



# SWAP IT TOOLKIT

## Step-by-step guide for swap event organizers



Developed by Recycling Council of Ontario as a resource of Waste Reduction Week in Canada. This project is supported by the City of Toronto through its [Waste Reduction Community Grants](#).



WASTE  
REDUCTION  
WEEK  
IN CANADA



Recycling  
Council of  
Ontario



TORONTO



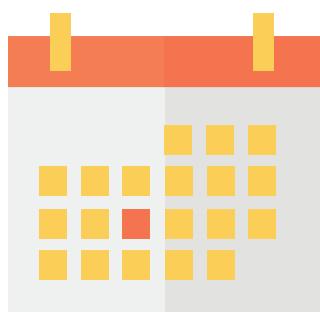
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# Step 1: Planning Your Swap



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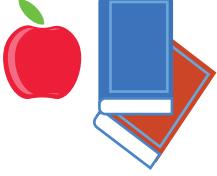
## Build a Team

From the initial planning stage to post-swap, there are many parts involved to ensuring a successful event, which is why it's important to delegate roles and responsibilities right away.

Use the Swap It Event Planning Checklist to delegate tasks and track progress.

## Choose a Time

We recommend applying a theme and aligning it with other significant events. Changing seasons are a great time as many of us will go through our closets in preparation of different temperatures.

Event	When	Why it's a good time
Back to School and Fall	August - September	New classes doesn't mean new outfits. Host a back to school swap where families and students in your community can find 'new' clothes, backpacks, and supplies. 
Waste Reduction Week in Canada	Upcoming dates: October 19 - 25, 2020 October 18 - 24, 2021 October 17 - 23, 2022	Celebrate Waste Reduction Week in Canada by hosting a swap during the 3rd week of October. With summer's end and winter just around the corner, fall is a great time to host a swap. 
Winter Holidays	December - January	Encourage the act of giving and host a holiday-themed swap. People can bring gifts that weren't a hit, find a gently-used gift for someone, or find something 'new' to wear to holiday gatherings. 
Earth Month and Summer Holidays	April (Earth Day: every April 22)	After a cold winter, people are spring cleaning and eager to start thinking about spring and summer clothes. Better yet, April is Earth Month, which offers an excellent opportunity to educate your community on the importance of conservation and extending material lifecycles through swapping. 

# Step 1: Planning Your Swap

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To maximize participation host in the daytime on a weekend or in the evening on a weeknight.

Duration is up to you! We recommend at least two hours to allow for ample time for swappers to drop off materials off and look around.

## Choose a Location

Your swap could be the recreational room or lobby of your building, a local park, or at your nearest community centre. Remember to keep it accessible. Find a space with enough room for all the material: racks, tables, and space for people to try things on. If choosing an outdoor location, have a plan in place in case of inclement weather.

## Book the Location

Once you've found an ideal location, confirm you can host your swap there. Most recreational rooms in multi-residential buildings need to be booked ahead of time. For events in public spaces you may require a permit.

Guidelines for your swap and communicating them prior to the event are crucial.



# Step 1: Planning Your Swap

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## Set the Rules

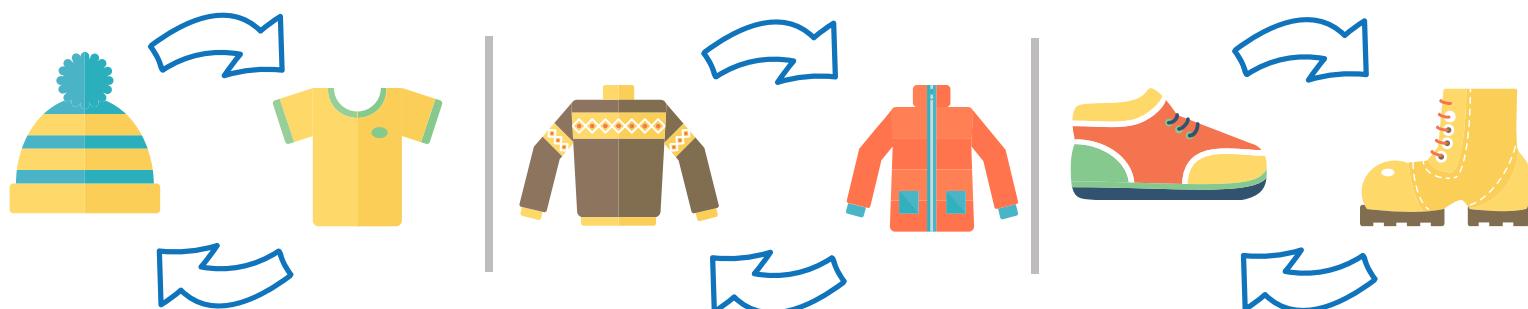
### Accepted and Non-Accepted Materials

Decide what types of materials can be included at your swap. We suggest following the material list given by the charity of your choice to determine acceptable materials.

Encourage items to be prewashed, in gently used condition, and still ready for wear. We recommend excluding clothing with rips, tears, holes, broken zippers, and stains. Don't limit your swap to just to clothing and accessories; welcome attendees to bring small appliances, toys, or home décor.

*Common materials:*

Acceptable Material	Not Acceptable Material
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clothing</li><li>• Accessories: hats, mittens, scarves, ties, purses, wallets, backpacks, bags, jewelry, watches</li><li>• Small miscellaneous items: books, toys, games, puzzles, stuffed animals, pots, pans, utensils, , vases, dishes, cutlery, glassware, silverware, stemware, jewelry, crafts, mugs, candles, picture frames, baskets, ornaments, hand tools, media, small furniture, small appliances</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other textiles and accessories: bed/bath towels, sheets, blankets, pillows, curtains, tablecloths, jewelry, hair accessories</li><li>• Large miscellaneous Items: large appliances, large furniture</li></ul>



# Step 1: Planning Your Swap

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## Establish a System

The most common way to organize a swap is to provide one ticket for each item an attendee brings, one ticket allows for one item to take home. Use paper tickets or reusable tokens.

You may consider setting a maximum amount of tickets a person can receive. We recommend a limit of 10 and offer participants a chance take also home any leftover pieces at the end of your swap before it is donated.

If your swap is in a large public space with heavy pedestrian traffic, you'll likely have people passing by interested in participating. Encourage them to still take part in reuse by selling tickets for \$5 each. Contribute any proceeds to local community projects or donate to a charity of your choice.

## Keep it Flexible!

Choose rules that work best for you.



## Encourage Greater Reuse

Make an effort to reduce waste by encouraging attendees to bring their items in a reusable bag or box. They may need the bag again to bring home their 'new' items.

## Organize and Categorize

A well-organized swap makes it easy for everyone to place their items in appropriate areas so others can find what they are looking for. Separate materials and use the customizable event signage to categorize items.



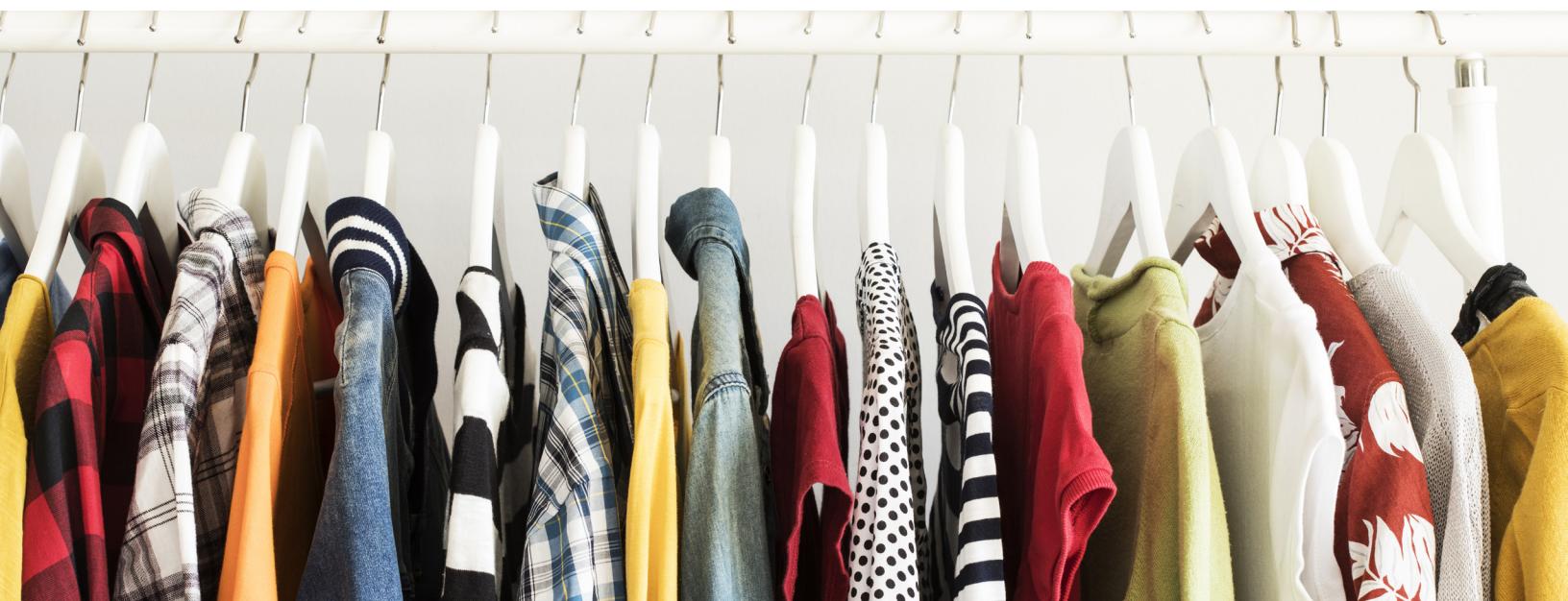
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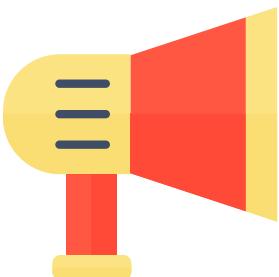
## Gather Supplies

You'll want to keep everything organized, which is where tables, racks, and hangers come in handy. Consider borrowing or renting instead of purchasing new. Some suggested supplies:

- Tables
- Chairs
- Clothing racks
- Mirror(s)
- Bins for accessories
- Tape
- Printed Swap Event Tracking Sheet
- Printed signage and posters
- Roll of tickets, tokens
- Ticket collection container
- Pens and markers
- Scale for weighing materials
- Calculator
- Speaker for playing background music
- Bags or boxes for leftover material
- Event tent (if outside)
- First batch of swappable items (see [Setting Up in Section 3](#))



# Step 2: Promoting Your Swap



# Step 2: Promoting Your Swap

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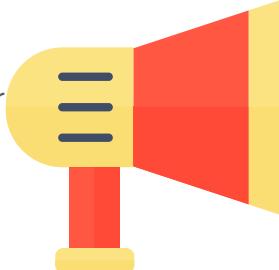
Engaging your community is important for participation and making sure a wide variety of items are available for swap.

## Community Outreach

Engaging your community is important for participation and making sure a wide variety of items are available for swap.

There are many tactics you can take to reach out to your community about your swap. Be creative and build relationships with organizations and individuals who can help.

- **Emails, letters, and newsletters:** use the Sample Customizable Letter as a template.
- **Digital/print elevator signage:** an effective way to quickly catch the attention of people in your building.
- **Posters:** using the Promotional Poster, advertise around your community.
- **Webpage:** if your building, organization, or community group has a website, create a page dedicated to your swap with all relevant details
- **Media:** reach out to local outlets such as community newspapers, radio stations, news sites, and tv stations. They may be interested in promoting your swap or even visit your event!
- **Register with local online event directories:** try reaching out to organizations that list local events.
- **SwapItToolkit.ca:** don't forget to tell us when your swap is! We will post all swap events and assist promotion through Waste Reduction Week in Canada social media channels.



## Social Media

Social media is a free and effective tool to use for promoting your event. There are multiple tactics you can take to spread the word online:

- **Facebook Events:** are easy to create and remind attendees of upcoming events. They also allow guests to RSVP so you can get an idea of how many will attend ahead of time.
- **Local Facebook Groups:** online discussions are a great way to take questions and easily communicate the details of your event, and groups help you gather a community of interested people that may attend future swap events you choose to hold.
- **Social media posts:** along with Facebook events, groups, and status updates, Twitter posts and Instagram stories are other avenues to promote your swap.
- **Social media ads (paid):** anticipating a large swap? If you have budget, run a localized paid social media campaign to promote your event. Advertisements allow you to target specific demographics, locations, and interests.



# Step 3: The Swap



# Step 3: The Swap

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On the day of your swap your team will play an important role in making sure it runs smoothly. Refer Event Planning Checklist to assign tasks and guide your day.

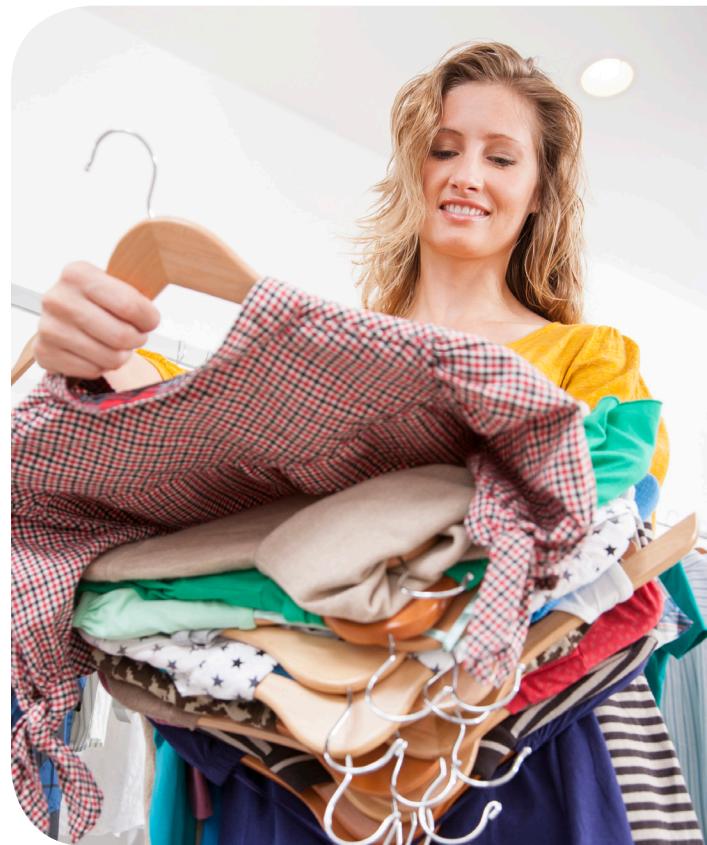
## Setting Up

At least an hour before the event, prepare your swap by arranging tables, tents, chairs, clothing racks, and hangers in a way that best suits the space you are in.

You'll want to have a first batch of items setup and ready to be swapped for your first attendees. Have your team bring gently used items from home or take a shopping trip to a local thrift store to purchase some unique items.

Once tables and racks are set-up, decide how items will be categorized and put up matching signage. Arrange the swap check-in station (where items are accepted) at the entrance and check-out station towards the exit.

Provide your team with instructions, familiarize them with your event rules and guidelines, and station them at an assigned table or category area for your event.



# Step 3: The Swap

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## Swap Check-In Station

This will likely be the busiest station so you will want to have a few team members dedicated to accepting material. There should be a scale for weighing items (if possible), multiple printed tracking sheets, tickets/tokens, pens, and a bin.

Use the Swap Event Tracking Sheet to record the total weight of items each attendee brings. This will be important to compare to the total weight of all items at the end of your event to calculate how much you just diverted from landfill. The best way to do this is by counting, weighing, and recording items as they are dropped-off. If you do not have a scale to weigh, keep track of the number of items collected for swap.

Once materials are recorded, give the appropriate amount of tickets to the attendee and they are free to swap!



## Shop Station

This will be where your attendees will shop. With people sorting through all the items, trying things on, and putting things back, this area can get messy! Have one or two people dedicated to hanging up newly received items and organizing the shop station. You may also want to have an event floater helping with organization, answering questions, taking photos, and posting to social media using hashtag #SwapIt.

## Check-Out Station

Have one person positioned near the exit. As they leave attendees will exchange their tickets and take items home. The Check-Out should have a ticket collection container that will be counted after the swap to see how many items were actually swapped.

This station is an excellent opportunity to provide more information on swaps, the circular economy, and issue of textiles waste.



# Step 4: Post Swap



## Take Down

Once all attendees have swapped 'till they dropped, it's time to take down the event. Start by removing leftover clothing and items. Now is also the time to offer attendees who exceeded their 10-ticket limit (or number set for your swap) to take any extra items before they are packed up.

Reuse your swap tickets for future events if possible or recycle them. Keep any signage and reuse them for your next swap!

## Be Great and Donate

There are bound to be pieces leftover once the swap is done. Leftover items can find new life somewhere else by donating to a local charity. Schedule pick-up ahead of time, or soon after the event is finished.



### Value Village Donation Centres

Each Value Village store accepts donations of used goods on behalf of non-profits. When you donate gently used items to a Value Village store, they purchase those goods from a non-profit, providing them with unrestricted revenue. Read more at [ValueVillage.com/donate](https://www.valuevillage.com/donate)

Materials: gently used clothing & shoes, housewares, books & media, kitchenware, and other items.

Website: [valuevillage.com/donate](https://www.valuevillage.com/donate)

How to donate: Bring materials to your closest Value Village store.

### Diabetes Canada

Materials: Clothing and small household items and electronics

Tel: 1-800-505-5525

Website: [declutter.diabetes.ca/pickup](https://declutter.diabetes.ca/pickup)

How to donate: Schedule a pick-up online or call Diabetes Canada.

### Goodwill

Materials: Clothing and small household items and electronics

Website: <https://goodwillindustries.ca/donate/>

How to donate: Find a Goodwill location near you and call for a pickup.

### Habitat for Humanity

Materials: gently used household items and building materials

Website: [habitat.ca/en/restore](https://habitat.ca/en/restore)

How to donate: Find a Restore location near you and call for a pickup.

## Submit Results

Tracking and recording inventory data of a swap is important because we want to know the impact of our actions. Recording weight and amount of material at check-in offers a benchmark to compare your weight and materials at check-out, with the difference being your contribution to textile diversion from landfill.

Once your swap is complete, add up all the results from your Swap Event Tracking Sheet and complete the online form at [SwapItToolkit.ca](http://SwapItToolkit.ca). There will be draws with the chance to win exciting prizes for swaps that submit results within 30 days of the event!



## Continued Engagement

Keep attendees engaged on swaps and the issue of textiles waste. Reach out to your community and see what they've learned and what they enjoyed the most about the swap.

### Ways to stay engaged:

- Share the results of your swap
- Conduct a brief survey of the swap
- Encourage attendees to post photos of their 'new' items and outfits on social media using hashtag #SwapIt
- Ask attendees to help with planning the next swap or waste reduction event

