



## ***SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS***

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service  
scfcl website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

### **Leader Training Guide**

#### **Turning Clutter into Cash**

##### **Objectives:**

- Participants will be able to learn how to deal with clutter.
- Identify ways to make money from clutter.
- Motivate participants to get of their clutter and make money from items that they have accumulated.

##### **Lesson Overview/Introduction:**

The average household size has declined to 2.61 persons while the average home has doubled in size since the 1950's to 2,250 square feet. However, people are still having problems with clutter and how to deal with the things they have accumulated.

American families spend \$1,700 on clothes and 1.2 trillion annually on nonessential goods, in other words, items they do not need. The average woman owns 30 outfits, in 1930, that figure was nine. Shopping malls outnumber high schools and 93 percent of teenage girls rank shopping as their favorite pastime. Most Americans use 20 percent of what they own. The other 80 percent is made up of items they do not use, feel they should use or think they might use one day.

##### **Lesson:**

**Ask:** What is clutter? (*Allow time for answers*)

According to Webster's Dictionary, clutter is defined as a number of things scattered in disorder; jumble. Another definition might be "anything you don't need or use that takes up your time, energy or space, and destroys your serenity. It can be clothes, shoes, papers (mail, bills, etc.), books, magazines, toys, craft items, tools, furniture, and hardware. It can also be things that people buy, receive or collect over the years.

**Ask:** How can clutter become a problem?

Clutter can cause safety issues when someone trips on clutter that is left on the floor or when flammable items are stacked next to a heating unit that may be a fire hazard. It can also make it hard for you to keep areas clean and can become a place for rodents and dirt to hide.

**Ask:** Do you want to turn your clutter into cash?

The biggest challenge people have when organizing their home is figuring out what to do with those unwanted items that are still in good shape. There are several ways you can make some money and de-clutter your home!

### **Decluttering Your Home:**

- De-clutter one room at a time. Spend at least 15 minutes a day in the same room and do not move to the next room until you have finished in the room that you started.
- Take four boxes with you when you are decluttering each room. Label each box:
  - Toss
  - Giveaway
  - Keep
  - Sell
- Start at the corner next to the door and move your way around the room. Clear countertops, books shelves, and the floor. Once you have finished, move onto the cupboards, drawers, closets.

### **Ways to Turn Clutter into Cash:**

**Yard Sales and Flea Markets:** Yard sales and flea markets are great ways to get rid of a lot of items quickly. They are also great ways to sell housewares, clothing (especially children clothes), toys, books and games. Yard sale and flea market shoppers are usually bargain hunters, therefore, do not expect to make a lot of money.

- **Signs:** To attract customers to your yard sale, make your signs visible and be creative. Use bright colors and consider adding balloons the day of your sale.
- **Time:** Start your yard sale early because bargain hunters tend to be early risers. Try marking everything down to half-price during the last hour.
- **Pricing:** To sell items quickly, price all of your items before the sale. It can become time consuming putting a price tag on every item, so try grouping items together. Set up tables labeled \$1.00, \$5.00, \$10.00, etc. and make sure you have a lot of change. Be willing to negotiate because people love a good deal. Use a cross-bag or fanny pack instead of a moneybox to store change and payments because locked moneyboxes can be stolen.
- **Electricity:** Have extension cords on hand so customers can test appliances. If it works, they will probably buy it.
- **Unsold Items:** After the sale, have a plan for getting rid of leftover. Consider taking them to the nearest donation spot as soon as the sale is over.

**Consignment Shops:** A consignment shop is another option for receiving money for items you no longer need especially slightly worn designer clothes, shoes, children clothes, sports equipment, housewares and toys. Some shops will give you a store credit or a percentage of the items sold. Make sure you check references for any business before you decide to use their services. You may also want to check with the Better Business Bureau at <http://search.bbb.org>.

**Classified Advertisement:** Use your classified ad section in your local newspaper to sell furniture and other items that cost too much to ship.

**Pawn Shops:** They can be a good option for specific things you may want to sell (like guitars) so you should do a bit of research to find out what is successful through these stores in your area. Selling to a pawn shop may work well since they can often take a wide variety of things. When they resell your item, you might not get top dollar but they will take the item off your hands immediately and you can get paid at the time of drop off.

**Online Websites:** If you don't want to take your items to different locations to get rid of them, consider selling them on the internet at one of the following sites:

- **Facebook:** If you don't feel comfortable selling to a complete stranger, you might want to list your items for sale on your personal Facebook page. The bonus of using this social media network to sell is that it is free to list your items and you will be dealing with people you know.
  - **Yardsellr.com** This site uses your social networks to help you sell your items. You can log in using your Facebook account to let your friends see what you are selling in your online yard sale. Payments to you will be made via check or funds can be transferred to your PayPal account. They do not charge a fee to sell, but they do markup your asking price.
- **Amazon:** This is a popular place to sell used items (books, movies, music, etc.) and it makes the selling process easier and more secure. You can send the item to the Amazon Warehouse and let them ship it to the person that purchased it. Books can also be sold at [SellBackYourBooks.com](http://SellBackYourBooks.com) or [Cash4Books.net](http://Cash4Books.net). To sell your books on these websites, you will need the ISBN number, which is usually found on the back of the book or inside on the copyright page. When an item is sold, payments are made via check or funds can be transferred to your PayPal account or an account of your choosing.
- **Electronics:** To sell electronics, try Best Buy's Trade-In Program. They accept a wide range of items. Send them information about your item and they will give you an estimate of the value. If you are happy with that amount, you can send or take the item to the store and receive a check or gift card.

## **Lesson Summary:**

Whether you decide to sell or donate, you will unclutter, free up some much needed space, and do something good for yourself. The challenge is to take stock of what you have, to simplify, and downsize to give yourself peace of mind and to leave a clutter free legacy to your families.

## **Suggested Activities:**

- Have participants make creative yard sale sign.
- Have members share one thing they plan to do to take control of their clutter.
- Write the lesson overview facts on index cards and distribute them to members. Ask them to read aloud.

## **Suggested Materials:**

- Cardboard boxes labeled toss, keep, giveaway and sell.
- Poster board, colorful markers, stickers.

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## **Sources/References:**

De-Clutter Your Life, Ohio State University, 2007

11 Best Places to Sell Your Clutter for Cash, <http://www.popsugar.com/smart-living/Where-Sell-Used-Goods-28874509>