Organizing a Donor Designation Drive

Each day, 22 Americans die waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. Many more are in need of a life-enhancing tissue transplant. Saving Sight is committed to helping grow the Donate Life eye, organ and tissue donor registry through public donor drives.

The single best way for the public to pledge to be an eye, organ and tissue donor is by joining the Donate Life eye, organ and tissue donor registry. This is a confidential computerized database that is maintained by Donate Life America. When an individual passes away, organ and tissue bank staff are able to access the donor registry to see if that person had registered as a donor. If they are on the Donate Life Registry or their state’s first person consent registry, we are able to proceed with the donor’s wishes without first getting permission from legal next-of-kin. This way, we are able to make sure that each potential donor’s wishes are carried out.

While the majority of registrants in the eye, organ and tissue registry have joined while obtaining or renewing their driver’s license at the DMV, anyone can join the registry 24/7 online at registerme.org. This is where holding a donor designation drive can become a successful way of educating the public about donation and encouraging individuals to join the registry!

Choosing a Location

There are many places in your local community that can serve as great locations for a donor designation drive. Here are some tips for deciding what place might work best for you:

• Choose a location that has a good amount of foot traffic, but is not too busy to allow people to stop and talk to you. Many times, people will have questions regarding donation or joining the registry. You will want to be in a location where it is logical for someone to stop and converse.
• Ensure that you will have internet access, a computer and enough room for individuals to sit down and register at a computer terminal. A laptop with a wireless Internet connection usually works best.
• Some places and events are a better match for individuals to make a decision regarding donation. We often find that events that tie in with health screenings, community events or even fundraisers for Lions clubs can be a good fit since they allow for enough time for someone to stop by your area.
• Individuals under the age of 18 need a signature of a parent or a legal guardian to join the registry. Therefore, keep in mind the logistics of an event targeting this age group- you will need parents/guardians present for them to register.

Please make sure to always get permission from the coordinator of the event or manager of a location to hold a donor drive before proceeding.
Logistics for Set-Up

Once your group has identified a location, date and time for the screening, please contact our volunteer coordinator at volunteer@saving-sight.org so we can promote the event. We will:

- Put it on your state’s donor registry calendar
- Put it on our web site calendar at www.saving-sight.org/calendar
- Promote the event on Saving Sight’s social media a

At this point, Saving Sight can also send you a donor registry drive kit which includes:

- Donor registry brochures
- A plastic Donate Life table skirt wrap/banner
- Donate Life green promotional bracelets

We will need at least 5 days’ notice prior to your event in order to mail out the donor registry drive kit.

Educating About Donation

The best way to start a conversation at a donor drive is simply to ask an individual if they are on the Missouri organ and tissue donor registry. At that point, people will answer either yes or no.

Often, when speaking about organ and tissue donation, people will have questions for you. You’ll find that some people have pre-conceived notions about donation and have heard many myths. Here are some resources that can help you in clearing up some of those myths and answering the more frequently asked questions about organ and tissue donation.

**How many people are currently in need of a transplant?**

According to Donate Life America, 124,000 Americans are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant and thousands more require life-enhancing bone, tissue and cornea transplants. More than 1,200 of them are 10 years old or younger. Nearly 60% of patients awaiting lifesaving transplants are minorities. On average, 150 people are added to the nation’s organ transplant waiting list each day—one every 10 minutes.

**Which organs and tissues can be donated?**

Missouri’s donor registry offers individuals the option to choose whether they want to donate all organs and tissue or select organs and tissue. Bones, corneas, heart, heart valves, intestines, liver, lung, kidney, pancreas, skin, tendons and veins all have the potential to be donated.

**Do chronic health problems make me ineligible for donation?**

With technological advances in organ and tissue transplantation, more people than ever before are eligible to be donors. If you pledge to be a donor, your medical condition and history will be reviewed at the time of death. It’s at that time a physician will determine whether or not your organs and tissue can be transplanted. In many cases, if the tissue cannot be transplanted, it may still be used for life-saving research.

Almost anyone can be an eye donor, regardless of non-communicable diseases like cancer or diabetes, since the cornea gets its oxygen from the air as opposed to the blood stream. Donation will not occur in cases of HIV or AIDS, active hepatitis, active syphilis, rabies, viral encephalitis, or active meningitis.
Does my religion support organ and tissue donation?
Eye, organ and tissue donation is accepted by most mainstream religious groups as a charitable act that can save or enhance another’s life. If an individual has questions relating to religion and donation, we encourage them to discuss the matter with their spiritual leader for future guidance.

What happens if I die in another state?
All hospitals are required to alert their local organ procurement organization (OPO) at the time of every death. If an individual from Missouri dies while in another state, that state’s OPO will contact the OPOs in Missouri to see if the individual has joined the registry. If the answer is yes, the Missouri law will apply, and retrieval will take place in the state in which the individual has died.

My eyesight is really bad; can I still be an eye donor?
Even if you have poor vision, in most cases, you can still be an eye donor. As the outermost layer of the eye, the cornea is not affected by many eye conditions, such as astigmatism and farsightedness, which cause poor vision. As long as the cornea is healthy, meets the requirements of the cornea transplant patient and eye surgeon, and has been cleared of any medical issues, it is suitable for transplant.

Will my decision to become an organ and tissue donation affect the quality of my medical care?
When you receive medical care, your doctors are dedicated to saving your life. According to a statement from David Fleming, president and CEO of Donate Life America, “For health professionals, the number one priority is always to save the lives of their patients, and only after death is organ and tissue donation considered. While you can recover from comas, brain death is permanent, irreparable.”

The doctors working to save your life are entirely separate from the medical team involved in recovering organs and tissue after death.

Is there any cost to my family associated with donation?
Donation is a gift. No costs will be incurred by the donor, donor family or donor’s estate for the gift. Neither the donor’s family nor estate will receive money for the donor’s gift. All costs incurred after death and relating to donation will be the responsibility of the donor agencies.

Can I still have an open casket funeral?
Everyone involved in the donation process takes every step to ensure the body is treated with the respect and dignity a donor deserves. Donation does not disfigure the body and will not interfere with an open-casket viewing.

Can I take my name off of the registry if I change my mind later?
You can amend your gift at any time. Simply visit registerme.org, log in to your account, and note that you no longer wish to be on the Donate Life eye, organ and tissue donor registry.