

## Fast Facts:

- 40% growth in operational capacity 2015-2017, as a result of investment linked to the Social Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF)
- Client growth from 5,244 in 2013 to 10,733 in 2017
- 3,993 households served in 2017, averaging 2.7 people per household
- 67,393 furniture items collected (2017)
- 7,471 donors of gently used furniture (2017)
- 2,407 tons of furniture diverted from landfill (2017)
- 15,729 tons of waste diverted from landfill since 1998
- 47 staff members
- 30 Leg Up job training program participants annually
- Contributes to the Zero Waste Economy and 5 of the 7 R's of recycling; Recycle, Reuse, Repair, Regift, Recover.
- SROI Ratio (2017) 11.77 of value per 1 dollar invested

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*"You know what you brought me, right? You might think you brought me furniture. But no. No, today you brought me a chance. With nothing in it, this room used to feel like a cell. Now I'm allowed to say I have a home."*

**- Robert - Participant, Furniture Bank, 2017**

## Program Background

Since 1998, Furniture Bank has been matching unwanted furniture & homewares to individuals and families seeking to create a new home transitioning out of homelessness or other forms displacement.

While Furniture Bank clients will have a secured affordable housing, these families lack the assets to transform their new housing into a home.

A person or a family without the financial means to make their housing into a home are said to living in Furniture Poverty.

Furniture Poverty affects too many low income people in Canada, many of which are formerly homeless, women and children escaping abusive situations, and newcomer families and refugees.



## Theory of Change Summary Statement

If individuals and families overcoming displacement have choice of quality, appealing furniture for their new lodgings, they will become settled more quickly, be more likely to create community and be more grounded to address other challenging circumstances.

## Social Enterprise Overview

Furniture Bank redistributes gently used furniture to people in need, most of which would otherwise be destined for landfill.

The business model is founded upon the belief that a house is not a home without furniture, and that a sense of 'home' is essential to living a fulfilling life.

The majority of Furniture Bank's revenue is generated through social enterprise

activities. These include professional removal and transportation services to donors of gently used furniture.

Furniture Bank also employs individuals facing barriers to employment, as participants in the Leg-Up Social Employment program. As a result, the Furniture Bank has impact upon three pressing societal issues every day; housing affordability (furniture poverty), employment, and the environment.

## About Furniture Bank

All Furniture Bank clients are living on a severely limited income and are experiencing furniture poverty. As a result of the Furniture Bank program, they are able to access high-quality, clean used furniture at no cost. They select the pieces that appeal to their taste, building a home that meets many different needs.

In addition to furnishing over 4,000 low

income households a year, Furniture Bank employs individuals that face barriers to employment. The *Leg-Up Skills Training and Employment Program (Leg Up)* has been a part of Furniture Bank operations since 2013.

From the beginning, the objective of *Leg Up* has been to confront barriers to employment. Participants are offered both employability and life skills training. This builds confidence and prepares each person for employment in a broader way. Annually, *Leg Up* employs 25-30 individuals.

### Stakeholder Outcomes

The impact of Furniture Bank touches stakeholders that include; furniture donors, furniture recipients, *Leg Up* trainees, regular volunteers and the environment. Examples of outcomes experienced include:

#### Furniture Recipients:

- Improved quality of life as a result of having a home with furniture
- Move forward successfully in their lives / Start rebuilding their lives
- Decreased likelihood to re-experience displacement or homelessness
- Increased social inclusion

#### Participants of the Leg Up Employment Program:

- Increased employability / lower barriers to employment
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Sustainable livelihood (Participants obtain long-term employment within or outside of the Furniture and continue to be financially resilient)
- Improved mental health
- Decreased social isolation



### Regular Volunteers:

- Well-being linked to the knowledge they are contributing to community

### Environmental impact:

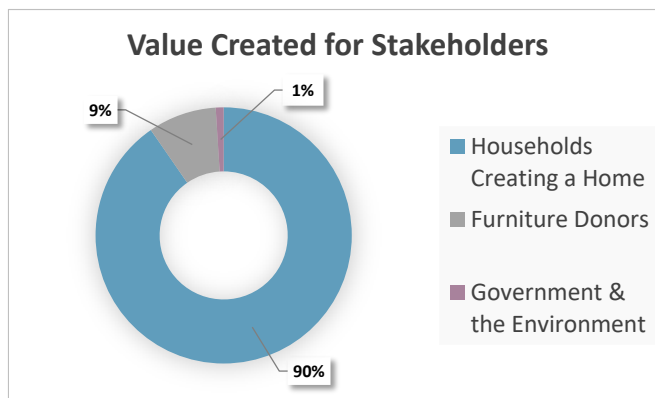
- Reduction in waste and pollution

### Social Return on Investment

In 2017, the Furniture Bank operated on a budget of \$3.6M. In the course of enabling 3,927 households to transition from furniture poverty, and recycling, collecting and transitioning 6,664 donations of furniture, the Furniture Bank created \$11.77 in value for every dollar invested.

The most significant portion of value created by the Furniture Bank stems from providing furniture to households in need. With the gently used furniture made available, Furniture Bank clients begin to enjoy the psychological, physical, and economic benefits of having a furnished home.

While *Leg Up* Program participants earn an income, and develop both job and 'soft' skills essential to long term employment, Furniture Bank has begun to expand its measurement systems to isolate the impact of the *Leg Up* program.



Environmental value is created through reducing the amount of reusable furniture going to landfill. In 2017 more than 1200 tonnes of furniture were diverted from landfill.

### Looking Forward

The Furniture Bank has a vision to share its business model across Canada, North America and even around the globe. By 2020, The Furniture Bank expects to be operating a national network of likeminded furniture banks (owned or partnered), leveraging the knowledge gained and performance improvements realized during the recent expansion project undertaken 2015-2017.