood, etc.
4. Getting in touch with the right person at the blood bank can be challenging. If you get hold of a phone no, go ahead and call right away. Email works as well. However, phone calls are more personal and produce quicker results.
5. Once you get hold of the right account manager at the blood bank, let them know your identity ("I am the local social services event organizer for the 40+ males of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community"), purpose and desired dates for the blood drive. The blood bank may ask you to sign up / register on its website. That's fine. This is probably the easiest part of the entire process. Once you get a commitment for the blood drive, write them a thank you email. This way both of you have each other's emails so that future communication will be facilitated.
6. After you have the blood bank's commitment for the time and date, ask them what their expectations are e.g. how many donations are they targeting (15 donations for 2-3 hour long blood drive is usually considered a success) ? let them know the location they would be parking the blood mobile on the day of the drive, etc. Ask them how many donors they will be able to see at one time i.e. how many stations/beds will be set up for donors.
7. Let your Chapter/Jama'at President and auxiliary in charges know the date and time of the blood drive.

Run-up to the drive:

Your relationship and future cooperation with the blood bank will depend on the success of your first drive. Make sure

1. As you get close to the drive (2 weeks prior to the drive, set up a Google sign up sheet with time slots. Divide the expected donor no's between Lajna, Khuddam and Ansar. For example if there are 15 donations sought, ask each auxiliary's commitment for 5 donors each. 5 donors typically mean up to 8 signups will be needed per auxiliary since due to various reasons not everyone will be able to donate.
2. Use all Jama'at communication channels and repeated announcements to introduce the blood drive and get donor commitments. These channels include: signs posted in the Mosque, phone calls, Juma/meeting announcements, Telegram / WhatsApp group announcements, etc. This is the most critical piece of the entire effort that determines drive success. Get signups and firm commitments.
3. Print/Put up blood drive banners outside the Mosque. A decent reusable canvas banner costs less than a \$100 at Fedex Kinkos. Graphics / Logos can be requested from the National PA department. *Don't have the date printed on the banner so you can reuse it for blood drives later.*
4. Check to see if you can use free non-profit ad space in the local newspaper to advertise the blood drive.
5. Call the blood bank account manager 2 days before the drive and confirm that they are staffed and have the blood mobile available for the upcoming blood drive.

On the day of the drive and beyond:

1. Arrive 30 min before the start time of the blood drive.

2. Welcome the blood bank staff once the blood mobile arrives. Let them know you are there to assist them and what time food etc. will be served at the Mosque and that they are welcome to join for the meal.
3. Take good pictures of the donors while donating blood, blood mobile, etc.
4. As the drive is wrapping up, check to see how many signups showed up and how many units were actually collected.
5. Thank the blood drive staff.
6. Thank the Jama'at President, auxiliary in charges, donors, etc. for their cooperation
7. Take down the banners and blood drive signs.
8. Report a successful blood drive in the Ansar monthly report complete with pictures to Qaid Ithar.