

What we are: **SLIDE 1**

Welcome To Housing Home Goods Bank, Inc. is an ALL Volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit “Furniture Bank” registered with the State of Maine. Started on a WHIM in 2011 as a 50th birthday celebration after a 40th birthday celebration in 2001 raised \$7,300 for the Bangor Area Homeless Shelter (BAHS). **SLIDE 2**

Originally helping people moving from the BAHS, in May of 2012 we opened up to help ANY and all shelter programs and ANY programs that helped people starting over. **SLIDE 3**

In addition to helping people moving to permanent housing from shelters, we also help (slide of agencies served) **SLIDE 4**

People displaced by disasters such as house fires

People escaping Domestic Violence

Immigrants

People re-entering society from corrections

The Working Poor

ANYONE in need

We have NO GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS

No Vouchers Needed

What do we give out? **SLIDES 5, 6, 7, 8, 9**

ANYTHING for Kitchen, Bedroom, and Bathroom.

Beds, Dressers, Kitchen items from cookware to glasses and dishes, microwaves, toasters (Permission to use term “Bank” conversation)

ADAPTIVE/MEDICAL equipment: Hospital beds, walkers, crutches, canes, etc.

We no longer handle Televisions and NEVER cribs due to ever-changing safety standards

To quote part of a grant application:

Imagine moving into a new home. It’s exciting for most of us, a great feeling. Now imagine that home is just walls, ceiling, and floors. No bed to sleep on, no chair to relax in, no dishes in the cupboard, no pan to heat your soup in, not even a can opener to open that can of soup. This is the reality for many clients of Welcome To Housing. They are starting off with very little and in many cases no funds to purchase even the simplest of furnishings and housewares.

We offer the basics to help make this new living space into a real home. This greatly increases their sense of wellbeing. The ability to get a good night's rest on a bed, with clean sheets and warm blankets is so important. Most of us take these simple things for granted. I'll never forget meeting a fellow getting a bed. He was overjoyed since he had been sleeping on a bare floor for a while. He commented what a difference this would make to him being able to sleep and then get up re-freshed for work.

[The fact we offer the items at no charge helps our clients with financial stability as well.](#) Since they won't have to spend their limited funds on furnishings they have a greater chance of paying rent, staying on top of other bills and putting food on the table. They have a better opportunity at long term success in their new home.

During the 1st quarter of 2021, which is the most recent our volunteers have compiled data for, we helped 243 people with a total of 2,945 items distributed, and people traveled from as far away as Saco and Topsham travel to us during that period to obtain home goods.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

In the past we have filled requests for unusual things. **SLIDE 10 (Dignity Factor: If YOU were struggling, would you want to receive what you're donating?)**

One client was looking for a guitar **SLIDE 11**

which was part of her therapy and a social media post helped find one that was never used by the donor, complete with case, tuner and strings.

We have "rehomed" a couple of organs and even a couple of pianos. We contacted Together Place in Bangor a peer run recovery center and offered them a piano and a ping pong table. Early on, a lady needed an air conditioner due to respiratory issues. The next day a UMaine student called to say she was transferring to one of the Carolinas and had 2 to donate.

From the Past...Looking to the Future: **SLIDE 12**

In 2017 the agency that we had as our fiscal agent announced its founder was retiring and knowing the cliché "NOTHING will change" is NEVER the case we applied to become our own 501(c)(3).

We went from a couple of small portable storage PODS at Paker Bailey's in Brewer to a 2,267 square foot utility room at Old Town Plaza to a 6,400+ square foot Victorian **SLIDE 13** which is now our permanent home thanks to a grant from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation. **SLIDE 14**

We have had great support from New England School of Communications at Husson University and numerous classes and now individual interns from the University of Maine as well.

SLIDE 15

In fact, one intern is working to polish up a proposal that will be going to the Maine Association of Realtors and will offer support and training from **WTH** as well as **The Arrostook Veterans Alliance**, **Project Fresh Start** out of Augusta, **The Storehouse** in Bangor which has free clothing and **Furniture Friends** in Portland.

EVERY corner of Maine has people in dire situations and this plan would link our organizations together in a network and use our example to start similar programs in other parts of Maine. Eventually we hope to see this model succeed and work with members of the Maine Congressional Delegation to share the concept with other states. **SLIDE 16 SLIDE 17 SLIDE 18**

In addition to the “people” aspect, as Dr. Brianne Berry can attest to, WTH is also keeping a tremendous amount of materials out of the waste stream.

In conclusion, there are other possibilities WTH is looking at for our Old Town location to enhance and build on what we already do and thanks to continued growth and community support we will likely achieve those goals. **SLIDE 19 David and Carolyn (A TRUE success from someone who was a recipient to being a WTH supporter) Slide 20**

Two BIG goals we have from WTH and this network proposal is to increase public understanding and awareness as to the existence and importance of “Furniture/Home Goods Banks” and wanting to *have people be as aware of them as they are of FOOD PANTRIES!*

Slide 21

The other goal we have also worked on for the last 10+ years is a simple one, that was written about in an Op-Ed in the Bangor Daily News by Dr. Berry and myself, that urges people NOT to vilify people who are struggling and in need...

Because in REALITY... it can happen to ANYONE.

Question/Answer Session (following second presentation)

Closing slides	22
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Follow Up Topics:

WTH welcomes opportunities to present in-person and/or virtually to other agencies, organizations, etc.

Opportunities to help through people's clubs, organizations, houses of worship, etc.

Reiterate "Dignity Factor"

Future uses to add to WTH building: ADA accessibility in coming years, making meeting space available for counselors, etc

In addition to **furniturebanks.org** people can check out the LARGEST furniture bank at their website: **bridging.org**

WTH would LOVE to become more connected with environmental aspect, like DEP etc.

WTH seeking funding for Solar Array in near future to truly abide by the concept of being eco-friendly.