

Too Much Stuff! Where to Sell or Donate Things You Don't Want

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

You have seen articles about how to get rich quick. But most of us could use one about how to get *rid* quick. Everyone talks about decluttering. How many people actually do it unless they have to move? If you are serious about purging, but don't know what to do with all that stuff, read on.

To move resalable items out quickly, call in an eBay agent, who will photograph, price, post and ship items on eBay for you and take a commission, sometimes up to 45 percent. An experienced eBay agent knows what will sell and what won't. (If you have very valuable items, call in an auction house.)

If you want to donate items and it's inconvenient for you to carry them, Amazon offers the Give Back Box – <http://givebackbox.com/amazon> – a free shipping label you can paste onto a shipping carton; fill the carton with “gently used” clothing or household items, take it to the U.S. Post Office, or give it to your mail carrier. It will go to Good Will or one of their other partner organizations.

Local churches and similar organizations collect items for their annual jumble sales and books sales but you don't have to wait. If you want to deliver items in person, there are places in the city ready to accept items all year. It's best to call ahead to check on what specific items fit their current needs, the hours they are open, and current location. Things change.

Books and Recordings

Friends of the Free Library's Book Corner, 311 N. 20th St., accepts used books, CDs, DVDs, records and VHS tapes. Call 215-567-0527. Sales proceeds benefit the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Specialty books can go to targeted recipients. If you have legal books, basic skill books, or vocational trade books, Books Through Bars, at 4722 Baltimore Ave, collects books for prisoners. Call 215-727-8170. <http://booksthroughbars.org/>

Do you have books in Yiddish? The National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA, collects them. Call 413-256-4900. <http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/> (The U.S. Post Office has a special rate for items sent to libraries.)

Finding special niches for selected books can be fun to do if you have the time. I donated a collection of books by H.L. Mencken to the H. L. Mencken House in Baltimore, and I donated a collection of books on alternative medical care to an integrative-medicine M.D. Hardest to get rid of were textbooks older than two years, but eventually someone from Craig's List came and got them.

Clothes, Accessories, and Jewelry

Career Wardrobe, 1822 Spring Garden Street, accepts women's and men's clothes suitable for office wear, and uniforms for women in medical and service fields. Shoppers can purchase clothing at 50 to 70 percent off retail. Call 215-568-2660. <http://careerwardrobe.org/donate/clothing-donations/donation-guidelines/>

The Broad Street Ministry, 315 S. Broad Street, accepts certain clothing which they give to people in need. Call 215-735-4847. <http://www.broadstreetministry.org/>

If you have valuable jewelry, you will probably want to compare offers on Jewelers' Row. Consignment stores accept good clothing, accessories and jewelry for resale, and you will get a percentage of the sale price. Thrift stores accept clothing, furniture, and household items to resell, using the proceeds for their causes. A popular one in Center City is the Philly Aids Thrift Store at 710 S. 5th Street. Call 215-922-3186. <http://phillyaidsthift.com/>

Furniture: Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, at 2318 Washington Ave, a discount home-improvement store, sells gently used furniture and home goods. They offer free pick-up. Call 215-739-9300. <http://www.habitatphiladelphia.org/restore>

Specialty items: Recently, I donated a box of odds and ends to Spiral Q, an organization that uses reclaimed materials for community art projects such as life-size puppet parades and theatre productions. Here is a link to their page showing what supplies they need: <http://www.spiralq.org/supplies-equipment/>

Musical instruments: Musicopedia, an organization that provides music

opportunities for children, at 2001 Market Street, accepts musical instruments. Call 215-829-9522. <https://musicopia.net/instrument-donation/>

Tools: If you have tools in good useable condition, you can donate them to the West Philly Tool Library at 1314 S. 47th St. Call 215-833-3190.

Historical photos and documents:

You can even donate old family photos and documents (if no one in your family wants them) to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust St. All photos must be labeled with names and dates. Call the Director of Archives and Collections Management at 215-732-6200. <https://hsp.org/>

Selling or donating items online: You can sell or donate many items through Craig's List. <https://philadelphia.craigslist.org/> This method works especially well for free items (look for the Free section). You post your items on Craig's List along with your email address which they anonymize. You can include preferences in your post such as “I want to donate this item to a non-profit organization or a school.”

When you get responses, you can choose which person to give the items to and tell them when and where to pick up. If you live in a building with a doorman, you do not even have to meet the person if you don't want to. Just leave the package marked with the recipient's name with your doorman for pick-up.

Through Craig's List, I found a young man who collects manual typewriters and teaches kids how to type. He wrote me a thank-you note on the typewriter I gave him. I also sold a stained glass window to two very nice people who were converting their house to a B&B. And I found a man who refurbishes old computers for use by a Federal program for ex-offenders.

If you have tips for readers or questions about where to get rid of certain items, send them to centercity@centercityresidents.org and put my name in the email.