

How to Set Up and Manage a Gear Exchange Program



1. Define Your Program's Purpose

- Determine if the exchange is for **short-term rentals** (e.g., weekend trips) or **long-term lending**.
- Establish who can participate (e.g., students, faculty, staff).
- Set goals—support outdoor access, sustainability, affordability, etc.

2. Build Your Gear Inventory

- **Start small** with essential items (e.g., tents, backpacks, sleeping bags).
- **Source donations** from outdoor retailers, alumni, or student organizations.
- **Seek funding** from campus sustainability programs, student government, or grants.

3. Create a Checkout & Return System

- Use an **online reservation system** (Google Forms, library software, or a custom database).
- Assign **gear IDs** to track each item.
- Set **rental periods** (e.g., 3–7 days) and **late return policies**.

4. Establish Rules & Liability Policies

- Require participants to **sign a waiver** covering damage, loss, and safety.
- Offer a **gear care guide** to educate users on proper handling.
- Decide on **repair vs. replacement policies**—charge fees or rely on donations?

5. Manage Inventory & Maintenance

- Designate a **storage space** with proper organization (shelves, labels).
- Schedule **gear inspections** after each return for damage and cleanliness.
- Create a **cleaning & repair plan** (student workers, volunteers, or vendor support).

6. Promote & Engage the Community

- Advertise through **social media, flyers, and student newsletters**.
- Host **gear use workshops** to educate new users.
- Partner with **outdoor clubs** or recreation departments for outreach.

7. Seek Feedback & Improve

- Survey users to learn what gear is most needed.
- Adapt policies based on usage trends and community input.
- Consider a **membership model** or **volunteer incentives** for sustainability.

For more resources, reach out to other universities with similar programs or outdoor gear libraries.

Need help getting started? Feel free to reach out to Field Inclusive for more insights!

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