

A BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITY-LED TEXTILE REUSE



The National Association for
Charitable Textile Recycling

www.nactr.ca

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de:



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada

Research support conducted by:



In partnership with:



Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
Definition of Key Terms	3
Clothing Swaps	4
Yard/Garage Sales	11
Free Markets	15
Municipal Initiatives	21
University Events	27
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT	31
Step 1: Determine Your Municipal Reuse Mandate	31
Step 2: Determine an Initial Reuse Focus	32
Step 3: Support Behaviour Change and Track Success	33
Step 4: Embed Reuse and Pursue More Comprehensive Strategies	34
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	34

INTRODUCTION

The consumption of textiles and household goods is a key contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. To combat this, there is a movement sweeping across Canada where citizens are igniting change and supporting the reuse of consumer goods and textiles through innovative community-based initiatives, such as free markets, clothing swaps, and repair cafes. Picture yourself at the heart of your neighbourhood's yard sale extravaganza, or rallying your community for a donation drive that leaves a lasting impact. By taking inspiration from these events, you have the power to spearhead your own transformative projects. Together, we can build a stronger, greener future while raising funds for those in need.

These community-driven efforts can be supported and expanded by community organizations and local governments, thus providing opportunities to advance municipal goals, build community, and potentially raise money for charitable entities.

Based on a review of community-led textile reuse initiatives across Canada conducted by the Share Reuse Repair Initiative, this toolkit provides best practices for local governments and community organizations to advance the reuse of textiles and household goods in their communities. For each best practice, the toolkit includes:

- » A **description** of the best practice and its environmental, social, and economical benefits;
- » **Potential municipal roles**, in order from least effort to most effort and involvement;
- » Implementation **challenges and potential solutions**;
- » Best practice **examples** from across Canada;
- » **Resources** for further information.

Definition of Key Terms

- » **Community-Led** - Initiated and run by local government, community organizations (e.g., neighbourhood associations, local nonprofits), local reuse leaders, and/or institutions, such as universities or places of worship. May involve different levels of involvement and effort from local government, including initiatives entirely organized by local government, those where

local government plays a supportive or coordinating role, and those which are entirely organized by community organizations.

- » **Reuse** - Diverts or delays items from entering the landfill by giving or selling them to others. Items might be reused in their original state (e.g., a sweater in good condition, a functioning kitchen appliance) or might be repurposed into something else (e.g., old curtains into cushion covers, electronic components into jewellery).
- » **Charitable Benefit** - Advances the purposes of charitable organizations, including NACTR members, which may include social programs, health research, environmental protection, etc. In this toolkit, charitable benefit is most often achieved through donations of textiles and household items, which charities sell to create revenue that funds their charitable programs. Charitable benefit may also be achieved through the donation of monetary proceeds (e.g., from yard sales).

REUSE INITIATIVES BEST PRACTICES

Clothing Swaps

An event or gathering where participants bring good quality clothing that they no longer want for exchange with others who attend.

Clothing swaps are popular and versatile events that can be run in a living room with friends, at an events venue with hundreds of participants, or integrated into other community events. They are primarily run by nonprofits and community organizations, with a few examples of those led by, or in partnership with, municipalities.

Value Proposition

Clothing swaps can help to divert textiles from landfill while optimizing charitable benefits and shifting mindsets.

- » **Environmental** - Clothing swaps recirculate textiles that may otherwise end up in landfill through swapping and donation of leftover items to charitable organizations, diverting anywhere from 250 kgs to over 1180 kgs (550 lbs -

4,000 lbs) of textiles per event¹. They may slow the purchase of new clothing, thus reducing the purchase of new items and avoiding the use of virgin materials and carbon employed in production.

- » **Social** – Clothing swaps provide a low-cost alternative to buying new clothing. They can support a range of charitable purposes when entry fees or leftover clothing are donated to charitable organizations. Some clothing swaps incorporate educational messaging around fast fashion and sustainable consumption to shift mindsets about clothing consumption.
- » **Economical** – Increases the profile and sales of local sustainable enterprises who may run a table at some clothing swaps.

Key Steps for Planning and Organizing

1. Define Goals and Scope

- The objectives of your clothing swap could include fostering community building and inclusivity, minimizing clothing waste by maintaining items in circulation rather than contributing to landfills, and providing participants with an affordable means to refresh their wardrobes, all while promoting a shift towards more responsible consumption habits.
- Consider key metrics based on your goals. Metrics could include: number of people attended, number of items swapped, weight of items swapped, how much textile was diverted from landfill, how many donations to charity were incurred, if attendees learnt something new, etc.
- To determine scope consider: How many people will attend the event? Will it be hosted to serve a school community? A neighbourhood? Something else?

2. Understand the costs

Costs of a clothing swap might include: Rental/permit fees for the swap location, purchasing and/or rental of supplies, printing of promotional materials (e.g., posters), event day signage, paid advertising (social media, event listings, etc.), and staff time (if

¹ Based on interviews conducted for this report.

applicable).

3. Seek Municipal and/or other support

- Contact a municipal representative to assess the possibility of municipal support. Support might include resource allocation, such as funding or venue support, event permits, or promotional assistance through municipal channels.
- Do research to see if other similar events are happening in your area. Connect with the organizers and inquire about how you can get involved or partner with them to increase the reach of both events.

4. Plan the swap

- Put a call out for volunteers and build a team.
- Define roles. Roles might include: 2-3 sorters, 1 person to record attendees and number of items swapped (this is important for success metrics), 1 runner to place items on the swap floor, and a few others to keep things tidy.
- Choose a date, a time, and a venue.
- Gather your supplies: clothing racks, hangers, seating, toilets, wall dividers for fitting area, scales, tables, bins for accessories, music speakers, signage, pens, markers, tickets, mirrors, appropriate lighting, and sign-in sheet for attendees' contact information (optional).
- Consider offering repair activities.

5. Connect with a NACTR member in advance for pick-up of leftover items

- Even a small clothing swap often results in numerous leftover garments, providing an excellent opportunity for donations to a charity collector. Contact a NACTR member in advance of the event to schedule a pickup of the remaining items, or locate the nearest NACTR member donation drop-off center and deliver the items during collection hours.

6. Establish Guidelines and Health & Safety Measures

Options for guidelines are:

- Place a limit on the number of items each participant can bring (recommendation = 10).
- Restrict the types of items participants can bring.

- Determine the system to be used. Will items be sorted in advance or on the day of, or both? Will participants get tickets for items donated or swap item to item? Will tickets be available for purchase for onlookers who did not bring donations?



- Consider if you need to charge a small admission fee, i.e. \$5, to offset costs.
- Make it a fundraiser: Ask for donations at the door or charge for baked goods.

Some options for health and safety measures:

- Communicate to swap attendees that all materials must be cleaned before bringing to swap.
- Encourage attendees to clean their 'new' items before use.
- Consider not accepting items that are more prone to pests, such as linens and upholstered furniture.
- Thoroughly inspect items brought to the swap to make sure nothing is soiled or in unsuitable condition.

7. Promote

- Community Partnerships: Foster collaborations with local businesses, artists, performers, and influencers to bring entertainers and increase event visibility.
- Connect with municipal and charitable partners, like NACTR members, to integrate the spirit of charitable giving into the event.
- Digital Promotion: Utilize social media, community websites, and email newsletters for digital promotion.
- Advertise with posters in local community spaces, such as coffee shops and public libraries.

8. Finally: Host your swap!

- Set up a Check-In station: This is where items can be sorted and where participants will receive their tickets.
- Set up a Shop Station: Layout tables/racks and establish areas with

categories for where each type of item is held.

- Set up Fitting Rooms (optional).
- Set up a Check-Out station.

9. Post-event: Take Down, Manage Leftovers, and Ask for Feedback and Assess Results.

- Bag the leftovers for easy transport to or pickup by NACTR members.
- Consider establishing a mechanism to gather feedback from attendees and documenting the event to provide a report to stakeholders (i.e. “We swapped 500 garments and donated 500 lbs of clothing to NACTR members”.)

Roles for Local Governments

- » **Promote** clothing swap events to increase awareness and show municipal support.
- » **Provide space** in community venues for organizations to host events.
- » **Fund** clothing swap events with grants and sustained funding programs.
- » **Develop programs** that can be taken up by community organizations.
- » **organize and operate** municipal clothing swap events.

Implementation challenges and potential solutions

- » **Leftover items** can be kept for another swap or donated responsibly to a local charity such as a women’s shelter or a NACTR member. Working with a charitable partner, such as a NACTR member, in advance can help solve the challenge of managing leftover items and ensure verified charitable benefit.
- » **Space** – finding a suitable venue can be a challenge. Municipalities may be able to provide access to community venues to overcome this problem.
- » **Staffing** – many clothing swaps led by nonprofit or community organizations rely on motivated volunteers, both for leadership and supporting roles. Partnerships with municipalities and charitable partners can support volunteer outreach and recruitment. Providing incentives, such as first pick of clothes, can encourage volunteers to participate.
- » **Funding** – there is not a reliable funding base for setting up and running clothing swaps. Some swaps receive grants from municipalities, while others

rely in part on proceeds from entrance fees. Funds from municipalities on an ongoing basis can help provide a foundational level of secure funding. This can include grants or a sole source contract with nonprofits who provide clothing swaps that advance municipal goals of zero waste, affordability etc.

- » **Not all textiles are accepted.** Clothing swaps focus on high-quality materials for reuse. Partnering with a NACTR member that accepts all grades of textiles could prevent items being turned away.

Examples

- » **The Great Halifax Clothing Swap (NS)**. This biannual clothing swap is led by volunteers associated with Ensemble HFX in partnership with community sponsors. The swap charges a \$15 to \$25 entrance fee. Excess clothing is donated to a charity collector, while entrance fee proceeds go to Laing House. 350 people attended their spring 2023 event held on April 22 and there were 250 kgs (550 lbs) of leftover clothing, which was picked up for charitable donation by a NACTR member. The second event, held on September 23, 2023, welcomed 400 attendees and processed 1,911 kg (4,214 lbs) of textiles.
- » **Threading Change Global Clothing Swaps (BC/Canada-wide/international)**. Threading Change is a youth volunteer-led international charity that organizes clothing swaps in several Canadian cities and beyond. They have held swaps in 8 countries. A recent Vancouver event included a sustainable fashion workshop and featured local sustainable vendors as well as a DJ. The organization partners with various groups, including Aunt Leah's Urban Thrift, the Downtown Vancouver Women's Shelter, Drop Wish, BC Apparel and Gear Association, Northwest Skills Institute, Fresh - Plant Powered, Canada Service Corps, and #risingyouth.
- » **Grande Prairie Drop & Swap (AB)**. This clothing swap was organized by the City of Grande Prairie in partnership with Aquatera, a utility corporation, and Goodwill, a charitable member of NACTR. Members of the public can drop off lightly used clothing during a 2-day window, then return on the 3rd day to participate in the clothing swap. Leftover items are donated to Goodwill.

Resources

Clothing swaps are easily replicable! There are many resources, toolkits, and how-to guides available to support uptake by more nonprofits, community organizations and local governments across Canada.

- » Fashion Takes Action, [Clothing Swap Guide](#)
- » Fashion Revolution, [How to Host a Clothing Swap](#)
- » Recycling Council of Ontario, [Swap it Toolkit](#)
- » T.O. the Good Swap, [Sustainable and Ethical Fashion Resources](#)
- » Circular Innovation Council, [Swap it Toolkit](#)

Yard Sales

Residents place unwanted items, including household goods and textiles, in their yard, on the sidewalk, or another designated location, to be sold or given away.

These events are commonly organized by individuals, community organizations such as neighbourhood associations, and municipalities. Regular events happen annually or multiple times per year. Yard and garage sale events led by community organizations or municipalities may operate across entire neighbourhoods or cities, attracting thousands of people. Large events might incorporate music and other community activities to create a festival atmosphere.

Value Proposition

- » **Environmental** – Yard and garage sales divert waste from landfills by keeping items in circulation in the local economy. They appeal to a broad range of motivations for participating (economic, environmental, social).
- » **Social** – Supports building community as participants engage with their neighbours. Community organizations and institutions participate and can benefit from the proceeds of the sale (e.g., church halls).
- » **Economical** – These events support the local economy as residents who keep the money from selling their valued unwanted items have more purchasing power; supports nonprofits; large scale events of this type

support job creation and revenue creation by creating a festival atmosphere where other vendors are welcome.

Key Steps for Planning and Organizing

Determine purpose and scope:

- Is it a sale that will take place on a single street, multiple streets, through an entire neighbourhood, or will it involve an entire community?
- Will households be simply encouraged to host garage sales on the same day or is the idea to foster a “festival” atmosphere with music and other attractions?

Consider funding opportunities for large-scale events:

- For a large-scale sale, consider seeking municipal support and/or charging a registration fee to participating households to cover the cost of advertising and overhead.

Verify any local regulations or permits required for hosting a large-scale yard sale in your area.

- Coordination with the local government may be required to manage permits, road closures, or traffic management.

Choose a date and time and register participating sales.

- Create a registration form to sign up residents to host garage sales at their homes.
- To find garage sale hosts, send out the form through city or community newsletters and email lists and post the form on popular local social media channels and community bulletin boards.

Establish guidelines and health and safety measures

- Refer to [Facts for Garage Sale Vendors by the Canadian Government](#).
- Communicate to participants that all items to be sold must be clean and free of pests.
- If it is a large event, consider placing toilets across the area of the event.

Connect with a NACTR member in advance for pick-up of leftover items

- Contact a NACTR member in advance of the event to schedule a pickup of the remaining items, or locate the nearest NACTR member donation drop-off center and deliver the items during collection hours.

Community Engagement and Promotion:

- Promote the event via posters, social media, and newsletters.
- Connect with local businesses who can increase visibility of the event and bring their offerings on the day.
- Consider collaborating with artists, performers, and other entertainers to enhance the atmosphere of the event and attract attendees.

Draw up directions, share them with the community and let it happen!

- Consider designing a map to display the locations of participating sales.
- These lists and maps can be distributed to garage sale shoppers online and in printed copies made available in self-serve literature stands throughout the community.

Post-event: Take Down, Manage Leftovers, and Ask for Feedback and Assess Results.

- Bag/box the leftovers and collect them in a central location for easy transport to or pickup by NACTR members.
- Consider establishing a mechanism to gather feedback from attendees and documenting the event to provide a report to stakeholders (e.g., participant survey via email).

Roles for Local Governments

- » **Promote** yard sale events in the local community
- » **Provide space** in community parks or halls
- » **Issue permits** and manage traffic to enable larger events
- » **Build partnerships** with charities to manage donation of leftover items.
- » **organize and operate** municipal yard/garage sales.

Implementation challenges and potential solutions

- » **Space** – Availability of outdoor space can limit participation, particularly for those in high-density neighbourhoods and multi-family dwellings. One solution is for municipalities to secure access to community space, such as a park or gymnasium.
- » **Management of left-over items** – Leftover household items and clothing are typically the responsibility of households, which can be time-consuming and may result in items going to landfill that are suitable for reuse and recycling. Providing central donation bins or securing a verified charitable partner such as any NACTR member to collect items from multi-home sales can make it easier and more convenient for yard/garage sale participants to manage unsold items and prevent unnecessary waste.
- » **Coordination with the local government** may be required to manage permits, road closures, or traffic management. Involving local government as an organizing partner can ensure you have the permissions you need. Local governments can also serve as the lead partner which addresses the coordination issues internally, as well as provide a core base of staff and resourcing, in return for events that are popular amongst residents and divert items from landfill.

Examples:

- » **The Great Glebe Garage Sale (ON)**. A large, long-running, and very popular neighbourhood-wide yard sale organized by volunteers from the Environment Committee of the Glebe Community Association. Participants and organizers describe a "festival" atmosphere with music, attracting thousands of people into the Glebe neighbourhood to browse the sales. Partners include: the TWIGS club at Glebe Collegiate Institute and Glebe St. James United Church. Yard sale participants can opt to donate proceeds to Ottawa Centre Refugee Action. There are no centralized donation options for residents to take unsold items. Organizers say clothing can be hard to sell and often is left over. Opportunity and interest in establishing more organized donation options for participating residents.
- » **Coquitlam City-Wide Yard Sale (BC)**. Residents of Coquitlam can apply to participate in the yard sale/giveaway event, which happens twice per year.

Residents sell items from their yards/sidewalks. Participants are instructed to remove any remaining items by sunset, suggesting there is an opportunity to introduce a donation component for unsold items.

- » **Yellowknife Indoor Garage Sale (NWT)**. Indoor garage sale organized by the municipality. Residents can register to sell household items (no commercial vendors). Vendors are responsible for the removal or disposal of all items from their tables. Items in good condition may be brought to any of the local thrift stores or brought back home for resale. No donation options available at the event.
- » **City of Toronto Secondhand Sundays (ON)**. City-wide free outdoor giveaway event. Residents leave unwanted items on the curb or lawn for neighbours to take for free. Any items untaken should be taken back indoors by residents. No known option for donation as part of this event.

Resources:

- » Shareable, [How to Organize a City Wide Garage Sale](#)
- » Government of Canada, [Facts for Garage Sale Vendors](#)

Free Markets

Free markets accept donated items, which they make available to the public for free at a market-style event.

Free markets are pop-up events run in strategic locations to ensure accessibility for community members who would otherwise have to commute to a donation drop-off. While they hold similarities with yard sales and giveaway events, free markets represent a distinctive reuse initiative because they happen at a central location and do not involve the exchange of money. These events are often volunteer-run by community organizations in association with charities or by municipalities.

Value Proposition

- » **Environmental** – Free markets and free stores create environmental benefits by providing an alternative to landfill and recycling by keeping reusable items in circulation.

- » **Social** – Free market leftovers are often donated to charitable organizations, contributing to social benefit. Free markets can be fun and social events where participants may connect with neighbours and find new, local homes for their no longer needed items, encouraging community cohesion.
- » **Economical** – They provide a low-cost alternative to participants who can acquire new, reused things for free. Paired with other market events, such as local vendors, the event may attract customers in support of local businesses.

Key Steps for Planning and Organizing

1. Define the Purpose and Scope:

- The goal of the free market could revolve around cultivating community connections, educating residents about options for reuse, diverting waste from the landfill, and providing free alternatives to buying new items.
- Specify what types of items are suitable for the free market and encourage contributions (e.g., clothing, books, household items).

2. Obtain Necessary Permissions:

- Check Local Regulations: Ensure compliance with any local regulations or permits required for hosting a public event.
- Liability Considerations: Understand liability considerations and obtain any necessary insurance or waivers if applicable.

3. Determine Logistics (location, date, and time)

- Accessible Venue: Select a central and accessible location like a park, community center, or public square.
- Weather Considerations: If your event is planned to be outdoors, establish a backup plan in case of inclement weather, such as a covered area or an indoor venue.
- Community Availability: Choose a date and time that maximizes community participation. Weekends or evenings may work well.

4. Gather Support and Engage the Community

- Consider seeking municipal support.
- Mobilize volunteers and engage local community groups.

Collaboration can help in organizing, promoting, and running the event smoothly.

- Recruit volunteers: Enlist volunteers to help with event setup, item categorization, and crowd management.
- Consider additional features to support social and educational goals, such as repair workshops, skill-sharing sessions, or entertainment to engage participation.

5. Promote the Event:

- Put up posters in various locations like apartment complexes, student dorms, and community centers.
- Use fliers, mass emails, and collaborate with community resources.
- Seek coverage from local media and community radio stations.
- Advertise pre-event drop-off location and time (if applicable).

6. Organize Collection Points (optional)

- Pre-event Drop-off Locations: Set up designated collection points for community members to contribute items before the event.
- Partner with Local Businesses: Collaborate with local businesses to serve as additional drop-off locations.

7. Connect with a NACTR member in advance for pick-up of leftover items

- Contact a NACTR member in advance of the event to schedule a pickup of the remaining items, or locate the nearest NACTR member donation drop-off center and deliver the items during collection hours.

8. Establish and Communicate guidelines

- Encourage participants to bring items they want to share. This can include clothes, books, household items, or any other goods that are still in good condition.
- Clearly communicate the rules of the event, emphasizing the spirit of generosity and the absence of money transactions.
- Encourage attendees to take what they need and contribute what they can.
- Clarify that contributions are anonymous, not donations, and there is no end-profit.
- Optional: Some RRFMs use a stamp system to encourage

contributions. Participants receive a stamp for bringing items, allowing them to take items freely.

9. Set Up the Free Market:

- Organized Layout: Plan the layout of the free market area, ensuring items are categorized for easy browsing.
- Signage: Clearly label different sections and provide signage with event information.
- Assistance: Have volunteers available to assist attendees, answer questions, and maintain order.

10. Manage leftovers

- Collaborate with local NACTR members to collect any unclaimed items after the event.
- Set up recycling bins for any damaged or unsuitable items to promote responsible disposal.
- Bag the leftovers and collect them in a central location for easy transport to or pickup by NACTR members.

11. Clean-up and Post-Event Evaluation:

- Gather Feedback: Collect feedback from participants to understand what worked well and identify areas for improvement.
- Documentation: Document the success of the free market through photos and testimonials to share with the community and local media.

Roles for Local Governments and Community Organizations

- » **Promote** free market events to increase awareness and show municipal support.
- » **Provide space** in community parks or halls for organizations to host events.
- » Provide **funding** opportunities to organizations operating free market events.
- » **Develop programs** for free market events that could be taken on by organizations.
- » **organize and operate** municipal free markets.

Implementation challenges and potential solutions

- » **Space** – Acquiring a centrally located space to host an event can be a challenge for community organizations. Free market events often run on the weekend for the highest foot traffic, but find themselves competing with paid rentals. Storage space to hold items is also a challenge for pop-up events. These are challenges that municipalities could alleviate by providing access to community space. Prioritising walkable, urban areas or town centres allow people to walk to them easily and provide reuse options for residents who may not have yards better suited for yard/garage sales.
- » **Management of leftover items** – Some items may not be taken home by others. Select a verified charitable organization, such as a NACTR member, to donate items collected to maximise charitable benefits.
- » **Funding and resourcing** can challenge the capacity of free markets, particularly if they become popular. Encourage established nonprofits and/or local governments, alone or in partnerships, to run pop-up free markets. This will ensure sufficient resources and capacity to run a successful market.
- » **Residents may be unaware of what is accepted**, reducing the potential items diverted from landfill. Provide educational information about the full range of household items and textiles that can be donated e.g., yes, socks with holes in them!

Examples:

- » **ReMarkets (St Lawrence, Roncy) (ON)**. A pop-up event that takes in textiles (even socks with holes) as well as household appliances and books. This event makes reuse more accessible to the community who cannot necessarily drive to charity drop-off locations. The main challenge is having space and funding to run the event. Runs on volunteer staff – volunteers have priority over claiming items.
- » **Squamish Reuse-It Fair (BC)**. Previously run by Squamish Climate Action Network (CAN) (until 2020) and now they are run by the District of Squamish with Squamish CAN support. The Re-Use-It Fair accepts donations of household goods and clothing in good condition or in need of minor repair.

At the Re-Use-It event, these items can be taken home for free. No data is available on metrics/scale/donations.

- » **City of Vancouver Free Swap events (BC).** This example welcomed residents to bring 4-5 small items, including books, clothing and accessories, toys, electronics, art, household goods, and music, for exchange. Participants could take as many items as they liked and leftover items were collected by The Salvation Army.

Resources:

- » Rabble, [Free Market Guide](#)
- » LifeSpin, [Free Store Guidelines](#)

Municipal Initiatives

This includes various practices linked with municipal drop-off events or infrastructure such as transfer stations or landfills including reuse events, free stores or reuse stores.

These events are led by municipalities, typically in partnership with charitable organizations or community associations. This type of initiative may run out of permanent spaces that accept donations, or as pop-up events where donations received are directed to appropriate charitable partners or recycling enterprises.

Value Proposition

- » **Environmental** - Promotion of drop-off events encourages residents to rethink what can be reused and recycled and, perhaps, to hold on to things in anticipation of the next event rather than throwing things away. By providing accessible drop-off points, more residents have access to reuse options, resulting in more items diverted from the landfill. In the case of free stores or transit stations, materials that might otherwise be headed for landfill can be diverted - a convenient one-stop-shop option for residents. Reuse stores and reuse centres associated with municipal infrastructure have the benefit of being a hub for intake of items that have a second life as well as educating residents about proper disposal of other items. Often they also intake construction materials, solvents, and other hazardous items.

- » **Social** – Charity partners benefit from the municipal organization and promotion. In most cases, proceeds raised from sales go to charitable societies or the operation of the initiative.
- » **Economical** – Supports charity partners through municipal resourcing, and job creation in hiring people to manage the event or staff the store/station.

Key Steps for Planning and Organizing

1. Define purpose and scope

- The goal of your municipal drop-off event could revolve around ensuring the proper disposal and potential reuse of unwanted items, fostering community awareness about reuse and recycling options, and making these options more accessible to residents across the municipality.

To define scope consider:

- Will this be a recurring event or a one-off?
- Will the event happen in multiple locations or just one?
- Will this event be coupled with existing municipal infrastructure?

2. Partner with local organizations and NACTR members who can offer reuse or recycling options for donations

- Partnering with different organizations can create a broader range of disposal and reuse streams for items brought in by participants.
- This will ensure many different types of items can be accepted (e-waste, clothing, bulky items, household items), contributing to the convenience and impact of the event.

3. Become familiar with regulatory requirements involved in collecting and handling the items you plan to accept

- e.g. E-waste can be hazardous

4. Determine logistics (location, date, and time)

5. Consider what you will need for set up (Refer to [Guidance Document – Secretary for Environmental Protection](#) for an example)

- Traffic Control

- Traffic Barriers
- Signage
- Donation Form Completion
- Unloading & Loading Vehicles/Receptacles
- Event Schedule
- Volunteer Parking & Arrival
- Advertising/Pre-event Fliers and Post-event Branding
- Photography to document your event

6. **Gather Support and Engage the Community**

- Publicize the event: Put up posters in various locations like apartment complexes, student dorms, and community centers. Use fliers, mass emails, and collaborate with community resources. Seek coverage from local media and community radio stations.
- Recruit volunteers: Enlist volunteers to help with event setup, item categorization, and crowd management. Partner organizations may be able to provide volunteers.

7. **Document donations**

- Consider establishing a mechanism to gather feedback from attendees.
- Document the event with photography and metrics to provide a report to stakeholders involved after the fact.

8. **Post-event: ensure a smooth handover of items to partnering NACTR charities or other local organizations.**

Roles for Local Governments

- » **Educate/Outreach** at local waste facilities to promote and raise awareness of reuse options. Let the community know about the drop-off events and what they accept.
- » **Provide Space** in public areas beyond the transfer station to increase ease of access to drop off events.
- » **Build partnerships** with charitable organizations, including NACTR members, that could support drop-off events and expand reuse opportunities as well as social benefit.

- » **Develop Programs** that can be operated by community and charitable organizations.
- » **organize and operate** municipal drop off events. Manage and operate municipal reuse centres as part of local government.

Implementation challenges and potential solutions

- » **Space on site** – Some municipal sites have limited space with additional safety constraints, which can cause logistical challenges for operating other activities. Municipalities should start with quick-win opportunities such as pop-up reuse events or adding reuse areas for collection of high demand items by charities at transfer stations. Municipalities could explore and develop more complex models to scale reuse over time. This might involve, for example, redesign of transfer stations to accommodate reuse as a default option for a broader range of goods.
- » **Unknown quality of items** – The quality of items dropped off can vary. There may not be a report back of data from charities to municipalities about where items went and what percentage was reusable vs. recycled. A solution is to adopt an approach to track metrics from the drop-off events featuring reuse, recycling, and charitable benefit and other valued outcomes that can be shared with partners and residents. Ensure the approach is not an undue burden on charitable partners. Knowing where items go is a proven part of supporting desired sustainable behaviours.
- » **Attendance can vary** according to awareness and promotion. Partner organizations can help to promote events. Running drop-off events on a regular and consistent basis in easily accessible locations encourages participation as an expected and habitual behaviour by residents.
- » **Requires capacity of partnered charity** to pick up, store, and resell items. Partnering with a range of community and charitable organizations can expand the capacity and types of items diverted, and contribute to social as well as environmental benefits. Choosing a NACTR charity can ensure that the funds from donations support verified charitable benefits. It is also important to match the reuse practice to the size/nature of the community. Free stores or share sheds work well in smaller communities, whereas they're not as suitable for larger cities, which require a more structured approach

like reuse events or stores. Municipalities should seek partners with capacity and interest to participate in reuse practices.

- » **Staffing** – Community organizations may not have enough staff to assess the volume of materials donated for reuse. Municipalities might address this problem by training transfer station staff to support the assessment of materials for reuse.

Examples:

- » **City of Vancouver Reuse and Recycle events (BC)**. The City of Vancouver partners with local organizations like reBOOT Canada, Encorp, Call2Recycle, LightRecycle, Electrorecycle, Product Care, and other charitable organizations to host reuse and drop-off events to make it convenient for residents to dispose of items that can be reused or recycled. Expanding this initiative is part of the 2040 zero waste strategic plan.
- » **John Reuse Connections Donation Events (NB)**. Donation event where residents can bring household items and clothing for donation to a range of charitable partners. The event is hosted in a tent at the exhibition centre. The event also accepts broken electronics for e-waste recycling.
- » **City of Toronto Community Environment Days (ON)**. The City hosts Community Environment Days in every ward and at Drop-Off Depots to help reduce the amount of reusable or recyclable waste going to landfill. The City of Toronto partners with a nonprofit agency to collect household items for donations, including textiles. Residents can also pick up free compost for gardening at each event. Over 58500 kg (128970 lb) of textiles have been collected since 2019.
- » **Whistler Reuse Centre (BC)**. Reuse Store run by Whistler Community Services Society that is located at the transfer station. The Reuse Centre accepts clothing and household items for resale. Larger household goods, furniture, tools and building materials are accepted by the nearby ReBuilt It Centre. No data on what happens to items that are not sold.
- » **Mt. Lorne Transfer Station Free Store (YT)**. Public can drop items off for \$1 fee charged per bag of donations drop-off and \$10 fee for donation of bigger items like couches and mattresses. Visitors can visit the store and take away items for free. Leftover textiles received are sent to Vancouver or Edmonton

for recycling. The Mt Lorne Free Store also has a Facebook page, where residents can give away items without visiting the site, or can email Mt Lorne with items to post online.

- » **Metro Vancouver Reuse Days at Recycling & Waste Centres (BC)**. Metro Vancouver partners with a local nonprofit secondhand organization, Urban Repurpose, to divert materials for reuse from one of its Recycling and Waste Centre. Urban Repurpose assesses materials being brought into the site and selects items to take to its store for resale or giveaway. 300 to 400 kg of material per hour are diverted during Reuse Days. Share Reuse Repair Initiative was contracted by Metro Vancouver to develop a model to scale reuse opportunities at Recycling and Waste Centres which will be available in a publicly accessible report in 2024.

Resources:

- » City of Toronto, [Community Reduce & Reuse Program](#)
- » Government of Canada, [Notifying for and Hosting an E-Waste Collection Event](#)
- » The Free Store Project, [Join the Free Store Network](#) for support creating a Free Store
- » Green America, [Free Store Article](#)
- » EcoCentre - QB, [Solid Waste Management Review](#)

University Events

Some universities encourage students, staff, and/or faculty to reuse items on campus. Move-in/out programs help students to donate items for use by future residents.

University reuse programs may include free stores and move-out programs. Move-out programs run as pop-up donation drop-off locations at the end of the school year. The drop-off location is, in most cases, a designated spot inside university residences. Items collected by university reuse programs may include textiles, household items, wood, glass, fibres, office supplies, plastic, paper, tools, equipment, and arts and craft supplies, which can be dropped at a designated location. Items collected are donated to external entities and, in some instances, a

smaller percentage of items are stored on campus and resold to students at a move-in sale.

Value Proposition

- » **Environmental** – Keeps items in circulation and out of the landfill; this is particularly significant for high-demand items that students moving into residence are likely to buy year after year.
- » **Social** – Benefits those in need in the university community with the possibility of donation to charitable organizations.
- » **Economical** – Reduces economic burden for students moving into university residences by providing free or low-cost items.

Key Steps for Planning and Organizing

1. Define purpose and scope

The goals of your university reuse program might include facilitating the sustainable and economical redistribution of used items on campus, reducing waste during student transitions, and providing resources to economically disadvantaged students. These programs can also meet student demand for more affordable goods while promoting a culture of eco-conscious behavior and profiling universities as sustainability leaders.

To define scope consider:

- Will this initiative be held in a single residential building or will it be a campus-wide event?
- Will items collected for reuse be available for free or will they be resold?
- What types of items will be collected?

2. Build a team and plan the initiative

Determine how to generate funds: university support; sponsorship; direct fundraising on campus; charging fees for items left in residence rooms; entry fees to reuse sales – usually lower for students and relatively higher

for community members.

Consider different models to run the program. Options include:

- Collection and sorting of goods in a space within a university residence, storage over the summer, and resale in a space within a university residence during move-in. Provides a high level of convenience for students with collection and resale right at student residences.
- A Large Central Move-In Sale. Collection at numerous university residences with storage and sorting over the summer with resale at a large central sale held outdoors or at a gymnasium or amphitheater. A large central sale provides economies of scale that contribute to financial viability and high visibility.

3. Submit a proposal to University management

- Verify if there are any specific regulations or policies regarding campus sales. Some universities may have guidelines for organizing such events.

4. Finalize logistics, including securing dates, time, space allocation, and staffing.

5. Create an item wishlist and quality guidelines

- For example: Mini fridges are usually in high demand and bulky furniture items sell for more.

6. Community engagement and promotion

- Community Partnerships: Foster collaborations with local businesses, artists, performers, and influencers to bring entertainers and increase event visibility.
- Digital Promotion: Utilize social media, community websites, and university email newsletters for digital promotion of both the collection and sale events.

7. Connect with a NACTR member in advance for pick-up of leftover items

- Contact a NACTR member in advance of the event to schedule a pickup of the remaining items, or locate the nearest NACTR member donation drop-off center and deliver the items during collection

hours.

8. Set up collection

- Have students drop off items at pre-arranged and supervised locations (e.g., a common space in university residences).
- Assess items at collection to weed out any items that do not meet the quality guidelines.
- Record metrics of items collected.

9. Process items

- Sort items into categories, check that items are clean and functioning, and price accordingly.

10. Run Sale(s)

- Transport items to the sale location and arrange them according to category.
- Set up a check-out table and payment methods.
- Record metrics about items sold.

Roles for Local Governments

- » **Promote** university programs through municipal channels.
- » **Educate/Outreach** to raise awareness about reuse options during life transitions such as starting college.
- » **Fund** university reuse programs.
- » **Partner** with universities to run on-campus reuse initiatives.

Implementation challenges and potential solutions

- » **Resourcing** – Some programs run at a deficit or need additional resourcing, such as paid staff rather than volunteers, to run effectively. Municipalities and universities could work together to provide funding and resources to prioritise reuse activities on campus.
- » **Management of leftover items** – Items may be left over from reuse programs, creating opportunities to partner with charities to accept surplus donations and unclaimed or unsold items. Seek opportunities for charitable partnerships to reuse and recycle the remaining items off-campus. Some move-out programs also involve municipal pick-up of items such as bulky items like furniture that are not desired by charitable partners.

- » **Unknown quality of items**, since students may first swap or sell the highest quality items between each other. Ensure reuse programs collect items that are valued by students and would be purchased new or otherwise, e.g., mini-fridges and office supplies.

Examples:

- » **UBC Mindful Move-Out (BC)**. A volunteer-run program that collects items from students moving out of residences. On average, the program collects 13 kg (30 lb) of materials per bed. Previously partnered with a charity organization, but adjusted into a collect, store, and resell model. Re-exploring the partnership model to include charitable donations in the future.
- » **Concordia University Centre for Creative Reuse (QC)**. Collects and displays a variety of wood, glass, metal, fibres, office supplies, plastics, paper, tools and equipment, and arts & crafts supplies collected from campus departments and individuals. The Used Material Depot is a free store where members can "shop" for items for free. No evidence of clothing collection or charitable donation, which presents an opportunity for development in this area.
- » **University of Winnipeg Sustainability Office (MB)**. The university's sustainability office is diverting textile and houseware waste by running a drop-off/pickup location for office supplies, offering recycling for office furniture, and managing a move-out program at one of the student residencies.

Resources:

- » Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, [Halls Reuse Guide](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The reuse of textiles and household goods is a growing focus of local government, yet still not a mainstream practice that has reached its potential to advance a variety of municipal goals. Only 1% of textiles diverted to NACTR members for reuse and recycling come from municipal sources. Local governments face a variety of barriers to a more concerted focus on reuse. The top three barriers indicated from

a 2020 survey of local governments in BC conducted by the Munk School of Public Policy for the Share Reuse Repair Initiative were: lack of clear municipal mandate around reuse; lack of funding or staff allocation for reuse efforts; and lack of clear departmental leadership for reuse activities².

Local governments can undertake the following steps to address these barriers and choose reuse strategies and roles that fit their unique context and capacity.

Step 1: Determine Your Municipal Reuse Mandate

It's important to determine how pursuing reuse strategies can help advance your municipal goals and address the priorities of your leaders and residents. By doing this, you can create the rationale for reuse and also determine what internal departments and external entities you might engage.

- » **Where does the strongest/clearest municipal mandate exist in existing plans or policies?** Review existing municipal plans and policies to determine the linkage between the reuse of textiles and household goods and a range of municipal goals, including zero waste, sustainability or climate action, as well as social planning goals like community building, equity, and affordability. Where there is a job creation, workforce, or business development component, economic development goals may also apply.
- » **What are key community priorities?** What do elected officials and community leaders care about most? What are the key priorities of residents? Are they cost of living? Minimizing waste to landfill? Creating new jobs? Building community?

Step 2: Determine an Initial Reuse Focus

There are a variety of reuse opportunities outlined in this toolkit. These next steps will help you decide where to start by supporting the reuse activities of existing community organizations and/or filling gaps for new activities that your local government leads or co-leads.

- » **Determine municipal roles to support existing community reuse activities.** Undertake a scan of existing reuse practices led by community organizations and determine what roles local government might play to amplify them. Often modest levels of effort by municipalities can make a significant

² https://www.shareuserepair.org/uploads/1/2/3/5/123584632/final_copy_pgi_research_brief.pdf

difference to the ability of community organizations to run effective and resilient reuse activities over time³. Consider roles such as:

- **Provide space** in community centres, libraries, or other municipal spaces for reuse events;
- **Offer grants** to support staff/volunteer time or event/activity expenses;
- **Provide promotional support** for reuse events or activities;
- **Offer permits** in a manner that minimises time and resources required;
- **Contribute some municipal staff time** for key supporting roles.
- **Share/develop free toolkits** about “how to” conduct reuse events e.g., the Recycling Council of Ontario developed a free clothing swap event [toolkit](#).

» **Consider the need and rationale for municipal-led reuse events or activities that fill gaps** in existing offerings and advance various municipal goals meaningfully. In doing so, consider best practices and recommendations to improve and scale these, as outlined in this toolkit. Municipalities can play a meaningful lead role in reuse practices in partnership with external organizations that include:

- Multi-neighbourhood or municipal-wide yard/garage sales;
- Municipal drop-off events for reuse and recycling;
- Reuse activities linked to municipal infrastructure – free stores, reuse events and stores;
- Clothing swaps (less commonly led by municipalities).

Step 3: Support Behaviour Change and Track Success

» **Employ best practices that support eco-conscious behaviour change when developing reuse practices and related educational materials.** One option is the [SHIFT Framework](#) proven to support uptake of sustainable behaviours. The Framework was developed by Dr. Kate White, Professor of

³ See pages 48 and 49 of

http://www.localgovsharingecon.com/uploads/2/1/3/3/21333498/localgovsharingecon_report_full_oct2015.pdf

Marketing and Behaviour Science at UBC Sauder who is a global leading expert in supporting prosocial behaviour. This framework is featured in SRRRI's [SHIFT Lite and Full Programs](#) attended by businesses, local governments and nonprofits who want to learn how to increase circular behaviours, including reuse, by the customers and audiences they serve.

- » **Develop metrics to track reuse and related municipal goals.** Measurement is key to the ability of local governments to justify and expand local government involvement in areas that go beyond traditional municipal roles. Tracking the volume of textiles and household goods diverted through reuse efforts is the foundation. Other metrics could be the number of reuse events and how many residents attend them, and resident satisfaction with reuse activities. Embodied carbon avoided and, where relevant, metrics like job creation or increase in business activity could also be tracked. Metrics need not be complex. A municipal-led repair cafe in the US developed a half-page questionnaire that measured the number and weight of items repaired, as well as participant satisfaction. In developing data-collection tools (questionnaires, etc.), consult those who will be using them (e.g., reuse event volunteers) to ensure data-collection expectations are feasible and fit within the regular activities of reuse initiatives.

Step 4: Embed Reuse and Pursue More Comprehensive Strategies

- » **Reframe municipal waste management plans to feature reuse as a priority.** York Region's [SM4RT Living Plan](#) and related [Circular Economy Roadmap](#) is one example. The City of Toronto's [Long Term Waste Management Plan](#) is another, as are many Circular Economy Roadmaps developed by municipalities that participate in the [Circular Cities and Regions Initiative](#).
- » **Develop comprehensive reuse efforts that advance the reuse of textiles and household goods together with sharing, repair, and other community goals.** Examples include [City of Toronto's Community Reduce and Reuse Programs](#) and the [suite of reuse offerings by York Region](#) that advance reuse together with sharing and repair. The City of Portland's [ResourcefulPDX program](#) is another comprehensive program focused on 4 key areas: Buy Smart, Reuse, Borrow and Share, and Fix and Maintain that support citizens to

embrace sustainable consumption practices and provide tips, resources and links to relevant activities, events, charities and businesses. When reuse is part of a more comprehensive effort, the visibility and uptake of reuse can grow as it is made accessible to more people and become normalized as part of a suite of practices promoting a sustainable consumption mindset and habit change.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizations are involved in almost all of the reuse best practices cited in this toolkit. Some reuse practices they lead, such as clothing swaps, and in other cases they play a supporting role, such as in municipal-led reuse events or practices. However, they have varied capacities in terms of human resources, space, funding, and supportive partnerships that influence their ability to scale the reuse of textiles and household goods. The following are recommendations suggested for community organizations to successfully pursue reuse opportunities that match their capacity and maximize environmental and community benefits.

- » **Select a reuse event or practice to pursue that matches the resources and capacity of your community organization.** More established organizations with more secure funding and human capacity, both paid and volunteer, will be able to take on larger or more involved reuse events or activities.
- » **Review existing “how to” resources first** before embarking on a reuse event or practice. There are toolkits for clothing swaps.
- » **Reach out to a relevant local government staff person** with responsibility for zero waste, circular economy, or sustainability and ask how they might support your reuse effort by providing space, funding, promotion, staff support, streamlined permitting, etc. Persistence may be required as reuse is not currently a mainstream practice of all local governments.
- » **Find a verified charitable partner, such as a NACTR member, to donate collected or leftover textiles and household goods.** This is particularly of value for larger clothing swaps, multi-household yard sales, and free or reuse markets.

- » **Employ best practices around behaviour change in the design and messaging of reuse practices.** There are free/low-cost resources that can help here including the [Lighter Living Motivations](#) and SRRI's [SHIFT Program](#).
- » **Organizations that support the nonprofit sector should support their members to pursue community-led reuse.** This could take many forms such as providing a list of “how to” resources, including reuse in conferences, hosting webinars, and more.