

# Furniture Assist: How Does It Work in Helping Needy?

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All donations are received at a Self-Storage Depot in Kenilworth, where Furniture Assist rents storage sheds. Drop-off hours are Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. In this three-and-a-half-hour period of time, we have between 40 and 80-plus drop-offs. Furniture Assist volunteers greet donors, assist in completing tax-deduction receipts and help to unload vehicles. Donations are sorted into temporary sheds as they arrive. On Mondays, these items are inspected and sorted by type and category and moved by a team of volunteers into appropriate storage sheds (with sheds holding categories like "beds," "lamps," "toys" or "books," "desks," "couches"). Throughout the week, newly donated items are sorted as they arrive.

On Sundays, we can accept nearly unlimited donations that are dropped off at the storage depot. Currently we are able to pick up only eight to 10 households of donated furniture each week. With each pickup, we request a donation of \$40 towards truck rental, insurance and gasoline. Most of the donated items remain in our sheds for only a few days, reflecting the need

for the service that Furniture Assist provides.

On Sundays from 1 to 3 p.m. we hold an "open house" distribution for pre-scheduled and pre-screened clients. At their appointment, clients come to select furnishings and other items. Clients are responsible for bringing helpers to carry items to their vehicles and for transporting their items home. Our current resources allow us to assist approximately 30 clients each week. We currently have a waiting list of three to four months. Since we currently receive 60 to 90 requests each week, we are actively seeking to expand our outreach.

Furniture Assist appreciates the generosity of individuals, community organizations and public and private foundations in Westfield and the surrounding areas. Donations of items and volunteers are also very much appreciated. By writing these articles, we hope to increase understanding of how Furniture Assist works and to illustrate how volunteer help is so important in all aspects of our organization.

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*This article is number two in a series of three articles. Please see our other articles and visit our website, [furnitureassist.com](http://furnitureassist.com), for information on donating or volunteering.*

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