

## The Wear Movement: New Life for Well Loved Clothing

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In 1994, the city of San Francisco set a goal for itself of zero waste by the year 2020. One of the top three solid waste landfill contributors not yet addressed, is textile waste, contributing 4% or 4500 pounds to landfill every hour (sfenvironment.org). Currently, consumers are asked to dispose of textiles in a clear plastic bag tied up and placed in the recycle collection bin with metal, glass, hard plastic, and clean paper. This collection system does not work. Shirts, pants, blankets and other textile products are put into the recycle bin where they are contaminated as they mix with the liquids left in discarded cans, bottles, and containers. The time is now to, “ shift the perception of clothing from being a disposable item to being a valuable product “(Ellen McCarthur Foundation, 2017).

The Wear Movement©, recipient of a grant from the San Francisco Department of the Environment, was founded in 2018, as a new strategy to cleanly collect post-consumer clothing and other textile products. Post-consumer textiles are to be diverted through a collecting and sorting process designed for highest and best use, rather than gleaned from a mixed recycle bin. This branded, scalable business model is based on a strategy to motivate the consumer to proactively contribute their textile possessions to a collection site before the products become trash. The premise is to develop and implement a model of clean post-consumer textile and clothing collection for scalable sorting, rehabilitating, and distribution to the marketplace for local benefit. The strategy is to focus on a specific category of textile products, such as denim, button up shirts, or blankets, collected in a limited timeframe, at the Wear Movement pop-up shop. The value of The Wear Movement is that new collection guidelines are mandatory to embed a circular rather than linear thought process into the mind of consumers.

The consumers targeted for [The Wear Movement](#) are on a college campus, San Francisco State University, where innovation and creative thought are supported. A team has been recruited to educate, train, motivate, organize and control this business that is creating a new industry for the benefit of the local community. One day each week, students erect a pop up store, in the student union

to collect and sell the clean clothing that students, faculty, staff and administrators contribute. The learning curve for all has been high, as have the rewards. A community request for blankets has supported the notion that new ways of thinking are imperative. With each blanket collected, a note is requested to be written by the donor addressed to the potential new owner to create a personal connection, telling a story of where the blanket has been or why it is being passed along. Findings of The Wear Movement support the need for disrupting the current donation to NGO's system and developing a new collection, sorting and distribution model of textile and clothing products for local benefit.

Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *A new textiles economy: Redesigning fashion's future*,  
(2017, <http://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications>).

San Francisco Department of the Environment. *Recycle Your Clothes, Linens, and Rags*. Retrieved from <https://sfenvironment.org/textiles>