

University Of Wisconsin Wins Abbott And Big Ten's 'We Give Blood' Competition As Campaign Donations Surge 319%, Helping Save Nearly 250,000 Lives

- University of Wisconsin wins Abbott and the Big Ten Conference's "We Give Blood" drive, awards \$1 million from Abbott to advance student or community health
- Second year of nationwide blood drive saw a 319% increase in overall participation with 83,043 donations and a 168% jump in student donors compared to 2024
- Big Ten students, alumni, and fans helped save up to 250,000 lives during the college football season
- A recent 'We Give Blood' survey found 92% of participants are very likely to donate again, a promising sign for building a sustainable blood supply for years to come

ABBOTT PARK, Ill. and INDIANAPOLIS, Dec. 6, 2025 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- Amid the nation's worst blood shortage in a generation, the University of Wisconsin rallied Big Ten students, fans and alumni to take action, winning the Abbott and the Big Ten Conference "We Give Blood" competition and inspiring 15,476 blood donations that could save up to 46,428 lives. Overall donations in the competition surged 319% compared to 2024, marking a dramatic expansion of efforts to confront the national blood shortages. In just the first 22 days of the initiative, donations surpassed last year's total as the entire Big Ten community united to strengthen the blood supply.

The University of Wisconsin held off the 2024 champion, the University of Nebraska, in a close battle and will receive \$1 million from Abbott to advance student or community health. Overall, the conference recorded 83,043 blood donations, which could help save up to 250,000 lives in Big Ten communities and across the country, as each donation has the potential to save up to three lives. Several schools stayed neck and neck throughout the competition, with classic rivals like The Ohio State University and the University of Michigan locked in close races.

"This year's competition not only helped to save a record-breaking number of lives, but it also showed the power of using sports for good with all schools increasing their participation from year one," said Robert B. Ford, chairman and chief executive officer, Abbott. "We are proud of the students, alumni, and fans who united to make a lasting impact on the blood supply, and we hope this spirit continues well beyond the season."

Blood donations are essential in many medical situations, including for trauma patients, accident victims, cancer patients, mothers facing complications before, during, and after childbirth, and premature babies. In the U.S., someone needs blood every [two seconds](#).

"This life-saving partnership demonstrates the tremendous passion of the Big Ten community," said Tony Petitti, commissioner, Big Ten Conference. "We're proud to help activate our fans from coast-to-coast in support of such a valuable mission and excited for the opportunity to honor the University of Wisconsin during the 2025 Discover Big Ten Football Championship Game."

The national blood donor pool is aging and shrinking, creating an urgent need for younger donors. Blood donations among 19- to 24-year-olds have fallen by nearly one-third in recent years. This makes college students a critical audience for the "We Give Blood" drive, and results show the message is working. Nearly 37% of student donors said the campaign inspired them to donate blood for the first time, and more than 90% reported they are likely to donate again.

"I am incredibly proud of our Badger community for showing up with generosity, compassion, and fantastic teamwork," said Jennifer Mnookin, chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Madison. "And I'm grateful to our peers in the Big Ten for their passionate engagement in this friendly competition, and to Abbott for the opportunity. Together, we're saving lives. A huge thank you to our students, faculty, and staff and broader Badger community for demonstrating once again the power of our Wisconsin Idea commitment to public service."

This year's competition offered people more reasons to participate:

- Student ambassadors championed the "We Give Blood" cause at every Big Ten university, bringing together Greek life, student governments, registered student organizations, university leadership and local blood centers to have the biggest impact.
- Abbott and the Big Ten also hosted 12 "We Give Blood" Weekly One-Up Challenges. These mini competitions tapped into collegiate rivalries, pitting two Big Ten schools against each other to see which could show up to donate the most blood during the week. In addition to saving lives, donors from the winning school received a chance to win select memorable campus experiences offered by the universities.

The "We Give Blood" competition ran throughout the college football season, from Aug. 27 through Dec. 5. Donation totals were tracked live and the final results are available at [BigTen.Org/Abbott](#).

Participants donated blood on campuses and at U.S. blood centers across the country and uploaded proof of donation to the campaign website or via text message to have their donation count for a Big Ten school. The donations received throughout the competition helped boost blood centers' supply throughout the holiday season, when donations tend to drop.

"The competition may be over, but the need for blood never ends," said Ford. "We encourage everyone to make blood donation a regular habit and help save lives year-round, ensuring a sustainable blood supply for years to come."

People can find a place to donate blood near them at [BigTen.Org/Abbott](https://www.bigtent.org/abbott).

About the Big Ten Conference:

The Big Ten Conference is an association of world-class universities whose member institutions share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service. Founded in 1896, the Big Ten has sustained a comprehensive set of shared practices and policies that enforce the priority of academics in the lives of students competing in intercollegiate athletics and emphasize the values of integrity, fairness and competitiveness. The Big Ten Conference sponsors 28 official sports, 14 for men and 14 for women, and the broad-based programs of the 18 Big Ten institutions provide direct financial support for more than 14,000 student-athletes. For more information, visit [BigTen.org](https://www.bigtent.org).

About Abbott:

Abbott (NYSE: ABT) is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 114,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries. Connect with us at [abbott.com](https://www.abbott.com) and on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).

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