



DONATION GUIDE

WHY TO DONATE

The Idea Store is a nonprofit organization that fosters creativity, environmental stewardship, education, and community through reuse. Your donations keep literally tons of materials out of the waste stream each year and place them into the hands of families, artists, teachers, students, and community members. Plus, your donation is tax-deductible.

WHAT TO DONATE

Arts & Crafts

- Art paints (no house paint or spray paint)
- Paintbrushes
- Kids' craft items (pompoms, foam, googly eyes)
- Pens, pencils, markers, pastels
- Canvases, sketchbooks, paper pads
- Clay, sculpture tools
- Scrapbooking materials, rubber stamps
- Photos, slides, negatives
- Picture frames (no loose glass) and framing hardware
- Glue guns and sticks
- Easels, drawing boards
- Mat, poster, sign board, foamcore, pre-cut mats
- Posters and prints

Fabric & Yarn

- Fabric, ¼ yard pieces or larger
- Yarn
- Needlework, knitting, sewing, quilting tools and notions
- Working sewing machines
- Buttons
- Elastic, Velcro, hem tape
- Needlework kits
- Sewing patterns, uncut
- Knitting and needlework patterns (no photocopies)
- Working sewing machines and parts
- Leather pieces
- Ribbon, trim, rickrack, bias tape

Metal

- Keys, locks, keychains
- Small machinery parts, gears
- Sheet metal pieces
- Unused foil trays
- Interesting metal shapes (no rusty or sharp pieces)

Paper Goods

- Stationery, envelopes, greeting cards
- Postcards, postage stamps
- Ephemera
- Maps
- Gift wrap and bags
- Office paper, unused
- Construction and art paper

Wood

- Boxes, blocks, dowels, chopsticks, golf tees
- Short (less than 3'), nail-free scrap
- Balsa and basswood, craft shapes, beads
- Driftwood

Home Improvement

- Hardware
- Tile (3" square and smaller)
- Loose architectural samples (all types) and sample books (wallpaper and fabric only)
- Tools
- Toolboxes and storage containers
- Knobs, finials, hooks



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School & Office

- Office supplies (file folders, organizers, staplers)
- School supplies (crayons, notebooks, scissors, folders)
- Lab glass and supplies, magnifiers
- Rubber bands, paper clips, staples, binder clips
- Labels and stickers
- Lanyards and name tags
- Report covers, page protectors
- Sticky notes, notepads
- Tape, glue
- Packing materials (no peanuts)
- Classroom materials and décor (flashcards, bulletin board edgings, manipulatives)
- Retired swag (no T-shirts)

Jewelry & Gifts

- Jewelry and jewelry parts, beads
- Jewelry making tools and supplies
- Vintage and unique items

Toys & Games

- Games and game parts
- Small toys
- Puzzles, complete or incomplete
- Dolls, doll clothes and parts
- Tennis, golf, and other small balls
- Mardi Gras beads and leis

Electronics & Media

- CDs and DVDs
- New cassette tapes
- Vinyl records
- Floppy disks
- Computer parts and keyboards (no monitors or whole computers)
- Cords and cables
- Analog equipment: record players, typewriters, phones, etc.
- Cameras and photography equipment

Books & Magazines

- Art, craft, science, and nature books and magazines
- Atlases
- Vintage picture books
- Vintage magazines
- National Geographics (pre-1980)
- Comic books

Floral & Natural

- Artificial flowers and greenery
- Floral tape, foam, wire
- Feathers
- Sap-free pine cones
- Seashells, other ocean artifacts
- Rocks and gems

Containers

- Baskets, tins, film canisters and vials
- Tins
- Small boxes (jewelry, gift, phone boxes)
- Clean, label-free glass jars (no peanut butter or salsa/pickle jars)
- Small vases and decorative containers

Other Items

- Spools and cones
- Cardboard tubes
- Clean plastic or metal bottle caps
- Wine corks, rubber stoppers
- Award medals, ribbons, trophies

Items for Store Use

- Clean shopping bags
- Scotch tape and double-sided tape
- Paper towels
- White printer paper and cardstock
- Natural cleaning supplies (no bleach please!)
- Unopened, unexpired, individually wrapped candy (to feed hungry volunteers)
- Monetary donations



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1. The Idea Store accepts donations during our open hours on Tuesday-Saturday. To give our team time to process donations, we don't accept donations on Sundays. If you have a large donation (more than one or two boxes), please call us in advance at (217) 352-7878.
2. For the easiest donation experience, drive to the west side of the building and park near the double blue doors. A staff member or volunteer will come out to help you. If you are on foot or have a small donation, just bring it to the register and a staff member will assist you.
3. We review the contents of all donations before accepting them. This process goes very quickly if you use bags, containers, or clips to organize your donation by category!
4. We are a tiny nonprofit with space constraints, so sometimes we may need to ask you to hold your donation until we have room to accept it. We appreciate your patience!

If you're unsure about an item, please ask the following questions:

- Is it clean? Is it smelly or moldy, or has it been stored outside?
- Is it safe? Does it contain toxic materials (e.g., mercury thermometers) or have sharp edges?
- Would it be more appropriate for another thrift or reuse outlet (e.g., clothing, furniture, building materials)?
- Is it a personal care or used medical item?
- Is it culturally or racially insensitive?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, please don't donate your item to the store! We can offer ideas for other outlets for donation or disposal on request. If you're still not sure, please give the store a call.

WHAT NOT TO DONATE

- Clothing or clothing scraps
- Furniture
- House paint
- Food or food containers (with exceptions listed above)
- Stuffed toys or any toys larger than 2x2"
- Used cassette tapes or any VHS tapes
- Aerosols (spray paint, spray adhesive, etc.)
- Household recyclables (cans, bottles, junk mail, etc.)

THANK YOU!!!

125 Lincoln Square | Urbana, IL | (217) 352-7878
the-idea-store.org