



# A Bed for Every Head: Addressing Furniture Poverty

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## Furniture poverty

The Furnish Together coalition introduces a standard definition of furniture poverty as:

The inability to access, afford, or maintain essential household furniture and goods for a functional, safe, and healthy home.

## The 2025 National Survey of Furniture Banks

In spring 2025, A Wider Circle, supported by several furniture banks from across the country, conducted a survey of 69 furniture banks in 30 states, representing over 1,100 combined years of experience. Key findings include:

- Individuals and families exiting homelessness are the top two groups served by furniture banks, followed by under-resourced single-parent households, and families fleeing domestic violence.
- 42% of furniture banks are only partially meeting or struggling to meet the demand from neighbors referred to their programs. The average number of clients on waitlists to receive furniture is over 100.
- Furniture banks report that 73% of their clients are experiencing severe furniture poverty, meaning they are missing three or more essential items. (Essential items include beds, tables, chairs, dressers/wardrobes, and kitchenware.)
- All furniture banks are focused on alleviating the impacts of furniture poverty. Many are also working to end it by advocating for universal access, the removal of financial and logistical barriers for individuals living in poverty, and the development of durable systems that foster consistent, scalable, and ongoing furniture support.

## The 2025 National Household Furniture Poverty Survey

In spring 2025, A Wider Circle utilized a survey research company to reach 1,050 individuals, census-balanced on age, gender, and geographic region. Extrapolated data reveal the following trends:

- At the current point in time, 32% of people across the United States are experiencing furniture poverty; that is, they are unable to access, afford, or maintain one or more essential household furniture goods.
  - 2 in 10 households do not have enough beds for everyone to sleep on.
  - 3 in 10 do not have a couch to sit on or a dresser to store clothing in.
  - 4 in 10 are missing more than one critical item for a functional, safe, and healthy home.
- Across their lifespans, 66% of people have experienced furniture poverty at least once (and 20% experienced it three or more times).
- While no race, gender, or age group is immune from furniture poverty, there are some groups who are affected more than others:
  - Households with 5+ members;

- Single-parent families;
- Young adults 18-34; and
- Households at or below 300% of the 2025 federal poverty line (\$46,950 per year for an individual and \$96,450 for a family of four).

### **The Impact of Living in Furniture Poverty**

In spring 2025, A Wider Circle conducted a set of comprehensive interviews with clients waiting for their furniture appointments. Impacts of living without essential furniture items include:

- 8 in 10 people report body aches like back, neck, or shoulder pain.
- 7 in 10 have trouble sleeping.
- 7 in 10 find it hard to relax or feel constantly on edge.
- 7 in 10 are unable or unwilling to host others in their home.
- 6 in 10 report emotional discomfort like stress, anxiety, or dissatisfaction.
- 5 in 10 say furniture poverty makes it hard to stay organized at home.
- 3 in 10 say their children struggle to complete homework.

### **The Impact of Furniture Stability**

A Wider Circle also conducted follow-up surveys with families about one month after they received furniture. The latest 200 results include:

- 9 in 10 people are more comfortable in their homes.
- 8 in 10 are more stable.
- 8 in 10 say their overall quality of life has substantially improved.
- 8 in 10 are better able to provide for themselves and their families.
- 8 in 10 parents have better interactions with their children.
- 7 in 10 parents notice improvements in their children's health and well-being.
- 7 in 10 have better physical health.
- 7 in 10 also have better mental health.
- 8 in 10 are more likely to invite guests into their home.

For more information about the research methodology and/or results, please contact:

Eddy Ameen, PhD, Chief Program Officer  
A Wider Circle  
Silver Spring, MD  
[eameen@awidercircle.org](mailto:eameen@awidercircle.org)

To learn more about furniture poverty, its scope, impact, and local solutions, we encourage you to reach out to furniture banks in your region.