

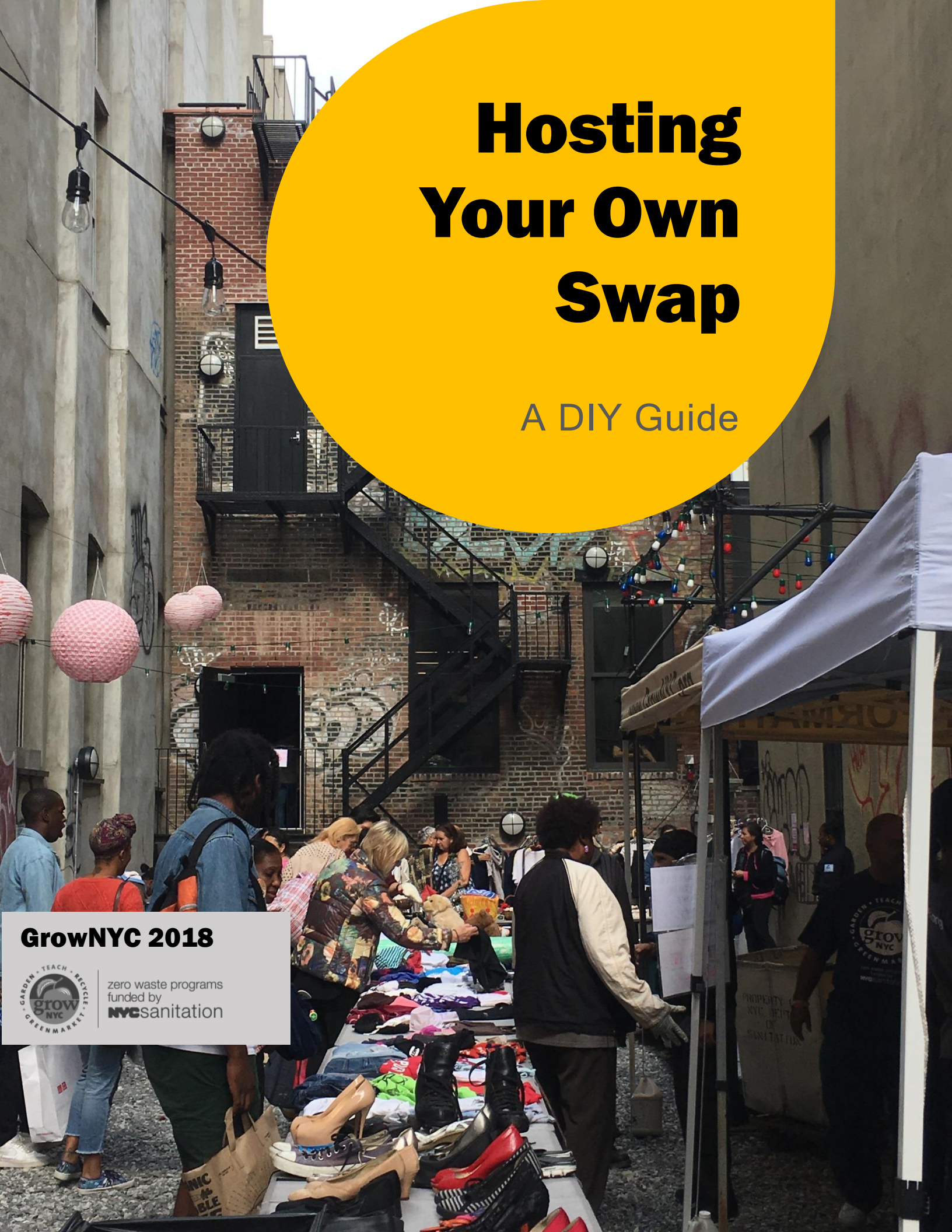
Hosting Your Own Swap

A DIY Guide

GrowNYC 2018



zero waste programs
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NYCSanitation



Hosting Your Own Swap

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Swap ‘till you drop!

Since 2007, with the support of NYC Department of Sanitation, GrowNYC’s Stop ‘N’ Swap® program has provided free community reuse events to NYC residents. At Stop ‘N’ Swap, the public is invited to bring items they no longer want or need and take home items new-to-them, all for free. Participants don’t have to bring something to take something. Reusing these items prevents waste from going to the landfill and avoids the waste associated with the production, shipping, and use of new goods.

Our goal is to provide an annual Stop ‘N’ Swap to each of the 59 community districts in the City. Still, the demand for reuse and the desire to participate in free community swaps extends beyond our program. We have created this guide to help other organizations and individuals host their own event.

Through our planning worksheet, site outreach letter, event materials guide, volunteer training document, and list of additional resources, you should be well on your way to hosting your own swap event. Of course, if you ever have questions, feel free to reach out to us at recycle@grownyc.org!

Good luck & happy swapping!

Swap Planning Worksheet

This comprehensive worksheet will help you define the parameters of your swap, create an event budget, design your event layout, plan an outreach strategy, recruit volunteers, and strategize on waste diversion at the end of the day.

1. Swap and Site Selection

<p>Swap Type</p> <p><i>Partial swaps only feature specific items such as kid's clothing, books, housewares, or even costumes!</i></p> <p><i>Full swaps include most residential items such as clothing, housewares, toys, electronics, accessories, books, music & movies, and other misc. items.</i></p>	<p>Partial Swap</p>	<p>Full Swap</p>
<p>Swap Audience</p> <p><i>Determine who your audience is for the event - is it open to all members of the public or to members of a closed community? This will determine how you approach many facets of your event planning.</i></p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Private</p>
<p>Paid or Free Swap</p> <p><i>Will the event have a fee associated with it or will it be free for participants, like Stop 'N' Swap? You may have a better sense of what you'll need after reviewing the Budget Items section below.</i></p>	<p>Paid Cost: _____</p>	<p>Free</p>
<p>Accepted Materials</p>		
<p>Host Site Name</p>		
<p>Host Site Address</p>		
<p>Host Site Contact</p>		
<p>Expected Attendance</p>		
<p>ADA Accessible</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>

Swap Planning Worksheet

2. Budget

Method of Transportation for Equipment	Personal	Volunteer	Rental
Gas and Transportation Budget	\$ _____		
Does your host require a site agreement or contract?	Yes	No	
Site fee (if applicable)	\$ _____		
Will you place paid advertisements in local news outlets?	Yes	No	
Advertising and Design Budget	\$ _____		
Will your swap include food and drinks for volunteers and staff?	Yes	No	
Food Budget	\$ _____		
Who will provide all necessary event materials? <i>You will need at least one table per item type accepted. Please see the Materials List for more information.</i>	Tables: _____ Chairs: _____ Dividers: _____ Clothing Racks: _____		
If needed, please indicate your budget for tables, chairs, clothing racks.	\$ _____		
Miscellaneous Materials Budget <i>Misc. materials might include cups, plates, gloves, tape, and trash bags.</i> <i>See Materials Guide (pg. 14) for more information.</i>	\$ _____		
Total Budget for Event	\$ _____		

Swap Planning Worksheet

3. Swap Structure & Rules

<p>Event Layout (please circle)</p> <p><i>Swaps can take many forms, but we recommend using a layout where volunteers have space to sort items out of public reach. See Swap Layout Diagrams for suggested layouts.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of location, your site should ideally have no stairs and provide easy access for people carrying items. Consider how to limit access to non-swap areas and items that are not for swapping.</i></p>	<p>Square</p>	<p>U- Shaped</p>	<p>L-Shaped</p>
<p>Intake and Sorting (please indicate)</p> <p><i>Decide where you would like volunteers and staff to intake and sort items. This may also be where you conduct a sign-in and weigh materials. Best located adjacent to the event entrance. If you have space to store items, you may consider allowing the public to drop items a few days to a week before the event itself.</i></p>			
<p>Restricted Materials (list all)</p> <p><i>Restricted items may include bedding, medicine, or furniture, non-portable items, clothing with rips, tears, stains, or non-working electronics.</i></p>			
<p>Event Duration</p> <p><i>Decide how long the event will run. GrowNYC events run 3 hours, allowing enough time for donations to get sorted and redistributed for participants to take home. If you have collected items ahead of time rather than at the event, you may consider a shorter time-frame.</i></p>			
<p>Rules of Transaction (list all)</p> <p><i>Stop 'N' Swaps don't require you to bring something to take something or limit the number of items you can take. Formulate your own transaction rules or item limitations based on the needs of your swap.</i></p>			

Swap Planning Worksheet

3. Swap Structure & Rules (cont.)

<p>Waste Disposal (list all)</p> <p><i>Clearly label trash and recycling bins, and place in 1-2 areas that are accessible without disrupting the flow of the event.</i></p>	
<p>Signage and Labels (list all)</p> <p><i>Create signs for tables identifying each material type. Additionally, it can be good to have signage about other programming from your organization. If you want to take photos of the event, it's good practice to include a sign that says so in lieu of having to get individual photo waivers.</i></p>	
<p>Creating an Atmosphere (detail how)</p> <p><i>Having a playlist running can be an excellent way to create a pleasant environment for swappers.</i></p>	

4. Outreach

<p>What is your event's name?</p> <p><i>Note: Stop 'N' Swap is a registered trademark of GrowNYC.</i></p>		
<p>Promotion time-frame</p> <p><i>We recommend designing a flyer at least three weeks in advance to promote your event online and on-the-ground.</i></p>		
<p>Does your group or organization have periodic meetings where you can promote the swap?</p>	Yes	No

Swap Planning Worksheet

4. Outreach (cont.)

<p>Do you want to send out a press release?</p> <p><i>If your organization does not already have press contacts, do some research on local news outlets. You may want to include your community board and other community organizations.</i></p>	Yes	No
<p>Do you have a newsletter or mailing list you can use to promote?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Would you like to create a flyer for your swap?</p> <p><i>Make sure to include the location, date, and time of the swap on the flyer. Be explicit about what items you will and will not accept. Translate flyers into multiple languages if needed in your community. Provide a phone number, email, and/or website where the public can get more information.</i></p>	Yes	No
<p>Do you want to include your event in online listings?</p> <p><i>The Skint, Mommy Poppins, and Eventbrite are just a few online platforms to promote your event. Thinking of who your audience is can be a helpful way to choose an outreach platform.</i></p>	Yes	No
<p>Will you conduct on-the-ground outreach?</p> <p><i>On-the-ground outreach can include putting up flyers in local businesses and distributing backpack flyers to schools.</i></p>	Yes	No
<p>Will you promote the swap through social media?</p> <p><i>You may want to make a Facebook event for your swap. Share all your event links, hashtags, and handles with cross-promoters.</i></p>	Yes	No

Swap Planning Worksheet

5. Volunteers

<p>How many volunteers will you need for your swap? <i>Partial swaps can require as little as 4 volunteers while full swaps need about 10-15 volunteers. Volunteer jobs include set-up, intake, outreach, etc.</i></p>		
<p>Will volunteers work the entire event, or will you have volunteer shifts?</p>		
<p>What is your volunteer recruitment strategy? (Circle all that apply)</p> <p><i>Utilizing Volunteer Match, NY Cares and NYC Service as well as your own newsletter or listserv.</i></p> <p><i>Reaching out to your own community through word of mouth to find people familiar with your mission.</i></p>	In-person	Online
<p>Will you require volunteer waivers or consent for photographs?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Will you require a minimum age to volunteer?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Will you provide a volunteer orientation?</p> <p><i>Stop 'N' Swap provides a ten-minute volunteer orientation before each swap.</i></p>	Yes	No
<p>Will your swap require bilingual volunteers?</p>	Yes	No
<p>Who will oversee volunteers during the event?</p>	Name: _____	
<p>Will you send a thank you to volunteers after the event or acknowledge them in any other way?</p>	Yes	No

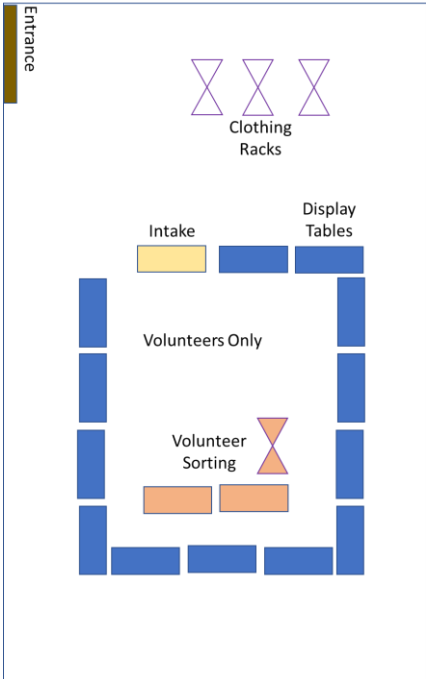
Swap Planning Worksheet

6. Waste Plan

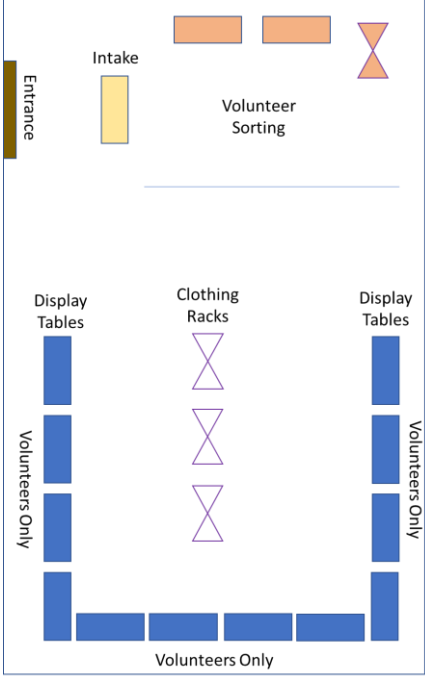
<p>Will your site be able to dispose of your event's recyclables and trash?</p> <p><i>If your site doesn't recycle, are you able to take the recycling waste elsewhere? Avoid illegal dumping!</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Where will you take your leftover donations?</p> <p><i>Find a local charity, or a larger reuse organization like Salvation Army and Goodwill who can accept leftover donations.</i></p> <p><i>DSNY SAFE Disposal events are a good resource for disposing any hazardous materials you may end up with.</i></p>		
<p>Where will you bring leftover plastic bags?</p> <p><i>Retail chains with multiple large stores in NYC are required to accept plastic bags & plastic film recycling. Often CVS & Duane Reade have bins for bags near the store entrances.</i></p>		

Swap Planning Worksheet

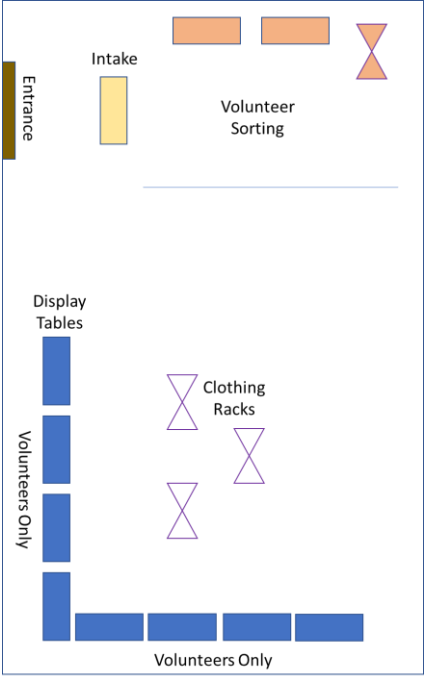
Swap Layout Diagrams



Square Layout



U-Shaped Layout



L-Shaped Layout

*All areas that are not designated "volunteer sorting" or "volunteers only" are open to the public.



Site Outreach Letter

If you don't have a space of your own, you'll need to reach out to a potential community partner. The template below can help you get the conversation started.

Subject: Opportunity for Collaboration

Dear [Host Name],

My name is [name] and I am [your title/role] of [group/club/organization]. I am reaching out to [insert site] because I am planning a free [or low cost] community swap event in your area. As a site that [qualities of site], [insert site] seems like a great fit for our event.

To give you a little more information on what the event is and what exactly we're looking for: the swap will be a community-based event, where local residents bring in items they no longer want and take things they do want. The swap is free, and residents don't have to bring something to take something [or include other major rules]. We will sort the items on arrival and remove all leftovers and donate or recycle them at the end of the day. The idea is to support reuse, build community, and divert good, reusable stuff that might otherwise end up in a landfill.

We are looking for a space that holds at least [##] people at one time, plus room for [##] tables, so large community spaces, senior centers, and school gyms tend to be ideal. We'll provide all the staff, volunteers, and materials needed. All we really need from a host is a space - though of course, any level of additional involvement is welcome! The total time needed for the event is [##] hours - [##] for the event itself, plus [##] for set-up and breakdown. We'd be looking to host the event on a [weekend/weekday/evening].

If supporting our event as a host seems feasible for the [site name] I would greatly appreciate hearing back from you! You can email me or call me at [phone].

Thanks!

[Name]

Extra Tip:

Be mindful of the type of event space you're reaching out to when first making contact - churches or other spaces without a full-time administrative staff are more likely to respond to a phone call than an email.



Event Materials Guide

Different types of swaps will require different materials, but the guide below will help you get started. See the Additional Resources page for tips on where to find some of these items.

Materials	Partial Swap	Full Swap
Tables	<p>5 to 7 Tables</p> <p>Events require one table for collecting materials (intake), one table for sign-in, one to two tables for sorting and one table per material accepted. We encourage the use of rectangular tables.</p>	<p>12-15 Tables</p> <p>See left.</p>
Clothing Racks	<p>0-2 Racks</p> <p>Events featuring clothing should include at least one rack for sorting and one for public display.</p>	<p>2-4 Racks</p> <p>Full Stop 'N' Swaps utilize one rack for sorting and three for public display.</p>
Divider	<p>1 Divider</p> <p>Divider is helpful to block public access to the sorting area.</p>	<p>See left.</p>
Table Signs	<p>2 Signs Per Material Accepted</p> <p>Each table requires two signs, one for volunteer viewing and one for public viewing.</p>	<p>2 Signs Per Material Accepted</p> <p>Stop 'N' Swaps include housewares, electronics, menswear, womenswear, kids' clothing, shoes, kids' toys, small accessories, media, books, shoes, wild card.</p>

Event Materials Guide

Pushcart or Dolly	To transport event materials and leftovers obtain a pushcart or dolly.	See left.
Scale	1 Scale To measure the weight of materials accepted and leftover, if desired.	See left.
Bin for Bags	1 Bin/Box and One Clear Bag Empty bags in good condition can be reused by swappers! Ask volunteers to place bags in the bin once they're empty of donations. TIP: reuse large bags to pack swap leftovers.	See left.
Volunteer Safety Materials	Includes latex gloves, hand sanitizer, and first aid kit. At outdoor events, you may want sunscreen & bug spray.	See left.
Waste Stations	Each station should consist of a bin for metal, glass, plastics, & beverage cartons, cardboard and mixed paper, and trash.	See left.
Trash and Recycling Bags	8 -10 Black Bags and 3 Clear Black bags will be used to collect leftover donations, and trash. Clear bags will be used for event recyclables.	20-30 Black Bags and 3 Clear See left.
Misc. Event Materials	Includes tape for signs, pens, markers, name tags for volunteers, cutlery, paper towels, cups, and plates for food.	See left.



Volunteer Training

A volunteer training can happen before the event itself or as a separate event. Always make sure to clearly state your expectations!

Training Outline

About Your Swap

Give an overview of the event, how long it's been happening, and who is involved. Mention the mission/goals of the event, for example: keeping good stuff out of the landfill, preventing the waste associated with making new stuff, helping people who might need/want things get them for free, inspiring environmental mindedness among the community, etc.

Role of Volunteers in Swap

Explain the role of a volunteer - to maintain the safety and quality of materials going out to the public by ensuring donations meet the parameters listed in the outreach material provided by your group. Primary volunteer duties involved in meeting those parameters include sorting through items before display and vetting unsafe and unacceptable donations. Additional duties include running materials out to the public, working to maintain a smooth event by keeping areas neat, assisting with drop-offs, and answering any questions participants may have.

Contraband & Textile Recycling

Provide an overview of what items are *not* supposed to be a part of the event and where volunteers can place these unwanted donations. As a reference, below is a list of donations that are prohibited at all Stop 'N' Swap events:

- Knives or sharp objects
- Prescription medicine
- Open or expired food
- Unsealed personal care products
- Clothing with rips or stains
- Furniture or oversized items
- Underwear
- Hazardous or flammable materials
- Broken electronics, toys, or games

Running Items

Once items are sorted, volunteers run them out to the tables and/or clothing racks for the public to take. It's good practice for volunteers to stay on the outside of the tables and have the public moving on the inside to create some space for everyone to move (see Swap Layout Diagrams). If the public is flocking towards a certain table or rack, suggest that volunteers spread items out over multiple tables or work with a fellow volunteer to spread items out at the same time.

To ensure the event is fair to all participants, it is important to stress that no volunteer should hand any item directly to a participant, even if they ask. A good practice when asked for something is to say, "I'm headed over to the xyz table, you can follow me there and take it once I set it down".

Volunteer Training

Training Outline cont.

End of Day

At the end of the swap, ask volunteers to assist organizers/staff pack up any leftovers [weigh them again if you're tracking diversion] and help move the leftovers either to a storage area or a van/truck that will move the leftovers to a different donation site.

Other Volunteer Logistics to Cover

- List any other expectations of behavior/conduct for volunteers
- Make sure volunteers take bathroom breaks! ID where bathrooms are located
- Let volunteers know about designated snack, food, and drinks area
- If volunteers find themselves with nothing to do, they can help organize the tables/racks
- Make sure to relay where volunteers can find hand sanitizer & gloves
- Ensure your volunteers know you are available to provide help throughout the event
- Ask if volunteers have any questions!

Extra tip:

If you know your volunteers' personalities & skills ahead of time, consider assigning more specific roles - for example, someone who is very focused but slow-moving might be a good fit for organizing a books table.



Additional Resources

There are tons of additional resources available if you get stuck while planning your event. Check out some of your options here.

Zero Waste in NYC Resources

- GrowNYC’s Stop ‘N’ Swap
<https://www.grownyc.org/swap>
- 2017 NYC Reuse Sector Report
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/docs/2017-NYC-Reuse-Sector-Report-FINAL>
- NYC Organics Collection Program
<http://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/2165/organics-collection-program>
- NYC Textiles Collection
<https://www.grownyc.org/clothing>

Other Swap-Hosting Guides

- Brokelyn “Ultimate Guide to Hosting a Clothing Swap”
<https://brokelyn.com/go-home-in-someone-elses-clothes-a-guide-to-hosting-the-perfect-swap-meet/>
- Big Aussie Swap “Swap Party Survival Guide”
<http://recyclingweek.planetark.org/documents/doc-261-council-big-aussie-swap-guide.pdf>
- Your Modern Family “How to Host a Toy Swap”
<https://www.yourmodernfamily.com/host-a-swap/>
- EcoMom “How to Host a Costume Swap”
<http://www.ecomomalliance.org/page/how-to-host-a-costume-swap>
- The Simple Dollar “How and Why to Host a Clothing Swap”
<https://www.thesimpledollar.com/how-and-why-to-host-a-clothing-swap/>
- DFW Child “How to Host a Baby-Themed Swap Party”
<http://www.dfwchild.com/features/3436/How-to-Host-a-Baby-Themed-Swap-Party#>
- Oprah.com “13 Rules for a Successful Clothing Swap”
<http://www.oprah.com/style/clothing-swap-how-to-host-a-clothing-swap/all>
- DecoArt “Host Your Own Cookie Swap”
<https://decoart.com/cookie-swap/host-a-cookie-party>

Key Donation Sites

- donateNYC Partnership List (each partner has list of accepted & non-accepted items)
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/donate/about/partnership/animalcarecentersofnyc.shtml>
- Goodwill NYC Locations
<https://www.goodwillnynj.org/shop/store-locator>
- Salvation Army Locations
<https://satruck.org/>
- HousingWorks Locations
<https://www.housingworks.org/locations/>

Additional Resources

Key Donation Sites (cont.)

- LES Ecology Center (e-waste)
<https://www.lesecologycenter.org/programs/ewaste/>
- Hazardous Materials
<http://www.nyc.gov/safedisposal>

Swaps Materials

- Container Store:
<https://www.containerstore.com/welcome.htm>
- The Freecycle Network
<https://www.freecycle.org/>
- Big ReUse
<http://www.bigreuse.org/>
- donateNYC “I Want to Find Goods” Platform:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/donate/giveandfind/residents/searchvendors.shtml>

Extra tip:

Social media can be a great resource for more information, too! Follow the hashtags **#zerowaste** and **#reuse** to stay up to date on the latest news & events in the reuse community.

We would love to hear about your swap-hosting experiences! Please feel free to submit info to recycle@grownyc.org or reach out to social media with **@grownyc** and **#stopnswap**