



Community,

The Chicago Furniture Bank is requesting financial support for our \$1,500,000 capital campaign regarding our recent warehouse purchase and next round of growth. This capital campaign will allow us to make improvements to the property, pay down our mortgage, and make the investments (truck and staff) to continue to grow reach our goal of furnishing 5,000 homes per year that would make us the largest furniture bank in the world.

With an idea and a \$250,000 grant from the University of Pennsylvania, the Chicago Furniture Bank (CFB) has grown to become the second largest furniture bank in the country in just 2.5 years since launching. The mission of the CFB is to provide dignity, stability, and comfort to Chicagoans that face poverty by allowing them to hand-pick an entire home's worth of furnishings. We currently fully furnish 13 homes per day through partnerships with 400 social service agencies around Chicagoland. We project to fully furnish 3,000 homes in 2021 and 5,000 homes annually by 2024, if successful with this campaign. Another important part of our mission is hire from the same communities that we serve. Currently, 50% of our staff is hired from workforce development agencies (CFB has 33 total full-time employees). Additionally, furniture is the least recycled household good with an estimated 10 million tons ending up in landfills each year (CFB diverts roughly 1,210 tons of furniture from landfills annually).

The CFB's furnishing program has grown to become a critical service in the broader nonprofit landscape in Chicagoland. The Chicago Furniture Bank is working closely with All Chicago on the Expedited Housing Initiative to furnish the homes of 2,550 households moving through the city's new rapid rehousing program. We currently are working with DePaul University to launch a study measuring how furniture impact home retention rates.

Every person should be able to sleep on a bed, share a meal at a table, and do homework on a desk. At the very least, furniture poverty affects one's quality of life; at worst, it becomes a contributing factor to social exclusion, physical and mental distress, and recidivism to homelessness. Providing furniture to those leaving shelters is a critical and oftentimes overlooked component in the Housing First Model as we believe four walls and roof doesn't truly create a home. Our specialized and streamlined program helps to stabilize households when they are beginning a new chapter in their life and adds a tremendous amount of value to our nonprofit partners.

The CFB is unique in the sense that we are able to cover the majority of our operating costs through earned revenue from our Operations. In 2020 we launched the Honest Junk Company (501c3 junk removal and liquidation service) that brought in over \$650,000 in revenue to the CFB in its first year. We plan to launch a national dorm liquidation project management service as well as a mattress refurbishing / recycling program in order to bring in more high-quality furniture, increase earned revenue and create jobs.

Sincerely,
Andrew Witherspoon and Griffin Amdur
Co-Founders of the Chicago Furniture Bank