

FBA NA

FURNITURE BANK
ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

CONFERENCE 2014
TACOMA, WA

FB Models and Best Practices

Facilitators:

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FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

**Robert Boyle, Executive Director
Furniture Bank of Southeastern Michigan**



FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

“To provide beds and essential home furniture to children and families in need.”

FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

How do you get the furniture?

- Drop offs
- Trucks
 - Scheduling/logistic considerations
 - Free v. Fee pickups
- Bulk pickups
- Buy new
- Build

FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

How do you provide furniture out?

- Walk-ins
- Referrals
- "Package" vs. "a la carte"
- Do you ask for a fee or give it away?
- Is your FB staffed w/ paid employees or volunteers?

FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

How do you fund it?

- Fees (as noted previously)
- Community support
- Gov't funding
- Social enterprise
- Gov't funding
- Fundraisers
 - Chair Affair
 - Bed Race

FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

Do you have any successful ancillary programs?

- Woodworking/ Building furniture
- Portable cribs
- "Beds for kids"

FB MODELS & BEST PRACTICES

Other best practices

- Maintain adequate cash reserves and monitor cash flow (trucks ain't cheap!)
- Bedbug screening, and/or other furniture treatment and return policies
- Sustainability, succession-planning and building an organization that is larger than the sum of its parts
- Strong, consistent communication with referral partners and stakeholders



Furniture Bank

of Southeastern Michigan

Through more effective collaboration with select partner organizations and a service delivery modeled after industry best practices, the Furniture Bank of Southeastern Michigan is on a path to better help families move toward self sufficiency.

We're going from...

to...

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receiving referrals from a network of 80 health and human service providers with whom there is limited communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working closely with a smaller network of health and human service providers with strong communication and mutually-agreed roles and responsibilities outlined in Memorandums of Understanding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clients frequently having to wait for extended periods of time to receive needed items and having to schedule multiple appointments to obtain all the items they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All items will be provided in a single visit within two weeks of a referral, allowing clients and their case managers to better focus on overcoming other barriers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than 50-percent fulfillment rate of items requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 95-percent fulfillment rate of items requested
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No charge for service, resulting in unlimited requests for limited resources, along with limited accountability for clients, partner agencies and the Furniture Bank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A modest fee-for-service component with increased program efficiency and sustainability, along with greater accountability for clients, partner agencies and the Furniture Bank.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A worthy charity with volunteers playing key staff roles, but with inefficiencies and internal processes that are unsustainable in a difficult economic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An efficient nonprofit business that maintains a compelling mission with an improved, more self-sustaining service delivery method that is better able to withstand economic ebbs and flows.



Furniture Bank
of Southeastern Michigan

Annual program outputs and benchmarks with service fees increases

	Base year				Jan - Jun
	6/09 - 5/10	2011	2012	2013	2014
Median Service Fee	No Fee	\$25	\$40	\$80	\$80
Families Served	3,712	2,281	1,871	1,186	559
Essential Items requested	20,831	8,788	7,827	6,195	2,783
Essential Items provided	9,364	6,846	6,664	5,318	2,735
Fill Rate	45%	78%	85%	86%	98%
Avg. # of appt. no-shows per month	112	26	19	5	6
Avg. wait time (in weeks)	10	6	6	3	2
Avg. # of items per client	4	5	5	6	7

HOUSE 2 HOME

VIRTUAL FURNITURE BANK

- **‘Housing First’ model created need**
- **Sheer volume of newly housed collapsed informal system of furniture acquisition**
- **ARRA funded start up of costs of just under \$30,000**

HOUSE 2 HOME VIRTUAL FURNITURE BANK

3 Main Components

- Donors
- Volunteers
- Recipients

HOUSE 2 HOME VIRTUAL FURNITURE BANK

- Referral-based system
- Homeless housing case managers and DSHS/TANF

HOUSE 2 HOME VIRTUAL FURNITURE BANK

Since November, 2009

- 691 Clients served
- 2,397 Items delivered
- 118 Volunteers
- 1,620 Volunteer hours
(1.5 hours avg per item)

HOUSE 2 HOME VIRTUAL FURNITURE BANK

**Annual cost to run program:
approximately \$20,500**

Funding sources:

- **City of Bellingham**
- **House 2 Home Heroes**
- **Volunteer Center general fund**