

OPEN

Prevention. Treatment. Recovery.

EVENT GUIDE

MEDICATION TAKE BACK DAY

An organizational and planning resource for
hosting a successful event.



MESSAGE FROM OPEN

Take Back Events help communities to remove the risk of unused medications.

Use this guide and register with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to host a successful Take Back Event. OPEN is excited to support you through guidance in planning an event; we've helped over 50 organizations in Michigan host their own events! We offer educational resources - including a newly updated Take Back Event process, office hours (during the month prior to events) for direct connection with our expert coordinator. Visit our Take Back Event website <https://michigan-open.org/programs/take-back-events/> for upcoming deadlines, office hours schedule, and links to free resources.

Use <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday#collection-locator> to find an event.



We hope those events increase public awareness about the risks of keeping unused medications.

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MEDICATION TAKE BACK DAY

WHAT IS A TAKE BACK DAY?

Take Back Day is a coordinated day across the US where the DEA asks law enforcement agencies to partner with local communities to collect unneeded medications (pills, tablets, capsules) and return them to the DEA for destruction. Read more about DEA's Take Back Day. To find a take back event near you, use the [DEA's Collection Site Locator](#). Please check back regularly, as events are continually added.



WHY HOST AN EVENT?

Prevention is key. To turn the tide of the opioid epidemic, we need to prevent substance misuse before it begins. Creating safe and convenient opportunities for community members to dispose of their unused and leftover medications is essential. These events also serve as an opportunity to educate community members on how to safely store medications at home and how to safely dispose of medications year-round.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

OPEN

OPEN offers educational resources that are free to download and use from our website. Possible resources for your event include:

- [OPEN Take Back Event resource folder](#)
- [Opioids Safe Storage and Disposal brochure](#)
- [Sharps and Liquids Safe Disposal brochure](#)

OPEN offers guidance for hosting events through the [Take Back Event program](#) webpage [QR code] and direct connections with our experienced coordinators. Attend an office hour for expert guidance in planning and recommendations.



TAKE BACK
EVENT
PROGRAM

DEA

All events must be registered through the DEA. Find a registered event near you using the: [DEA Take Back Day Site Locator](#).

After registration, you can request medication disposal boxes to be used at your event. The DEA has additional templates and resources available in the Partnership Toolbox on their website:

<https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>.

PLANNING ROADMAP

1 Partner with Law Enforcement

2 Form Your Team

3 Select a Location

4 Register with the DEA

5 Gather Supplies

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PARTNER WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Take Back Events are hosted in partnership with local law enforcement and the DEA. Contact law enforcement early and work closely with them. A law enforcement officer is required to register an event.

- One officer is required, Two are recommended
- Law enforcement takes custody of all medications collected at the event



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STEP 2: FORM YOUR TEAM

It's important to get the whole community involved! Begin by forming a team of volunteers and law enforcement. Your team will be critical to spreading the word and ensuring a smooth event.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVENT ORGANIZER:

- Create and review budget
- Connect with law enforcement and other partners
- Recruit volunteers and delegate tasks
- Create and distribute promotional and educational material

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS:

- Advertise for the event (ex: distributing flyers)
- Contribute to other tasks (ex: ordering food, picking up brochures)
- Set up and clean the day of the event
- Run workstations
- Direct traffic, greet participants, and answer questions

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- Maintain control and custody of collected substances
- Dispose/destroy controlled substances in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) requires one law enforcement officer present, unless the event uses a permanent disposal box
- OPEN recommends the presence of at least two officers

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STEP 3: SELECT A LOCATION

The venue you choose is important to make sure your community can get to the event. Make sure that law enforcement and the property manager approve of hosting the event at the desired location.

Things to consider when choosing a venue:

- Easy entrances and exits for participant safety
- Well known or easy to find location
- Space to set up tent (if outdoors) and/or tables
- Sufficient parking and accessible via public transportation
- Access to restrooms
- Safe perimeter around event
- Consider tents, tables, chairs

Venue suggestions:

- Parking lots
- Places of worship
- Pharmacies
- Hospitals
- Schools



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STEP 4: REGISTER WITH THE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Every Take Back Event must be registered through the DEA. The point of contact for events in Michigan is Detroit.Take.Back@dea.gov. The DEA will assist you with providing disposal boxes for your event and posters to advertise your event.

Contact the DEA point of contact (POC) for your state listed here: https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/poc.html. Your POC will let you know how to register your event with the DEA.

In Michigan, sites must register for each event hosted.



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STEP 5: GATHER SUPPLIES

- **General Supplies**
 - Scissors
 - Shipping/packing tape (to secure table cloths)
 - Zip ties or rope (to hang banners)
 - Waste bins and liners
 - Medication disposal box (request through DEA)
- **Workstation Setup**
 - Plastic table cloths
 - Clipboards (for gathering feedback and recording collection numbers)
 - Ink pens
 - King-size black permanent markers (to cross off personal information on pill bottles)
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Quart-size resealable bags (in case participants want to keep their pill bottles)
 - Disinfectant wipes
 - Disposable gloves
 - Paper towels
- **Rental Supplies**
 - Tent with canopy sides (if event is held outside)
 - Folding chairs
 - Banquet table(s) for workstations and shared supplies
- **Optional**
 - Volunteer apparel (t-shirts, hats, pins, or name tags to differentiate volunteers)
 - Food, coffee, or bottled water for volunteers
 - Candy bowl for participants
 - Balloons for decoration and event visibility
 - Container to collect questionnaires (if you are distributing questionnaires to participants)
- **Educational Materials Co-branding with OPEN**
 - You're welcome to download/share any of our resources! We can add your organization's logo to our materials and share the printable file with you. Visit our [co-branding program page](#) to learn more and apply.



FUNDING AN EVENT

The hosting organization and volunteers are responsible for funding the event. If funding is a barrier, OPEN suggests reaching out to organizations in the community for support.

- Businesses may donate printing services, banners, equipment rental, food for volunteers, or office supplies
- Some law enforcement agencies fund their own officers; other agencies will ask your organization to fund labor for the event
- Government grants (local, state, national) may be available
- Try partnering with a large organization (like a university or health system) for funding
- Ask a local business to sponsor your event
- To find volunteers, try asking local college students (especially nursing, pharmacy, medicine, criminal justice students) or volunteer organizations (sororities/fraternities, scouts, church groups)



REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

- Contact them early and work closely with them
- One officer is required, two are recommended
- Law enforcement takes custody of all medications collected at the event
- Cardboard disposal box comes from law enforcement or [Whitney Solutions](#)
- Law enforcement registers event with DEA ([POC list here](#))
- Law enforcement is not needed if meds are being collected using a permanent disposal box
- Contact points with your local law enforcement agency include community engagement officers, community outreach officers, and school resource officers

DEA LICENSE:

- [Code of Federal Regulations for Disposal](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations for Take Back Events](#)
- You do not need to have a DEA license if you have law enforcement at your event
- If you're using a permanent disposal box, you already have a DEA license and do not need law enforcement at your event

*Additional services, such as sharps disposal, may require a DEA license. Check with your law enforcement officer if you wish to offer any additional services.

MEDICATION ACCEPTANCE

The DEA will only collect certain substances at Take Back Events.

ACCEPTED:

- Pills, capsules, and tablets
- Including pet medications, prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and expired medications
- Medication patches
- Any solid medications
- Liquids in original container

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Schedule I drugs and cannabis-based medications
- EpiPens
- Needles, syringes, or lancets
- Inhalers
- Batteries
- Vape pens or electronic devices without removable batteries

COLLECTION DETAILS

- While law enforcement will maintain control and custody of your medication disposal box contents, the hosting organization is responsible for the collection and disposal of any sharps you receive.
- Solid medications, including pills, can be removed from the original container and placed directly into the DEA collection box. Liquid medications should remain in the original containers and be closed tightly to prevent leaking.
- It is highly recommended that you only use collection boxes provided by the DEA to ensure each box is an appropriate size and weight to carry safely.
- If illicit substances, including marijuana or methamphetamine, are surrendered at a take back event, law enforcement should handle such material as abandoned property in accordance with department policy.
- All participants must retain possession of their own medication during the disposal process. Law enforcement personnel should not handle the medications at any time.
- No effort should be made by law enforcement personnel to count, inventory, or log medications.



SAMPLE SCHEDULE



Set Up



**Begin
Collection**



**End
Collection**



**Take
Down**

SAMPLE PLANNING CHECKLIST:

- Contact law enforcement and secure at least one officer for your event
- Find volunteers
- Find a location to host the event and permission from law enforcement and property owner
- Register your event with the DEA
- Advertise event (email, radio, fliers, billboards, social media, word of mouth)
- Design/print yard signs, banners, table cloths, handouts
- Gather required supplies (scale, clear tray, disposal boxes, tables/chairs)
- Gather optional supplies (Deterra bags, naloxone, sharps containers)
- Write down collection amounts the day of the event and any feedback from attendees/volunteers

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.

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This document is not intended to take the place of local, state, or federal laws or guidelines. Information in this guide is subject to change at any time.

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