



**Life**

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**Goes On**

Be an organ/tissue donor

**Jesse White • Secretary of State**

*To strengthen the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry through outreach and registration initiatives.*

**Guide to  
Building a  
“Life Goes On”  
Committee to  
Promote  
Organ/Tissue  
Donor  
Awareness  
in Your  
Community**

Jesse White • Secretary of State  
**LifeGoesOn.com**

Thank you for your interest in Illinois' organ/tissue donor program. This ***Guide to Building a "Life Goes On" Committee to Promote Organ/Tissue Donor Awareness in Your Community*** is a valuable and creative resource for starting a "Life Goes On" Committee in your community. I commend you on your efforts to expand this lifesaving program in your area. This guide covers creative ways to get your committee's presence at public events, and identifying community leaders to be invited to participate. Also included is a list of my office's Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff members who are happy to assist you in starting a "Life Goes On" Committee.



Building a successful, community-based organ/tissue donor awareness program involves an active partnership between key community leaders and people who have a strong interest in donation. Many of these dynamic partnerships, called "Life Goes On" Committees, have been very successful throughout Illinois. Since the pilot "Life Goes On" Committee launched nearly 15 years ago in Peoria, "Life Goes On" Committees have sprung up in communities across the state. As a result, registry numbers have increased by as much as 20 percent in some areas as committee members work with community leaders in spreading the word about the importance of donation. These "Life Goes On" Committees also have become a model for other states.

I encourage you to take a look at the ideas in this guide, gather your committee members, order promotional materials, and start planning events to help educate your community about the lifesaving potential of organ/tissue donation. Do it on behalf of the more than 5,000 Illinois residents waiting for a lifesaving transplant.

*Jesse White*

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Secretary of State



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**One of the barriers that prevents people from signing up as potential organ/tissue donors is a lack of knowledge. As a respected community leader, you have the power to educate and influence the people in your community about organ/tissue donation. Because of the success of "Life Goes On" committees in Illinois, the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program has developed this guide to help you establish a committee in your community.**

## **Organizing your "Life Goes On" Committee**

The Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff will help you organize a "Life Goes On" Committee in your community. Addresses and phone numbers of the Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff and regional coordinators are provided at the end of this guide. Before meeting with the staff, however, compile a list of possible committee members from your community. It is important to make your committee as diverse as your community. Each group will contribute something different to your efforts, and the more involvement you get, the more successful your efforts will be.

The following are some ways to get representation from various community groups that are recommended for your committee, as well as ideas on how they can help support your organ/tissue donor awareness efforts.

**Business** — Most businesses are members of the local Chamber of Commerce. Invite the director of the Chamber of Commerce to join your committee. Businesses also are sources of donations and funding for additional activities. Examples include:

- Providing tray liners to local fast food restaurants (Hardees, McDonalds, Wendy's, etc.)
- Placing messages on marquees at hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, etc.
- Placing posters and banners in local businesses
- Publishing articles in Chamber of Commerce newsletters
- Distributing brochures to businesses
- Providing table tents to local restaurants
- Posting messages on utility bills and privately owned utility company newsletters

**Clergy** — Contact a priest or pastor of a large community church. The Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff will provide Donor Sabbath materials to share with church leaders. Oftentimes, if a pastor or priest supports a cause, the church members will be happy to participate. Check to see if any of the members are organ/tissue recipients or donor family members. Suggestions for church participation include:

- Placing brochures in church vestibules
- Including information in the Sunday message or sermon about donation
- Publishing articles in church newsletters
- Sending a letter from a particular pastor or priest to other area churches
- Printing messages about donation in church bulletins
- Asking a recipient or donor family member to speak to the congregation about donation
- Asking church organizations such as the Knights of Columbus or ladies societies to help organize an event
- Posting a message on church marquees

**Education** — The Regional Superintendent of Schools or a representative from the office should serve on the committee to help open doors to educational outlets. Ideas for reaching out to schools include:

- Providing brochures for students
- Making announcements via a school's public address system
- Providing pens, pencils, crayons or activity sheets to classrooms
- Posting information on bulletin boards
- Providing room decorations for National Organ/Tissue Donor Month
- Inviting donor family members and transplant recipients to speak at school assemblies, driver education classes, health classes and science classes
- Providing videos about donation for classes to view
- Creating essay assignments for special class credit
- Sending a letter to parents from the school
- Setting up booths at local sports events

**Government** — Local elected officials, such as coroners, mayors, county board members, township officials, state representatives, senators, sheriffs, police officers, firefighters and other community leaders are an asset to a committee. They can help organize your project with the following:

- City and county health fairs
- Health Department involvement
- Support from law enforcement agencies
- Employee newsletters
- Bulletin boards
- Distribution of materials
- Mayor and county board proclamations
- City-wide donor days activities
- Recipient and Donor Family Recognition days

**Labor** — Labor leaders have been a valuable source of help for "Life Goes On" Committees. They have a tremendous networking system and are willing to help where needed. Examples of labor involvement include:

- Donating funds for materials
- Publishing newsletter articles
- Inviting speakers to local union meetings
- Helping distribute "Life Goes On" materials
- Hanging banners at various sites
- Providing stories about union members who are transplant recipients or donor family members
- Helping at health fairs
- Hanging posters in union halls

**Transplant Recipients/Donor Family Members** — Organ/tissue transplant recipients and donor family members are very valuable members of a "Life Goes On" Committee. Many of them belong to area support groups and are willing to help organize events, staff informational booths, participate in parades and distribute literature. They help personalize your community-wide efforts by encouraging others to donate. Your local procurement agency can provide names of those in your area who have been affected by donation and transplantation. (See page 3 for a list of procurement agencies.) They also can provide interviews to the press. The Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff also maintains a list of recipients and donor families who have helped with past efforts.

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## Procurement agencies

Each area has a federally designated procurement agency for organs/tissue. Most procurement agencies have area representatives who can provide information, materials and volunteers for your events. Following is a list of procurement agencies in Illinois.

### **Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network**

425 Spring Lake Dr.  
Itasca, IL 60143  
giftofhope.org

### **Heartland Lions Eye Bank**

400 Chatham Rd., Ste. 103  
Springfield, IL 62704  
hleeb.org

### **Illinois Eye-Bank**

547 W. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 600  
Chicago, IL 60661  
illinoiseyebank.org

### **Mid-America Transplant Services**

1110 Highlands Plaza Dr. East  
St. Louis, MO 63110  
mts-stl.org

### **Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation**

7218 Villa Lake Dr.  
Peoria, IL 61614  
mtf.org

## Other medical organizations

### **American Liver Foundation**

67 E. Madison St., Ste. 1614  
Chicago, IL 60603  
liverfoundation.org

### **Biological Resource Center of Illinois**

9501 W. Devon Ave., Ste. 606  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
brcil.org

### **LifeSource**

5505 Pearl St.  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
lifesource.org

### **National Kidney Foundation of Illinois**

215 W. Illinois St., Ste. 1C  
Chicago, IL 60654  
nkfi.org

### **Rock River Valley Blood Center**

419 N. 6th St.  
Rockford, IL 61107  
rrvbc.org

## Organizing your “Life Goes On” campaign

Once your “Life Goes On” Committee is organized you can form subcommittees to discuss ideas and report to the committee. You and your fellow committee members know your community and the people in it better than anyone else. You also know how they will best respond to messages about donation.

Now that you have the core of your committee, your mission is to take the message to your community. To get you started, we have put together some questions and answers.

**Where should the committee meet?** — Someone on your committee may have access to an ideal meeting place (i.e., church, municipal building, union hall, hospital). When choosing a location, keep the following in mind: room availability, parking, location, furnishings (i.e., chairs, tables).

**How often should the committee meet?** — Most “Life Goes On” Committees meet once a month. It is important to settle on a regular meeting date, time and location to make it easier for people to plan ahead. As National Donate Life Month in April approaches, it may be helpful to meet more often to accomplish your goals.

**What activities can our community do to raise awareness?** — Some activities that work well in one area may not be as effective in another, so discuss what activities would be most effective in your community. (See the Raising Public Awareness section below for more information.)

**Where can the committee obtain “Life Goes On” materials?** — The Secretary of State's office will provide “Life Goes On” materials, including brochures, pens and tabletop displays (see page 8).

## Raising public awareness

April is National Donate Life Month. During this time, your committee should plan events and activities for the community to promote awareness. Below are some events that may be appropriate for your community. Expand or modify these events to fit your specific area.

**Appearance from Secretary of State Jesse White** — Organ and tissue donation is a personal issue for Secretary of State Jesse White. Therefore, he tours the state of Illinois promoting awareness for this lifesaving program. Invite Secretary White to one of your events by contacting a member of the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff.

**Green Ribbon Campaign** — The green ribbon is the universal symbol for organ/tissue donation. Green ribbons can be tied on trees in parks, atriums, courtyards and car antennas. Also, many municipal buildings have green ribbons tied on trees or light poles near the building. Police officers and other community leaders also have volunteered to wear green ribbon lapels in April. Contact the proper authority for permission to display the ribbons in a public area. The green ribbons should be weatherproof. Sizes vary depending on use. Smaller ribbons work well as lapels for shirts. Longer, thicker ribbons work well for tying on trees and light poles.

**Organ/Tissue Donor Awareness Day in the Park** — Invite donor families, recipients, community leaders and citizens to the park for a picnic in recognition of the benefits of donation. Plan games and other activities for children, and designate a time for donor families and recipients to share their stories. Send a press release to local media outlets.

**Displays** — Organ/tissue donor displays are available from the Secretary of State's office for local businesses, hospitals, schools, doctor's offices, malls, libraries and churches (see page 8). Be sure to get permission from the appropriate people at these locations.

**Speakers** — Community donor families and recipients make wonderful speakers. Many community organizations, churches and schools request people to speak about organ/tissue donation. Reach out to these organizations to set up a presentation at an upcoming meeting or event. The Secretary of State's office also provides speakers for your community (see page 8).

**Church Bulletin Inserts and Letters** — Inserts on organ/tissue donation in church bulletins can help raise awareness in the faith community. Contact the church to obtain details. You also may write letters on behalf of your committee and send to religious leaders in your community to encourage them to include a message about donation in their sermon.

**Organ/Tissue Donor Essay Contest** — Sponsor an Organ/Tissue Donor Essay Contest. Ask local students to write a short essay about the benefits of organ/tissue donation. Judge the essays and hand out awards.

**Recipient/Donor Quilt** — Ask donor families and transplant recipients in your community to complete a quilt "square" in memory of a loved one or in celebration of the gift of life. When all squares are collected, sew them together to form a large quilt in remembrance and recognition of all donors and recipients. Display the quilt in a store window or other public building.

**Organ/Tissue Donor Booth** — Set up donor awareness booths at community events such as health fairs, county fairs, celebrations or festivals. Contact the coordinator of the event to arrange for booth space. Follow up weeks in advance to ensure the space is reserved. The Secretary of State's office will provide materials for distribution to the public (see page 8).

**Proclamations** — A proclamation may be adopted by the city council or county board in recognition of the benefits of organ/tissue donation in the community or county. The proclamation is signed by the mayor or county board president and presented at a public ceremony. Contact the mayor's office, city council or county board for arrangements.

**Tray Covers** — Contact local fast food restaurants to have an organ/tissue donation message placed on tray covers. These can usually be done for free or minimal charge.

**Letters to the Editor** — A letter to the editor of your local newspaper is an effective way to reach many people with the organ/tissue donation message. The committee can write a letter encouraging people to join the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry and to discuss their wishes with their families.

**Newsletter Articles** — Many businesses, labor unions and community organizations publish newsletters on a regular basis. Contact these organizations about contributing an article about a local transplant recipient or donor.

**Banners** — Hang a banner in a highly visible area to create awareness. The Secretary of State Donor Program can provide electronic artwork.

**Schools** — Educate young people at an early age to help them make an informed decision about organ/tissue donation. The Secretary of State's office can assist with materials and presentations. During National Donate Life Month, ask schools to encourage family discussion about the benefits of donation in the morning announcement or bulletin, or have students design a bulletin board about organ/tissue donation.

**Marquee Displays** — Post a message about organ/tissue donation on a local marquee board. Contact local businesses, libraries, unions and hospitals to encourage them to post a donation message in April. This should be done several weeks ahead of when you want it displayed.

**Floats in Parades** — Contact the local parade coordinator to enter a "Life Goes On" float in a parade. Encourage committee members, transplant recipients and donor families to participate.

**Tree Planting Ceremony** — Purchase a small tree and ask permission to plant it in the park. Invite community leaders, residents and the media. Hold a ceremony honoring a donor or recipient's memory. Place a small plaque in the ground with the person's name after the tree is planted and dedicated.

**Celebrity Signing** — Invite local celebrities and/or officials in conjunction with a donor booth or display. They can sign autographs while committee members register donors.

**Sports Events** — Organize an Organ/Tissue Donor Awareness Night at a professional, college or high school sporting event. Announce a message about the benefits of donation at a break in the game, distribute brochures at the gates, and/or set up an informational booth in the lobby/parking lot.

**Hoops for Hope** — To raise awareness about the shortage of organs and the number of people on waiting lists for organs, teams are formed to shoot 5,000 baskets to represent the approximately 5,000 people waiting for transplants. These events are usually held at a large gymnasium or local junior college.

Regional coordinator for the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program died while awaiting a kidney donation this year.

Vikki was able to donate her corneas so that two others can now see.



**Vikki Tulcus**  
(1969-2013)

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# Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program Staff

To contact a member of the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff, please contact:

**Organ/Tissue Donor Program**  
**Michael J. Howlett Bldg.**  
**501 S. Second St., Rm. 451**  
**Springfield, IL 62756-9000**  
**800-210-2106**  
**lgo@ilsos.net**

**Program Manager** ..... Connie Boatman

**Assistant Program Manager** ..... Sitha Hun

**Office Manager** ..... Karen Kohnke

## **Regional Coordinators**

Damarius Blanks ..... Metro East

Brian Bush ..... Southern IL

Barbara Ellis-Steele ..... Chicago

Jan Eschen ..... Northern IL

Gail Grabczynski ..... Chicago

Elizabeth Hager ..... Western, Central and Eastern IL

Felicia Lee ..... Chicago

Dan Lietz ..... Chicago

Wendy Lindemann ..... Chicago

Maria Martinez ..... Chicago

Margaret Pearson ..... Chicago

Margaret Shannon ..... Northern IL

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## Request Materials or Speakers

The Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program has made it a priority to educate the public about organ/tissue donation. While Illinois continues to be the leader in registering potential donors, there are still approximately 5,000 people on the waiting list, and about 300 people die each year because of organ shortages.

The Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program provides materials to assist you in your efforts to help raise awareness about organ/tissue donation. **All materials are free** and may be duplicated as needed. **These requests are for Illinois residents only.** However, if you have a legitimate out-of-state request, please contact the Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

To request materials, please contact:

**Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program**  
**Michael J. Howlett Bldg.**  
**501 S. Second St., Rm. 451**  
**Springfield, IL 62756-9000**  
**800-210-2106**

### Available Materials

**"Life Goes On" brochures** — General facts about organ/tissue donation with a perforated section to tear off and send in to join the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry.

**Organ Donor License Plates** — Application forms are available for Organ/Tissue Donor license plates honoring Walter Payton.

**"Life Goes On" pens** — Pens with the "Life Goes On" logo.

**Posters** — 17"x22" posters designed by the overall winner of the Secretary of State's biennial Organ/Tissue Donor Poster Contest. Entries are from students in grades K-12. The winner's poster is distributed to all Driver Services facilities, libraries and hospitals across the state.

### Request a Speaker

The Secretary of State's office provides information about organ/tissue donation, the critical shortage of donated organs and how to become a potential donor. To schedule an Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff member to speak to your group, event, class etc., please call 800-210-2106 or 217-782-6258.