

Planning a Community Swap Day:

A How-To Guide

What is a Swap Day?

Swap days provide opportunities for community members to come together and exchange goods for free. Think clothes, books, decor, small appliances, etc. It's a perfect way to give things you no longer need a new home, instead of sending them to the landfill. A swap is also a great way to find something you've been looking for, without having to buy it new! At a community swap day, anyone is welcome - and there is no need to bring something in order to take something. Leftover items are generally donated to local social service organizations.

How to Host a Swap Day

Step 1: Pick What Type of Swap You're Hosting

- Before you plan the logistics of your swap, it's helpful to figure out the parameters of what you'd like to swap.
- You can do a specific swap (books, plants, mugs, clothing, Halloween costumes), a general swap, or a combination swap (clothing and books, plants and kitchen items, etc.).
- Think about what your audience would enjoy swapping, and the impact you're trying to make.

Step 2: Pick a Location

- **An ideal location has/is:** A space where people can drop off items, a space to display items, wheelchair accessible.
- **Optional:** Access to bathrooms and water, a space to sort donated items.

Step 3: Pick a Date & Time

- Pick a date that you think will work best for your target audience.
- Usually, around **3 hours is an ideal length to host**, but this will depend on volunteer and location availability.
- Check local event calendars to avoid time conflicts.

Step 4: Planning & Logistics

- Depending on how big you want your swap to be, it may be helpful to **recruit some helping hands**. Use a platform like Sign Up Genius to organize volunteers.
- Most swaps have items left over at the end. These items can be either donated or picked up by local social service organizations, if checked in with ahead of time.
- Have a rain plan if your event is outdoors.



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Step 5: Advertise Your Event

- We recommend collecting RSVP's ahead of your event to gauge interest and the effectiveness of your outreach strategy.
- Create a flyer for email and social media outreach.

Step 6: Day-of Execution

- **Optional supply list:**
 - Transport dolly or wagon, wayfinding signs
 - Electronic device or clipboard for checking in participants, luggage weighers to weigh clothes during check-in, a spreadsheet to keep track of items going in and out
 - Clothing racks and hangers, shoe racks, tables, starter items, pop-up changing tent, mirrors
 - Chalkboards and chalk if wanting to display data
 - Speaker and music playlist
 - Food
 - Fabric disinfectant spray, hand sanitizer, and volunteer waiver forms
- **Event flow:**
 - Set Up: Arrive at least one hour before; have a check-in area (optional), area for accepting and sorting donations, and "floor" area where items can be displayed.
 - During the event: Greet participants as they arrive, while sorting make sure what was brought is allowed and is not dangerous/unsanitary, put donated items out on the floor.

Step 7: Reporting

- Reporting is optional, but can help you understand the impact of your event.
- Here are some metrics we recommend tracking: Attendance numbers, amount/weight/type of items collected and taken, participant experience (post-event survey), volunteer numbers and hours.

Resources

- [Full Guide](#)
- [A²ZERO Neighborhood Swap Day Page](#)
- [Flyer Template](#)
- [Notify us of Your Planned Swap Day](#)
- [Give us Feedback on Your Planned Swap Day](#)
- [The Circular Economy and Ann Arbor](#)
- [A²ZERO Climate Action Plan](#)

Questions or comments?

Reach out to the Office of Sustainability and Innovations (sustainability@a2gov.org).

