

# BUILD YOUR OWN SIDEWALK SIGN

Tiny WPA has received numerous requests for sidewalk signs. Sometimes, the signs are for businesses. Other times, they are for recreation centers and gardens that simply need passersby to know that they are 'open'. Building Heroes and staff have worked to relentlessly refine the design—eventually developing a sign that is durable, beautiful, easy-to-move, adaptable, and easily changeable for formal or informal messaging.

The straightforward design allows for all kinds of customization—you can paint the frame, add vinyl decals and logos, or create a message board with a dry erase surface. This sidewalk sign is a simple and effective tool for sharing information to neighbors and passersby. The frame is made from sealed or painted poplar and lauan, the hinge is stainless steel, and the dry-erase surface can be cut from reclaimed political signs.

4-6 HOURS

COST \$150-200

Grabbing people's attention and sharing info is necessary for any business or community space. This simple sign can be placed on the sidewalk, along a path, or in front of a business to share key information with customers and neighbors.



## WHAT DO YOU NEED?



## MATERIALS

- 2 1 x 4 x 10ft poplar boards
- 2 ¼" x 2ft x 2ft plywood (luan) sheets
- 4 1 ½" wooden cabinet knobs
- 4 #10-24 x 1 ½" combo roundhead screw with nuts
- 1 box of #8 x 2" exterior trim screws (minimum 16 screws)
- 1 box of #8 x ¾" sharp point lath screws (minimum 20 screws)
- 1 box of 1" 18 gauge coated steel brad nails
- 1 12" long cabinet piano hinge with screws
- 1 qt semi-gloss exterior paint w/primer (if using pine or doug fir)
- 1 qt water-based polyurethane
- 3 sheets 100-150 grit sandpaper
- 1 bottle of wood glue
- 1 2ft long nylon paracord
- 2 coroplast signs

## TOOLS

- 1 table saw
- 1 chop saw (also called a miter saw)
- 4 speed clamps
- 1 drill with a driver bit
- 1 18 gauge finish nailer
- 1 ⅝" drill bit
- 1 ¼" drill bit
- 1 orbital sander or sanding block
- 1 tape measure
- 1 speed square
- 1 drop cloth
- 1 paint brush or roller
- 1 paint tray
- 1 safety glasses

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## TIPS!

Here are a couple of tips and things you should consider before you head to the hardware store to purchase materials.

### Material Length

Getting some of your wood cut at the store? We recommend adding at least 3" to the measurement of anything you are having them cut and then make all final cuts on your own.

### Don't Trust the Factory Ends!

The ends of the boards may look straight, but rarely are. They are rough, crooked, and often treated with a waxy coating that won't accept paint. Always cut both ends of your boards to ensure a precise final result.

### Stops and Tools

Stops are great when using the chopsaw. Simply clamp a piece of scrap wood to the table or saw at the length you need to cut, double check the measurement, and start chopping!

You'll make your first tool with your very first cut! Many of our steps will be using the 3/4" thickness of the scrap wood as a quick and easy measuring tool.

### Using a Finish Nailer

A finish nailer is required for installing the ledger strips. If you don't have a nailer available, a hammer and 1" trim nails will also work.

### Pre-Drill All of Your Screw Holes

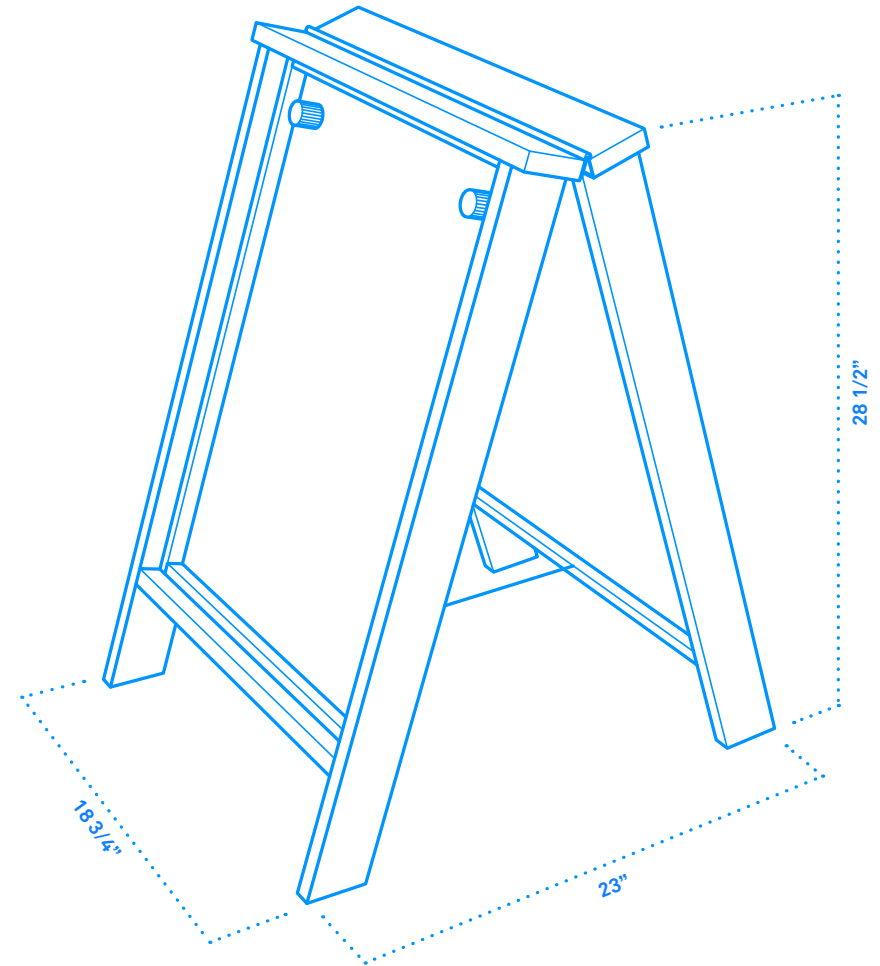
To prevent the wood from splitting, always pre-drill holes for your screws. This creates space and a path for the screw. When pre-drilling, an extra set of hands (and clamps) will help hold everything together.

### Wood Selection

The stock that's available at your local hardware store can vary, but it's worth the time to pick the straightest pieces with the fewest imperfections and knots. Selecting pieces that aren't warped, bowed, or twisted will save time once you start to assemble and increase the longevity of your completed shade structure.

### Gaps Between Boards are Bad!

A gap of any size between any two boards means that the connection is 50% weaker than if they were touching. If a gap exists, you will need remove ALL of the screws and then screw it back together.



## CUTLIST: SIGN FRAME

Start with the 1x4s and a table saw. Please note that the dimensions of most 1x4s are actually  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". This knowledge is helpful when measuring and cutting down your boards.

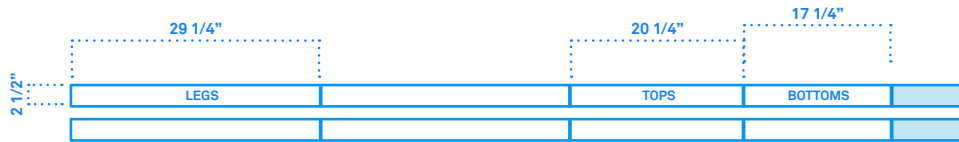
### First Cuts

Rip a blade's width from the factory edges of your poplar 1x4s, and then do two more rips: one at  $\frac{1}{2}$ " and one at  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". Please save the  $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces, they are your trim pieces.



### Second Cuts

Using a chop saw (also called a miter saw), cut off the factory ends (highlighted in the TIPS! section) of your four boards. Still using a chop saw, cut all boards down to the measurements listed above.



### Final Cuts

The final prep to get the legs ready is a  $15^\circ$  cut with the chop saw. Set up a stop so all your legs are the same length.



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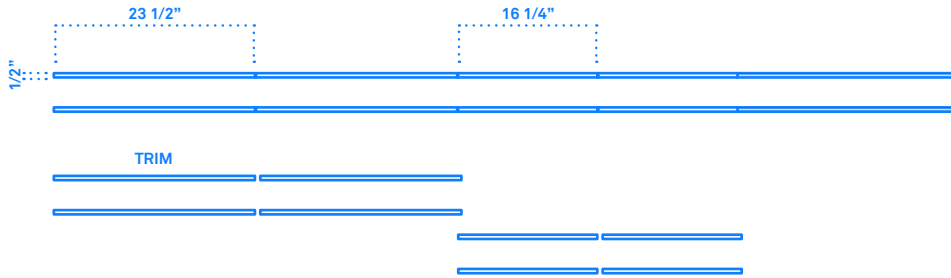


## CUTLIST: TRIM, PLYWOOD, AND COROPLAST

Next up are the 1/2" trim pieces that will hold the plywood in place and the plywood itself.

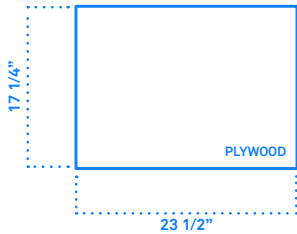
### Trim Cuts

Remove a blade's width from the factory end of your trim pieces, and then cut them down to the measurements listed above.



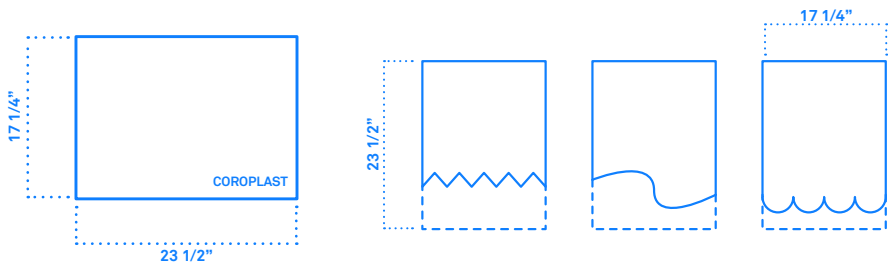
### Plywood Cuts

Rip your plywood down to the dimensions below.



### Coroplast Cuts

Cut your coroplast down to the dimensions below. You may use a laser cutter or handcut. Be creative! Make a fun shape.



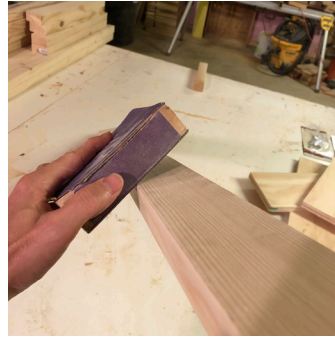
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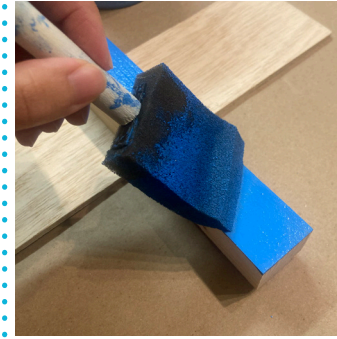
# HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT!



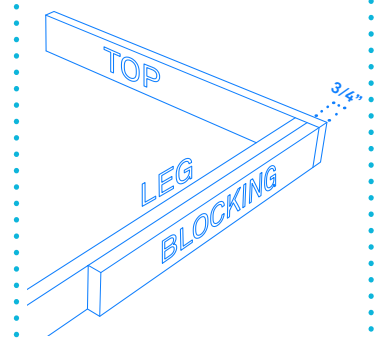
Sand your boards to prevent splintering and injury as you build.



Chamfer (angle) all corners with a sanding block to create comfortable edges.



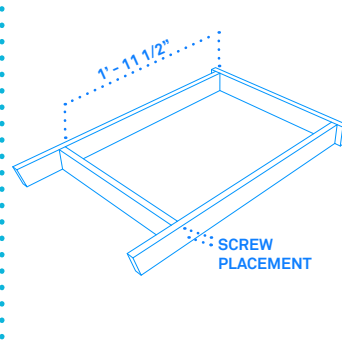
Paint or poly boards and poly the lauan plywood.



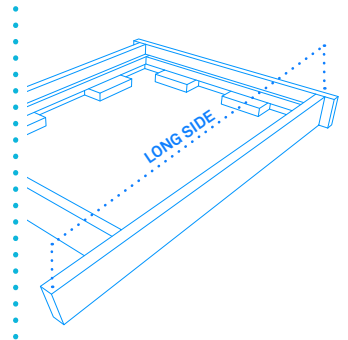
Position legs  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from edge of top with some cut-off material.



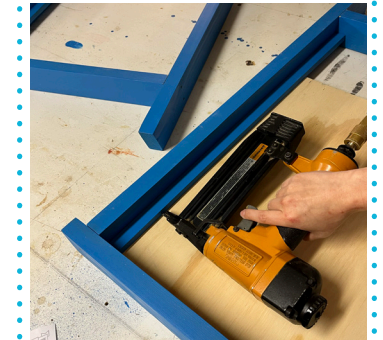
Attach legs to top with 2" trim screws. Use wood glue on all joints.



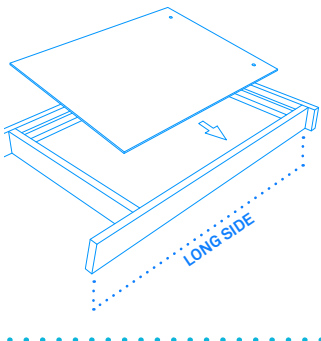
Attach bottom to legs with 2" trim screws. Ensure angles are square.



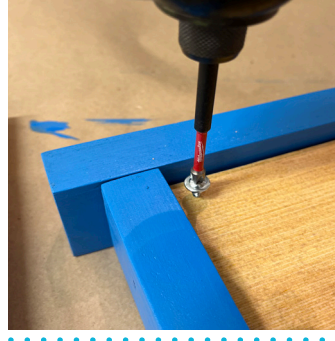
With legs "long side" up, position ledger strips  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the edge using  $\frac{3}{4}$ " off-cuts.



Use nail gun to secure ledger strips, with 1" 18 gauge nails.



Flip the piece over and position plywood onto ledger strips.

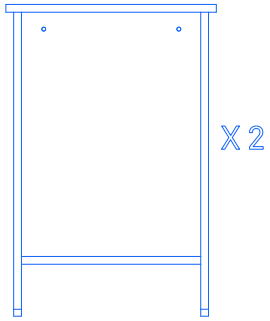


Pre-drill evenly every few inches, and attach with  $\frac{3}{4}$ " lath screws.

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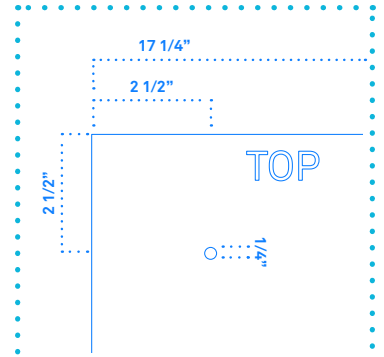
Repeat this page for second sign piece!!!



Position two sign pieces with the tops  $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart, and place hinge in the center.



Mark and pre-drill each hole, then attach the hinge.



Drill two  $\frac{1}{4}$ " holes in the top of your plywood.  $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " from edges,  $2 \frac{1}{2}$ " down.



Thread the screw with the nut through the back of the plywood.



Place the coroplast signs in, and screw cabinet knobs in place.



Drill holes in the bottom of the sign, and thread the paracord through. Knot each end.



Voila! Enjoy your finished sign.

## MORE NOTES ON BUILDING YOUR SIDEWALK SIGN!

Here are a few more tips for finishing up the beautiful sidewalk sign you are making!

### Focus Sanding High Touch Areas

We've said it before but we will say it again, focus your sanding and chamfering on high touch and use areas.

### All the Dimensions Matter!

While there is some flexibility in how the shade canopy gets finished, 'nailing' the dimensions as we've designed them is absolutely important.

### Did We Mention Gaps are Bad?

A gap means there is a TINY amount of room for the joint to move. If the joint starts to move it WILL get weaker over time. Again, you will need remove ALL of the screws and then screw it back together. And wood glue is magical, by the way.

### Run into Problems? We can Help!

Have questions or need help working through a fabrication problem? We are happy to help. Email Tiny WPA at [info@tinywpa.org](mailto:info@tinywpa.org).

### Maintain the Sidewalk Sign Properly

If you do paint or use poly, we recommend repainting or repolying every two years to keep your sign looking sharp. When you are ready to repaint, lightly sand your sign to

allow new paint to adhere better. It's also important to look for any nicks, scrapes or cracks and do touch-ups as needed. Remember: any exposed wood will absorb water, causing the wood to rot. Paint or poly "seals" the wood, protecting it from rain and mold. Replace the coroplast and paracord as needed.

### Post Pictures of Your Building Process on Instagram and Tiny WPA!

We want to cheerlead for you and give you some visibility for your efforts! Tag us (@tinywpa) and we will happily repost any photos or stories that you share.

Don't have an Instagram account? Send photos to [info@tinywpa.org](mailto:info@tinywpa.org), and we will post them!



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