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For back-to-school shoppers, secondhand offers budget-friendly options

Spending on essential school items is expected to reach the second-highest figure on record, but shoppers can find deals at Goodwill North Central Wisconsin

NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN—Across north central Wisconsin and beyond, back-to-school and back-to-college spending has begun. As of early July, more than half of back-to-school and college shoppers already purchased items for the upcoming school year, according to the [annual survey](#) released earlier this month by the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Prosper Insights & Analytics. The good news is, shoppers have options as they prepare for school to start, including shopping for secondhand items at Goodwill North Central Wisconsin.

“By shopping our stores, families can stay on budget for back-to-school spending and help support individuals who have a goal of building skills that leads to sustained employment and improved financial stability,” Katie Van Gompel, Chief Operating Officer at Goodwill NCW said. “It’s a win-win for our communities.”

Secondhand options offer relief as families with children in elementary through high school anticipate spending an average of \$874.68 on clothing, shoes, school supplies and electronics. This is the second highest amount in the last 17 years of the NRF survey. Additional findings from the survey include:

- The top three categories for college spending include electronics, dorm or apartment furnishings, clothing and accessories.

- K-12 shoppers are budgeting \$309.35 on average for electronics, \$253.29 for clothing and accessories, \$141.62 for school supplies and \$170.43 for shoes.
- College students and their families are expected to spend an average of \$1,364.75 on items for the upcoming school year.

Budget-friendly tips at Goodwill NCW

- New donations are added to the store shelves daily. Shop often. Frequency and quick decision-making can pay off for finding one-of-a-kind treasures.
- Search beyond clothing. Check the aisles for belts, purses, backpacks, dorm-room essentials, shoes, desk décor, blankets and more.
- Donated items with the color tag of the week are 50% off the ticketed price. Shop clearance racks for extra savings.

Tips for shopping secondhand for back-to-school

- Shop for new items with tags. Just because items are at a secondhand store doesn't mean they have been worn or used before.
- If you have a child who goes to day care or elementary school, shop secondhand for items they can leave there, rather than taking items back-and-forth. These include changes of clothing, winter outerwear, extra layers and blankets.
- Find items that are out of season, like fall and winter coats. Families can often find great-quality coats for a fraction of the cost of new outerwear.
- Check out bags. Find inexpensive laptop bags, backpacks and totes for a variety of uses—to hold library books, craft supplies, toys for kids in the car, workout necessities for after school, clothes for sports practices and much more.
- Find name brand options like The North Face, Adidas, Nike, Under Armour and more that are new to you and budget friendly.

One of the best parts for shoppers at Goodwill NCW is they can both stay on-budget and support a life-changing mission. Thanks to revenue generated by shoppers, program participants across north central Wisconsin received nearly 88,300 training hours in Goodwill NCW stores and more than 7,900 hours at community partner locations in 2023.

To find a Goodwill NCW location, visit [Locations | Goodwill NCW](#).

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Goodwill North Central Wisconsin (Goodwill NCW) is a nonprofit organization with a mission of Elevating People by Eliminating Barriers to Employment. We provide pathways to those underserved, underrepresented or disadvantaged who have a goal of building job skills that lead to sustained employment and improved financial stability. We see people for who they are and believe in the power of work, within our retail stores and workplaces throughout our community. We are proud of the life-changing impact we make in our communities and to our planet with the help of our donors and shoppers. Learn more at goodwillncw.org