

Oyate Tipi  
Cumini Yape





Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape  
Winnipeg's Furniture Bank

**Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape  
means  
“where the community lives,  
sharing and recycling”  
in Ojicree.**



# ABOUT US

Oyate Tipi is a registered charity and social enterprise which redistributes gently used furniture and housewares from the community to families and individuals experiencing furniture poverty. We are in partnership with The Furniture Bank Network.

## HISTORY

Oyate Tipi is a non-profit organization located in Winnipeg's north end. In 1995, a group of crisis workers, providing outreach and follow-up services to women in transition, conceived the concept of Oyate Tipi. They observed that even when these women had secured new housing, they still lacked the essential comforts that transform a house into a home due to the shortage of furniture and household items.

In 2000, the United Way helped secure a building that was generously donated by the Bank of Montreal. In 2003, Oyate Tipi was born in that old bank and began to serve women and children affected by family violence. Since then, our mandate has grown to also assist people experiencing homelessness, youth aging out of care and a broader community.

Today, our programs are thriving. We are actively involved in the furniture bank program, initiating a number of environmental stewardship projects and developing our volunteer and internship program together with education institutions in Manitoba.

Oyate Tipi acknowledges that we are gathered on ancestral lands, Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojicree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.



## MISSION

To foster community equity and generosity, we strive to share household goods and furniture with those embarking on a journey to rebuild their lives, enabling them to cultivate a home imbued with dignity, safety, and hope. Simultaneously, we demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship by diverting these items from landfills, thereby showcasing care for the Earth and its future through their reuse.

## VISION

We envision a community free from furniture poverty, where the ethos of generosity prevails, fostering a culture of sharing between those with means and those in need.

Through this exchange, we aim to cultivate greater independence and self-sufficiency, while nurturing dignity and optimism among all members of our community. Moreover, by extending care to families, communities, and Mother Earth, we endeavor to create a harmonious and sustainable future for generations to come.

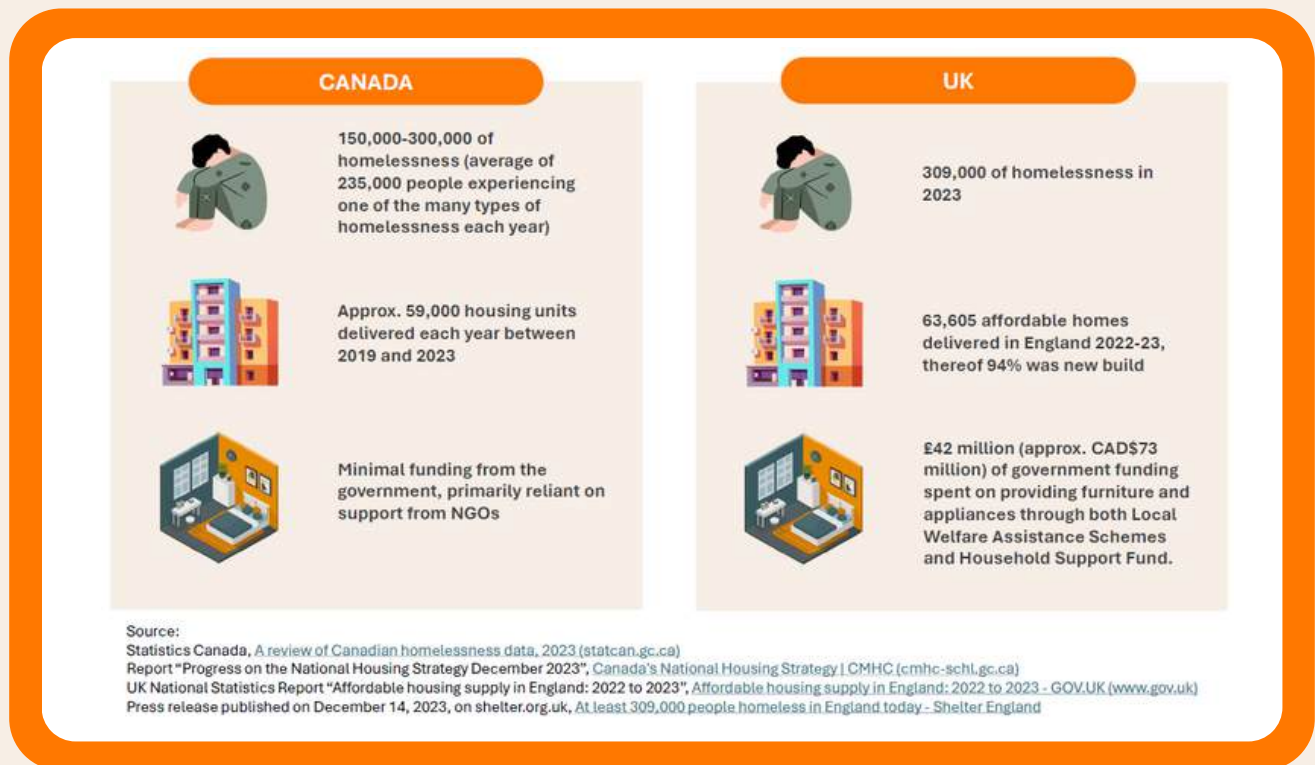




# WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

Homelessness has emerged as a pressing issue in Canada, with the estimated number of individuals experiencing homelessness ranging from 150,000 to 300,000, a figure that continues to rise.

In 2019, the Government of Canada introduced the Homelessness Strategy in conjunction with the National Housing Strategy (NHS). This initiative aims to reduce chronic homelessness in Canada by 50% by the 2027-2028 fiscal year by ensuring access to affordable, stable, and safe housing. Between 2019 and 2023, 293,466 housing units (approximately 59,000 per year) were delivered through five NHS programs, with a total commitment of \$30.74 billion. While the majority of government resources are allocated to the construction and repair of affordable housing, funding specifically for providing furniture and household essentials remains minimal.



# WHY ARE WE DOING IT?

With limited income and government funding support, individuals transitioning from homelessness into housing often find themselves lacking basic furniture and household items, a condition commonly referred to as furniture poverty. This term describes the inability to access, afford, or maintain essential household furniture or appliances necessary to achieve a socially acceptable standard of living. It is often a silent issue because its prevalence is hidden behind the front door, but it affects a growing number of low-income households in communities across Canada.

According to the article "The Impact of Living in an Un- or Under-Furnished House on Individuals Who Transitioned from Homelessness," published in the *Journal of Community Psychology* in 2022, residing in an under-furnished or unfurnished home can have detrimental effects on individuals across physical, mental, social, and emotional dimensions. For instance, children who sleep on the floor may struggle to maintain focus and attentiveness in school. Additionally, some participants reported experiencing previously unnoticed physical discomforts, such as back pain, until they had access to a bed again. The absence of adequate furniture also hindered social interactions, as individuals felt unable to host family and friends, leading to feelings of isolation and shame. Moreover, the financial strain of furnishing a home posed significant challenges, often requiring individuals to prioritize furniture over other essential needs such as food, clothing, healthcare, and education. On average, it costs between \$1,600 and \$3,000 to furnish a home with used furniture and \$8,000 with new furniture. This financial burden, coupled with distress and anxiety, can demotivate individuals from effectively rebuilding their lives.

While many people experience furniture poverty, others dispose of their gently used furniture and household items in landfills. In Manitoba alone, over 900,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated annually, placing significant pressure on waste management facilities and exacerbating environmental concerns.





# WHY ARE WE DOING IT?



Currently, consumer culture and the concept of a linear economy are deeply embedded in societal behaviors, with limited awareness of the principles of a circular economy. Key strategies for fostering a more circular economy include preventing and diverting waste through practices such as reusing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing, repurposing, recycling, and composting. The recycling rate in Canada is only 9% whereas 48.6% in European Union Countries in average.

The establishment of a furniture bank in Winnipeg is therefore crucial for promoting the circular economy. Such an initiative would divert used furniture and household items from landfills, address the issue of furniture poverty, and provide essential items to individuals and families in need.



# OUR PROGRAMS



Oyate Tipi has established three core programs: the Furniture Bank Program, the Environmental Stewardship Program, and the Volunteer and Internship Program. These initiatives constitute the fundamental frameworks that propel the organization towards the fulfillment of its mission and vision.

The Furniture Bank's funding stems from a diverse range of sources. Primarily, our programs receive support from government grants and financial contributions from businesses and households alike. Additionally, we operate as a social enterprise with the aim of achieving social, community economic, and environmental outcomes while maintaining self-sufficiency. Through our social enterprise services, we levy a fee to offset our operational expenses.



## FURNITURE BANK PROGRAM

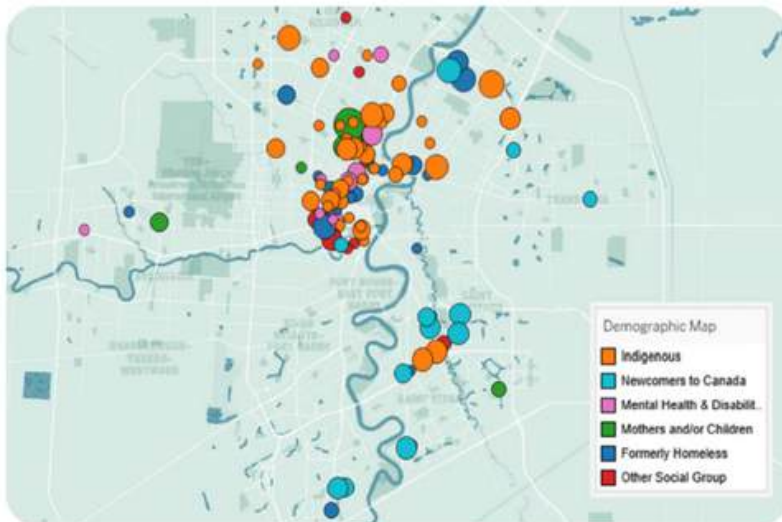
### Furniture Donation & Storage

Oyate Tipi Furniture Bank collects and donates furnishings to the vulnerable populations. The recipients of these donated items are referred by our partner social caseworker agencies. Beneficiaries include economically vulnerable including women and children leaving shelters, the formerly homeless, Indigenous, those struggling with physical and mental health, LGBTQ+, elderly adults, newcomers and refugees.





## Where do the donations go?



Donated items via  
Oyate Tipi Furniture Bank  
in Winnipeg 2023



Close to 8,000  
items of furniture



524 low-income  
families







## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SERVICES

### Furniture Removal Service

Oyate Tipi Furniture Bank offers a socially responsible furniture removal solution at a competitive price comparable to traditional junk removal services. However, the funds generated from our pickups are used to deliver furniture to families in need. Donors also receive a charitable tax receipt. Additionally, the redistribution of furniture items helps reduce environmental impact by alleviating the burden on landfills.

### Furniture Moving Service

Moving can be stressful. Oyate Tipi offers comprehensive moving services within Winnipeg, including storage options. Our services encompass a complete checklist to help you prepare before moving, heavy lifting, and pickup and delivery to your new location.

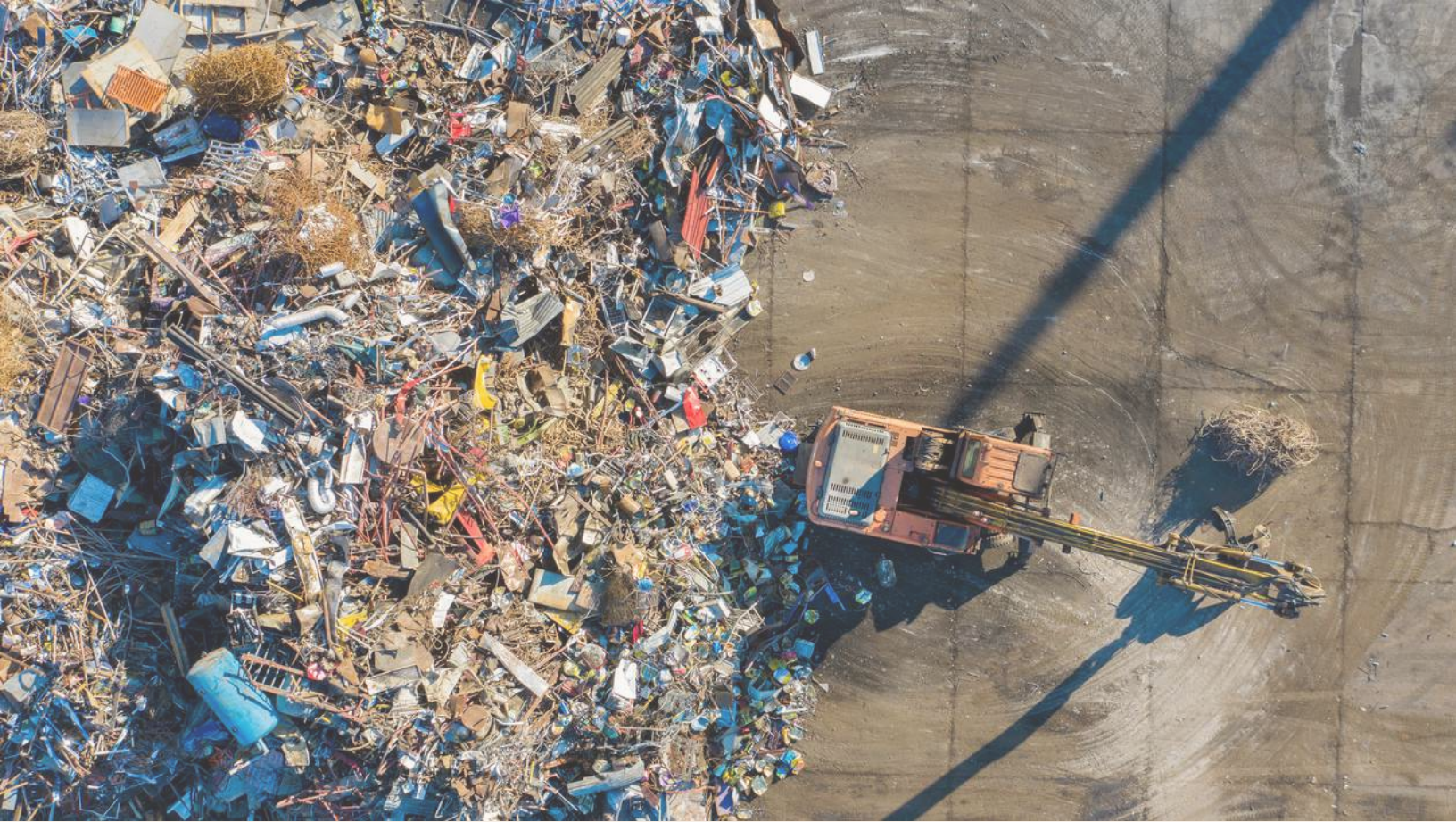


### Heat Treatment Service

Heat treatment is another essential service we provide. To prevent the spread of pests such as bed bugs and cockroaches in Winnipeg, we heat treat all donated items. This service is also available to families whose furniture or household items are infested with pests. Known officially as Thermal Remediation, heat treatment is one of the most effective methods for eradicating pests. Infested furniture is placed in an eradication chamber for 4-5 hours at temperatures between 60-65 degrees Celsius, effectively exterminating all bugs and their eggs. This service is also in conjunction with our pest prevention initiative.







## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Climate change is a global challenge with far-reaching consequences for ecosystems, economies, and communities. As an organization dedicated to sustainability, Oyate Tipi recognizes the importance of mitigating climate change and reducing greenhouse emissions.

This holistic approach to waste management is the impetus of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD), a European Union directive that seeks to establish a long-term path towards sustainable waste management. Preventing waste is the preferred option, and sending waste to landfill should be the last resort.







## Furniture Reuse and Recycling

Environmentally, Oyate Tipi has contributed significantly to waste reduction and sustainability. Approximately 366 tonnes of furniture were diverted from landfills in 2023. Items that are unsuitable for reuse due to their poor condition will be transferred to other organizations for recycling.

Landfills are a major source of methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. By repurposing furniture, we reduce the demand for new furniture production, which is often associated with deforestation, energy consumption, and carbon emissions.

Our efforts in furniture reuse and redistribution directly contribute to climate change mitigation by preventing valuable resources from going to waste and reducing the environmental impact of furniture production & disposal.





## Tenancy Advocacy and Pest Prevention Initiative

Environmental protection encompasses not only waste reduction and recycling but also the prevention of disposal. Oyate Tipi has launched a tenancy advocacy program to promote pest prevention and integrated pest management approach including the heat treatment solution to maintain furniture; and educate both landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities. Our program specialist regularly conducts presentations for agencies and their clients. Additionally, when conflicts between landlords and tenants arise, our specialist provides consultation to help mitigate these situations.





## VOLUNTEER AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### Beds for Kids Project

Oyate Tipi believes each child has the right to have a bed to sleep on. As part of our ongoing commitment to community development, we have launched the Beds for Kids project. This volunteer-driven initiative builds beds for children annually to ensure their health and overall quality of life. Our goal is to create a safe and nurturing environment where children can rest and thrive. Additionally, this project generates social employment opportunities integrated into the broader operations of our social enterprise charity. Participants receive both employability and life skills training, which builds their confidence and prepares them for a wide range of employment opportunities.





## Furniture Poverty Awareness Project

In collaboration with the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology, interns at Oyate Tipi can utilize their acquired skillsets from school. They can design a comprehensive marketing communication campaign aimed at raising awareness of furniture poverty among various stakeholders, including local businesses, trade associations, community members, and other collaborators. This project serves to enhance public understanding of our organization while also providing a platform for recent graduates to improve their planning, organization, execution, and communication skills.





# OUR IMPACTS

According to the Social Value Report by SiMPACT, published in July 2022, every dollar invested in Furniture Bank generates \$10.35 in measurable social, environmental, and economic benefits, thereby contributing to the creation of stronger communities. The social value parameters include the number of families assisted in securing essential furnishings for their homes, the weight and value of furniture and appliances diverted from landfills, the number of community donors providing home furniture, and the job opportunities created.



In 2023 alone, Oyate Tipi played a pivotal role in transforming the empty housing of hundreds of disadvantaged families into loving homes. Our dedicated team delivered close to 8,000 furniture items to 524 low-income families, facilitating their access to essential furniture and furnishings. In addition, approximately 366 tonnes of furniture were diverted from landfills, contributing to environmental sustainability efforts. On top of that, we provided valuable opportunities by creating 3,207 working hours for volunteers and interns, reinforcing our commitment to community engagement and development.

The metric of waste diversion tracked over the past years (2020-2023) highlights our environmental stewardship. The entire Furniture Bank Network in Canada has diverted thousands of tonnes of furniture from landfills. We have helped save an estimated 3,896.76 metric tonnes of CO2 emissions, which is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from 9,989,534 miles driven by an average gasoline-powered passenger vehicle.

When asked about the impact of Furniture Bank, caseworkers highlighted several key social impacts on beneficiary families. The top impacts reported were restoring hope in the future (83%), improving self-esteem (78%), enhancing self-confidence (72%), and fostering family stability (72%). These findings underscore the significant positive influence that Furniture Bank has on the lives of those it serves, contributing to their overall well-being and sense of security.





## TESTIMONIALS

**“Thank you so much for your help and all the information. I really appreciate it. Your guys were fast, nice, and respectful of us and our stuff. Great service!”**

*Brittany S. on heat treatment and moving service*

**“Your advocacy helped. Now me and my worker have made a plan to get me out of my current bad living conditions to something better.”**

*Kansas H. on tenancy advocacy program*

**“My grandson lost their home in a fire. You helped with everything. They were starting again from scratch. You delivered everything, even a kid’s bed. A lot of stress was taken off this young family. I appreciate all you did, and the delivery was much appreciated.”**

*Katie C. on furniture bank service*

**“Oyate Tipi helped me when I was first setting up house after my separation. They were so gracious and kind. Now they help when I have unneeded furniture to donate, even picking it up. Thank you so much.”**

*Signe K. on furniture bank service*

**“Oyate Tipi is amazing! They have their own bed bug heat treatment so everything is precautionary treated. The people who work there are amazing! I love this place so much. They furnished my entire apartment.”**

*Martini Monkman on furniture bank and heat treatment service*



# CONTACT US

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