

The Fine Print

Buy Nothing Project Global Standard Rules

THE BUY NOTHING PROJECT is an international network of local gift economy Buy Nothing groups. This movement is supported by freely-offered training, volunteer mentors, and a library of public copyright resources available to everyone around the world. This document is one of these resources, and it's meant to be used by Buy Nothing groups on any online platform as well as for offline groups.

The Buy Nothing Project Global Standard Rules are the tools available to anyone around the world interested in building a Buy Nothing group. The majority of our Global Standard Documents carry a public copyright from Creative Commons. This public copyright gives people the legal right to use the Global Standard Documents as-is, or to make edits. Groups using Global Standard Documents without alterations follow the rules listed below.

The Buy Nothing Project movement also includes local groups where local group leaders have made changes to create customized Local Variations of the Global Standard Rules and Documents to better meet the needs of their community, or to grow the sort of gift economy they want to lead.

Below, you'll find the Global Standard Rules, or "Fine Print". Please note that your group may have a modified version of these rules:

Criteria for Membership

By joining a Buy Nothing Group, you agree to participate in this Project at your own risk.

Adults Only | Give Where You Live | Join Only One Group

You further confirm that you are an adult, living within the boundaries of the group, and that you do not belong to any other groups within the Buy Nothing network.

Standards for Posts & Comments Outline:

These are the types of posts that belong in the groups:

- Offers of any goods or service you'd like to share, loan, or give away.
- Requests for services or any goods you'd like to borrow or keep.
- Gratitude posts! Gratitude is key; it's what fuels the magic.

Aside from goods and services, there are a few other types of gifts that fit into our mission:

- Gifts of self.
- Gifts of talent.
- Gifts of time.

Finally, in addition to gifts, requests, and expressions of gratitude, we allow discussions sparked by those gives, asks and gratitude as well as discussions about a gift economy mindset and the group in general, even if they are uncomfortable conversations.

Rules for Participation Outline:

- Keep it legal
- Show your humanity
- Build trust
- Give freely
- Participate as yourself
- Give from your own abundance
- We Are A Gift Economy (no buying/selling/trading)
- Ask and give creatively
- The Buy Nothing Project Mission
- All members participate at their own risk

Additional Suggestions for Creating Successful Posts

Here are a few suggestions for crafting your posts and comments:

These are not Rules, so they are not grounds for removing a member, but are helpful suggestions for stewarding an authentic Buy Nothing Project gift economy.

- Communicate clearly.
- Full disclosure.
- Practice patience.
- Be yourself.

By joining a group within the Buy Nothing Project, you agree to abide by our Mission and Rules as they are outlined above and detailed below. Every group within the Buy Nothing Project network is subject to the same rules and policies, regardless of location or size. All Rules and Standards are subject to change.

More Details about our Fine Print

Keep reading to learn more about each of our rules in greater detail.

Criteria for Membership

- Join only one hyper-local Buy Nothing Project group
- Give Where You Live
- The groups are open only to adults
- All members participate at their own risk

By joining a Buy Nothing Group, you agree to participate in this Project at your own risk. You further confirm that you are an adult, living within the boundaries of that group, that you do not belong to any other groups within the Buy Nothing network. You will be asked to confirm this information via Private Message.

You may not join the groups using a business profile or using your business location. Groups in the Buy Nothing Project network are for individuals only, and not businesses.

If we discover that you have knowingly joined multiple groups, that you have moved or live outside of the boundaries of the group, or that you do not meet the criteria for “adult,” you may be removed from the group.

Further grounds for removal are described in this document, including but not limited to:

- Posting spam, advertising/marketing, or items for rent, sale, barter, or trade
- Joining any group with a fraudulent account(s) or with the purpose to defraud others
- Hate speech, cruelty, or threats towards or between group members
- Dishonesty or obtaining items under false pretenses in order to sell said items without disclosing that intention
- Repeated instances of disregard for the rules or principles
- Blocking or refusing to communicate with a group leader
- Repeated complaints about the group or rules
- Statements that make it clear to the group and its leaders that you do not intend to build trust or participate in line with the mission and rules.
- Using the group as a platform for promoting any personal agenda that doesn't meet the mission or rules of the Buy Nothing Project.

Standards for Posts

These are the types of posts that belong in the groups:

- Offers of any goods or services you'd like to share, loan, or give away.
- Requests for any goods or services you'd like to share, borrow, or keep.
- Gratitude posts! Gratitude is key, it's what fuels the magic.

Aside from goods and services, there are a few other types of gifts that fit into our mission:

- Gifts of self: A Gift of Self is something that one member can do for another. It could be an evening of babysitting, a ride for an errand, help in the garden, a request for a spiritual act like prayer or meditation, or anything else that one neighbor might do for another neighbor.

- Gifts of talent: A Gift of Talent is anything that one member can teach another. Examples include: cooking or canning classes, computer lessons, tutoring or anything else that you would like to learn or teach.
- Gifts of time: A Gift of time refers to offering or asking for someone to spend time with. Examples include: jogging/walking/workout buddies, coffee/tea meet-ups, play dates for kids or pets, organizing an activity for the members of your group. This does not include open invitations to attend events that are also advertised elsewhere and open to the public, unless the recipient will be attending as a guest (or date) of the giver.

We welcome discussions that are sparked by the gives, asks, and gratitude posted in the groups. All of our stuff and gifts of self can be great starting points for building connections between us. Please refer to our “Show your humanity” rule and to the Community Agreement created by the Equity Team to guide your discussions.

We ask that every discussion start naturally in response to a give, and ask, or sharing of gratitude. This group isn’t a great place for personal status updates, but the good news is that members can always befriend each other online or in-person for personal discussions.

We also allow questions and discussions about the Buy Nothing Project, how to further the Buy Nothing Project mission to build inclusive and equitable gift economies, the platforms groups use, and gift economy culture, including links to relevant articles and information.

We welcome all perspectives about Buy Nothing groups. Discussions about improving the gift economy groups can be uncomfortable for some, and may include posts that are angry (including the use of profanity that isn’t directed at other people) or otherwise emotional, and that may mention other members by name or situation. These posts cannot use threats or hate speech, and are welcome provided that they follow the Community Agreement.

Rules for Participation

Keep it Legal:

- Don’t offer or request anything illegal. Follow all national, regional, and local laws, as well as Facebook’s [Community Standards](#)

- While we do not allow buying, selling, or trading in the groups, we consider ourselves bound by Facebook's definition of [Regulated Goods](#), as well as Facebook's definition of "Firearm". For more information about this rule, please see our Frequently Asked Questions file.
- The Buy Nothing Project also prohibits giving or asking for items that endorse or oppose any current political party, candidate, or ballot option. The Buy Nothing Project does allow neighbors to request, give, and receive items (example: signs, banners), and supplies to create these items, in support of social movements and events (example: Black Lives Matter, Pride parades, memorial vigils).

Show your humanity:

Remember that every person participating in your group is a real life neighbor of yours. Each person here is of equal importance to this gift economy. Cruelty, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated in the groups. All members, including volunteers, will abide by the Community Agreement.

Each group is open to every adult who lives in that group's boundaries, as set by each group's local volunteer(s). The Buy Nothing Project welcomes all people, regardless of race, ancestry, national origin, economic status, ability/disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, religion, philosophy, politics, beliefs or values. As such, the groups are diverse and allow us all to experience what it's like to give, receive, and share with people who may not experience the world as we do.

The Buy Nothing Project welcomes posts and comments that discuss the impact of others' actions and words within each group's content. Each participant is fully responsible for what they post and what they delete. Each participant is empowered to make their own choices here, being mindful that being a member of this community requires communication that doesn't include such things as personal insults, slurs, or anything that qualifies as hate speech.

We are an inclusive, equitable movement, not open to active haters. We encourage everyone to report accounts that are responsible for hate speech and hateful action directly to Facebook, so that this platform and this group are safer for all of us.

(very special thanks to the Equity Team for their labor and edits to this Show your humanity section)

- **Build Trust:**

Trust is the foundation of this gift economy. Act with honesty and empathy, using each interaction to build community. Stealing is prohibited. Don't pressure others via private message.

Do not take anything from your neighbor's property without specific permission. Only send a private message to another group member when they've asked you to do that; if you want people to reach you via private message, be sure to let them know. Remember that gifting in the Buy Nothing Project is always at the discretion of the Giver.

Please don't send unsolicited private messages to your fellow group members. If someone asks to be contacted by private message, then it's obviously fine to send a PM; otherwise, keep your comments to posts in the group. On the flip side, please have patience with people whose accounts are hacked by games and other apps, sending messages out on their behalf.

Do not use Buy Nothing groups as a means for collecting personal information about your neighbors, or to recruit people to join your religion, political party/candidate/ballot option, business or other organization. Buy Nothing groups are inclusive and equitable at their core. All group members should be respected as equals, just as they are.

Remember that integrity, honesty and trust are required for your gift economy to flourish and for human-centered connections to develop.

- **Give Freely:**

We do not permit trading, bartering, buying or selling within the groups. Keep in mind that all gifts must be given without any strings attached, and without any expectation of reward other than the joy of giving. Also remember that there is no limit to gifting or receiving in the groups.

- **Participate as yourself:**

You must use your **personal** Facebook account, and not an account with a business name.

You may share or request goods or services from or for your business, school, charity or other organization, as long as those offers or requests are not presented as a way of marketing, advertising, recruiting, promoting or otherwise “spreading the word” about your business or organization.

Pursuant to our other rules, you may only join one group, and it must be the group where you live – not where you work, where you volunteer, where your place of worship is located or where you “hang out” most often. You may not join a group in a location other than your own on behalf of a family member or friend. Please consider helping them set up a Facebook account of their own in order to participate.

- **Give From Your Own Abundance:**

It can be difficult to see a request that you can’t meet with a gift of your own. In these cases, it’s so tempting to offer advice about where else people can go to find what they’re looking for. We ask you not to do this. If you don’t have what someone wants or needs, you can still help them by adding an encouraging comment such as, “I’m so sorry I don’t have what you’re asking for! I’ll be on the lookout.”

Please do not tell people where they can purchase an item, pay for a service, or receive free assistance from people who aren’t members of your group. If you know of a free assistance program or free community resource that would be helpful to your group, we encourage you to check in with this group’s admins about the creation of a Community Resource document in this group’s Files.

The Buy Nothing Project welcomes the creation of a Community Resources file in this Buy Nothing group to list and link to all of the community resources that group members may find useful. The co-founders of the Buy Nothing Project believe that creating one document as a go-to resource for these links can help the group by providing permanent access, these resources in a way that doesn’t take up space in the daily feed. This gift economy was set up as an experiment to see just how many of the community’s needs can be met right here in the group. The creation of a Community Resources document is optional; check with this group’s admin about their approach to this.

We also ask that you not offer unsolicited advice as a standalone post. If you do have wisdom or advice to share, you can post to explain what sort of advice you'd like to offer, so people can reply to request this and you can arrange to an offer to connect in person or elsewhere (via email, text, or phone, for instance) so that you can pass along your knowledge this way, as a gift of self to the people in your group who reply to request it.

Respecting this rule to Give from Your Own Abundance allows the group to focus on what this gift economy is all about: giving, receiving, and sharing with each other, from our own abundance of stuff, skills, and generosity.

- **We Are a Gift Economy (no buying/selling/trading):**

This is not the place to refer people to ways to meet their needs or desires through the market economy. This means the following things are not allowed here: marketing or advertising; offers of items for sale, trade or rent; requests for items you'd like to buy or rent; items you wish to barter, trade or exchange; real estate posts; other posts encouraging people to buy, sell, or trade items or services elsewhere. Ask your local group Administrator for your group's policy on coupons and gift cards.

- **Ask and give creatively:**

Our focus is on freely given goods and services. This does not include requests or offers for monetary assistance, including requests for loans, cash or donations (for yourself or anyone else), or posts looking for or offering paid employment.

Instead of asking for the money to buy what you need, simply ask for what you need.

Instead of offering a monetary donation, offer something that might help your neighbor in some other way.

- **Remember Our Mission:**

We offer people a way to give and receive, share, lend, and express gratitude through a worldwide network of hyper-local gift economies in which the true

wealth is the web of connections formed between people who are real-life neighbors.

Please read through The Fine Print carefully before posting.

Post anything you'd like to give away, lend, or share among neighbors. Ask for anything you'd like to receive for free or borrow. Express gratitude whenever you feel grateful. Aside from goods and services, we also encourage members to request gifts of self, talent and time. We allow discussions sparked by those gives, asks and gratitude as well as discussions about a gift economy mindset, living a Buy Nothing lifestyle, and the group in general.

Find somewhere else for personal status updates; promotion of current political parties, candidates or ballot options; religious conversion efforts; posts offering unsolicited advice; outside-of-this-group community announcements, discussions, or invitations to public events; lost and found posts; and posts or comments that refer people to outside resources (even charitable ones) to fulfill their requests (check with your admin to see if your group has a Community Resources document in the Files for this sort of guidance).

All members participate at their own risk:

The Buy Nothing Project, Founders and Administrators accept no responsibility for any loss, damage, or legal liability that may arise from a member's participation in the groups.

Additional Suggestions for Creating Successful Posts

Here are some suggestions for crafting your posts and comments. These are not hard-and-fast rules, but are suggestions and requests by the Buy Nothing Project, based on our experiences, and our mission to build and foster healthy hyperlocal gift-economies.

Full Disclosure

Remember: We all participate in this project at our own risk. If you are sensitive to certain allergens, or you are concerned about the condition of an item, please ask the giver about those conditions.

A giver is not required to take back an item if it does not meet a recipient's expectations. Nor are recipients required to accept an item if, upon seeing it in person and before taking it home, they realize it won't work for them. If you find that a gift won't work for you, just be honest and let the giver know.

See our FAQ for more about what to do if you receive an item in disrepair.

We don't limit what happens to the things given here, we just ask for full disclosure so that everyone can give as they choose. When requesting an item, let your neighbors know if you are requesting the item on behalf of someone other than yourself or your own household, or if you are planning to sell the item or perhaps donate it to a charitable cause.

See our FAQ for more information about Reselling items

It is very helpful to everyone if you take a moment to describe the item. If it is a cloth item, be sure to mention whether it's been exposed to potential allergens. If there is any damage, be sure to describe it as well. If it has special sentimental value, we'd like to hear that too!

Communicate clearly

Communicate in the groups the way you would speak with a neighbor in person.

Please use full sentences, not impersonal abbreviations or one-word comments such as "ISO" or "INO," "WANT" "Next" or "Bump."

When gifting a tangible item in the Buy Nothing Project, including a photo with your post is a great way to show your neighbors your gift. We ask that you use only one photo in your post, with any additional photos added in the comments. If you are unable to post a photo, consider looking your item up on the internet and providing a screenshot.

As a last resort, you may include a link to that item if it will help you in your gifting. When posting a link, please keep all of our other rules and suggestions in mind.

Rather than cross-posting in other groups, we would love for you to commit to your Buy Nothing community and just post in your Buy Nothing group. But if items are cross-posted elsewhere, let your neighbors know by indicating this in your post.

When responding to an offer, please be sure that you communicate clearly about your ability to pick up the item in a timely manner. Givers are not expected to hold onto items for a recipient for any longer than is convenient, but we do hope that all members will do what they can to work out any scheduling mishaps.

Please do not feel the need to tell the group how much the item cost, how much it is worth, or how much it could be sold for. We view all gifts as equal, and so the monetary value is irrelevant.

Practice patience

Add a comment to an offer if you'd like to receive that item. Wait for the poster to comment back to you before sending a private message.

Let your post "simmer" for a bit before choosing a recipient, whenever you can. If you need an item gone right away, make a note of that in your post.

It may take a while for you to get used to this new way of thinking. Be patient with yourself and your neighbors.

Need something gone quickly? If you have a deadline for your item, please mention that in your posts. The more details you include, the less likely you are to have miscommunications.

If you don't have time to meet with your neighbors, and you need something gone right away, you can still participate. Let your neighbors know if you've put something out on the curb as a free offering, or if you see something in your neighborhood that one of your neighbors might be able to use.

Please communicate details clearly so everyone understands there's no guarantee the item will be for them.

You may consider providing the location of the items via Private Message, or tucked into the comments to your post, to preserve your privacy.

Not all gifts in the groups will find a home, and not all requests can be filled, but don't give up! Wait a while, and then offer or ask again, or "bump" your post by commenting to let your neighbors know that the item is still available or you are still looking. New members are added every day, and a new person may have just what you are looking for.

Once an item has been gifted, members are free to edit their posts to let people know. though this is not required. However, we ask that you do not delete your posts. Our posts become our shared narrative, and it helps in many ways to have a written, public history of what has happened between people here.

Please resist the urge to repeatedly "bump" your post. If no one has commented on your post, give it some time before bumping or reposting.

Be yourself

The goal is to grow a web of interdependence between real-life neighbors through giving, receiving, and sharing. Get to know your neighbors. Let us get to know you. We are all a part of this amazing experiment together!

While we don't want the groups to turn into neighborhood chat groups or discussion forums, we do want members to be friendly and communicative toward one another, share a little bit about themselves and why they might want a particular item, or a personal story about an item they are giving away. We also welcome comments like these:

- What a beautiful dresser! (just a comment; we have plenty!)
- Those are adorable shoes! (so sad they aren't in my size!)
- This is so generous of you! What a great neighbor!
- I think Mary posted what you are looking for just a few days ago!

- I'm out of town right now but I think I have some of these in my cupboard. Could you message me on Tuesday if you haven't already found some by then?
- I don't have what you are asking for, but I may have some information for you. May I send you a message? (Remember – do not send messages without permission)

As long as your comments relate to the post and don't violate any other rules, please share them. This sort of comment thread helps neighbors connect, offer support and encouragement, and get to know each other better.

Buy Nothing Project Policies

- Buy Nothing Project Administrators are volunteer stewards of this international project in their local area. All Buy Nothing Project Administrators agree to uphold, through example and explanation, the Mission of the Buy Nothing Project. Administrators should not be expected to mediate between members, resolve legal matters or negotiate when things don't go as planned. As all members are adults, we expect everyone to handle these matters for themselves. We ask that members handle these issues to the best of their ability and with respect.
- The Buy Nothing Project, Founders and Administrators accept no responsibility for any loss, damage, or legal liability that may arise from a member's participation in the groups. **All members participate at their own risk.**
- Every group within the Buy Nothing Project network is subject to the same rules and policies, regardless of location or size. The one exception to this statement is with regard to coupons and gift cards. Please ask your local Buy Nothing Project Admin about your group's policy on coupons and gift cards. All Rules and fds are subject to change.
- Local Admins reserve the right to delete anything that we feel doesn't belong in the groups, usually without notice, or to remove members who act in a way that is not in accordance with the Rules, Standards or Principles.
- The goal of the Buy Nothing Project is to create and nourish a network of hyper-local gift economies in which the true wealth is the web of connections

formed between people who are real-life neighbors. To achieve this goal, Local Admins will have the option, when a group has out-grown its current incarnation, to transform it into smaller groups devoted to more hyper-local neighborhood regions. We call this process “Sprouting”.

Other Useful Tips!

- To find the right group for you, visit our Find-Your-Group page and visit the group page on Facebook. If there’s no Buy Nothing group in your home community and you’re willing to be a local Administrator for the group, contact your Administrator to learn how to start your own Buy Nothing Project group.
- To join your local group, click “Join”, and you will see 3 questions that we ask all members to verify their eligibility for the group. If you do not see those questions, please send a message to the local Administrator listed in the group description. When the Administrator returns your message, it may be filtered by Facebook. Be sure to check your “message requests” folder for a message!
- If you have a question – ASK! Our Administrators are available to answer your questions, help you find the right group, or provide clarification whenever possible.
- Are you moving? Don’t forget, the Buy Nothing Project has groups all over the world! Every group has the same rules. All groups have a “One Group” policy and a “Give Where You Live” rule. If you are moving out of the neighborhood, admins would be happy to help you find your new group! Remember to remove yourself from your old group when you go, or ask an admin to remove you. This will assist us in adding you to your new group as soon as we get your request.
- Want to help? Our Local Administrators are essential to the success of this project. Local Administrators are supported by and collaborate with our vast network of Administrators throughout the world, including Founders, Global Admin Team, Regional Administrators and co-admins. If you have a spare hour or two each week and would like to help out with this amazing experiment, send a message to your Local or Regional Administrator and let us know!

- Remember, this project is run entirely by volunteers. We all have busy lives, and sometimes things slip past us! You can help out your neighbors by commenting on their posts, encouraging their gifting, and offering your knowledge and experience of our rules, standards and mission. These comments should be respectful and posted in the group where all members can see and learn from them. We appreciate your help!
- For more, be sure to check out our Frequently Asked Questions file.

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