

History of The Blood Center of Iowa

- 1937:** The concept of a centralized activity for the procurement of blood supplies for Central Iowans was originated by Mr. Ike Smalls. This Des Moines grocer single-handedly and with no financial assistance, established a donor referral service for the Des Moines hospitals. Mr. Smalls recruited blood donors, provided transportation for the donors to the hospitals and paid each donor \$5 from his own pocket for their donation.
- 1948:** As the need for blood products increased, four Des Moines hospitals formed the Polk County Blood Donor Service for the recruitment of donors.
- 1961:** The Polk County Medical Society, with support from the Polk County Osteopathic Physicians and the Des Moines Hospital Council, proposed that a community blood bank be established with the responsibility of recruitment, collection, processing and testing of blood products.
- 1963:** The Community Blood Bank of Central Iowa was incorporated in late 1962 and opened its doors in Des Moines at 1119 Woodland Avenue in January of 1963. At that time, collections averaged 5,000 pints of blood per year.
- Today:** The Blood Center of Iowa provides blood and blood products to 46 hospitals in 44 Iowa counties and collects more than 100,000 units of blood each year. The Blood Center's main facility is located in 431 East Locust St. in Des Moines, which houses all the administrative offices, a state-of-the-art laboratory and serves as the hub for all blood product distribution. Blood is collected at more than 1,800 mobile blood drives and at seven donor center locations throughout the state.

