

SunCoast Blood Centers

Sun-Powered Lifesavers: Transforming Bloodmobiles for a Sustainable Future

As the SunCoast Blood Centers' mission states, they are privileged to bring people together to save lives through innovative blood services and therapies. Their singular purpose is to collect, test, process, match, store and distribute all the blood products required to serve the hospitals and health centers in our community. Over 90% of bloodmobile operations are in Sarasota and Manatee Counties, providing blood to local hospitals at the lowest price per unit in the country.

The proposed ***Sun-Powered Lifesavers: Transforming Bloodmobiles for a Sustainable Future*** initiative will reduce noise and air pollution, ensuring a quiet, reliable, environmentally sustainable, and cost-effective blood collection system by converting two bloodmobiles from gas-powered generators to solar and battery- powered generators. Gas-powered generators produce excessive noise and harmful emissions, making them unwelcome in many areas and prone to malfunctions, resulting in disrupted blood drives, decreased donor participation, and high operational costs. Transitioning to solar and battery power will enable SunCoast Blood Centers to collect more blood, provide a steady blood supply for over 69,000 individuals annually, and promote environmental sustainability with the annual reduction of diesel fuel usage by 4,100 gallons.

The total initiative budget of \$109,500 will fund construction materials for \$36,000, batteries and monitoring software for \$57,500, and staff expense to support the installation for \$16,000 for the two bloodmobiles. The costs to sustain the initiative are minimal, as the initiative expenses are solely to support the power source conversion, not ongoing expenses. The initiative will result in cost savings of \$15,500 per vehicle per year, which will be reinvested into core services and maintenance. Budgeting, cost management, reserve fund strategies, together with exploring additional funding opportunities and partnerships will support ongoing operations.

Solar panels and batteries require minimal upkeep, and remote monitoring capabilities allow staff to identify and address issues proactively. Having completed two successful conversions, SunCoast Blood Centers have realized a marked improvement in reliability and reduced maintenance costs. This increased operational stability enhances their ability to maintain a steady blood supply without interruption. Solar generators can last up to 20 years, compared to five years for gas generators, providing a significant return on investment given the 20-year lifespan of a bloodmobile.

This initiative will advance SunCoast Blood Centers' mission to provide innovative, lifesaving blood services while promoting environmental sustainability and community health. By adopting clean energy solutions, it will enhance operational efficiency, donor satisfaction, and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable environment for all.