



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2027 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2027-265

Proposal Title: Minnesota Furniture Recovery and Resilience Initiative

Project Manager Information

Name: Shawn Dolan

Organization: EMERGE Community Development

Office Telephone: (612) 230-5741

Email: dolans@emerge-mn.org

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Restore value to discarded furniture by turning waste into opportunity. Reduce landfill use, expanding access to essential household goods, and building a more resilient, sustainable future for communities across Minnesota

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$2,365,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2030

LCCMR Funding Category: Resiliency (A)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Statewide

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project and In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

More than 12 million tons of furniture are discarded annually in the United States, with over 80% sent to landfills or incinerators and less than 1% recovered. Yet an estimated 60% of discarded furniture remains suitable for reuse or resale. The primary barrier is not material quality, but the lack of accessible collection systems, limited processing capacity, and restrictive intake standards at donation centers.

In Minnesota, bulky furniture is routinely crushed, burned for energy, or landfilled. Residents often face removal costs of \$100–\$150 per item, discouraging proper disposal and contributing to illegal dumping. Outside the Twin Cities metro, reuse and recovery infrastructure is minimal, leaving most furniture without viable diversion pathways

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

This project will establish a regional furniture recovery and reuse network that diverts bulky furniture from landfills and incineration while expanding access to essential household goods. Drawing on prior LCCMR-funded furniture recovery work and informed by early-stage pilot activity in Saint Paul, this effort moves beyond limited testing to implement scalable systems for furniture recovery, reuse, repair, and recycling.

With only a limited pilot window through mid-2027, current work in Saint Paul is focused on understanding logistics, partnerships, and material flows—not building a fully realized system. This project leverages those early insights to develop a comprehensive, regionally distributed model that can be implemented at scale.

The project will implement this model in Saint Paul and one additional Greater Minnesota community, intercepting furniture prior to disposal and triaging items for reuse, repair, recycling, or disposal only when necessary. Reusable items will be distributed through furniture bank partners, expanding access to quality household goods.

We have engaged with several Greater Minnesota regions—including St. Cloud, Mankato, Duluth, Rochester, Moorhead, Brainerd, and Marshall/Worthington—to identify a partner community. The goal is to develop a scalable, replicable model for regional furniture recovery across Minnesota.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state’s natural resources?

This project will divert thousands of tons of furniture from landfills and incineration while significantly expanding reuse and material recovery. By extending the life of usable furniture and recovering materials from damaged items, it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with disposal and new manufacturing. The project will also establish an accessible, scalable model for regional furniture recovery that strengthens Minnesota’s long-term waste resilience and reduces environmental impacts statewide.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Activity 1: Regional Furniture Collection, Diversion, Repair, and Reuse Infrastructure

Activity Budget: \$927,553

Activity Description:

This initiative will develop an efficient collection and transportation system to divert discarded furniture to a recycling and reuse facility. We will establish drop-off locations, scheduled collection events and curbside collection to increase accessibility in support of supply distribution to furniture bank models and reduce landfill waste. Partnering with the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI), we will explore innovative reuse methods for non-conforming materials and identify value-added commodities and potential markets for repurposed materials. Establish partnership with a municipality to intercept bulky furniture before landfill or incineration.

Funds will assist with staffing, truck leases, warehouse logistics, and operational infrastructure to process and distribute recovered furniture. We will expand repair capacity and strengthen downstream recycling partnerships for wood, metal, textiles, and foam. We will develop scalable best practices for broader statewide implementation based on tonnage diverted, reuse rates, recycling volumes, and furniture bank models supporting the needs of the local community.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Finalize partnership with the city and processing center on operational plan for targeted collection.	August 31, 2028
Establish necessary infrastructure (logistics, transport, sortation, secure storage) of aquired furniture and material	January 31, 2029
Implement curbside collection system beginning with scheduled pickups and organizing material recovery.	April 30, 2029
Transport collected materials to processing center for evaluation, sorting, identifying reuse, recycling, and repurposing.	April 30, 2029
Evaluate results of the program, assess scalability, generate report outlining potential for expansion and modifications	August 31, 2029
Review ongoing results of the program evaluating expansion efforts and modifications.	April 30, 2030
Produce final report and present findings and results to city, county and LCCMR Staff	June 30, 2030

Activity 2: Activity 2: Citywide Expansion of Saint Paul Furniture Recovery, Repair and Reuse Furniture Bank.

Activity Budget: \$1,437,447

Activity Description:

This existing pilot program will establish an expanded curbside collection system in Saint Paul to recover furniture before it is crushed or landfilled. Goal is to increase collection from 10% to 100% of the city of Saint Paul. The program will focus on reuse, repair, recycling, and repurposing ensuring the furniture is evaluated for their highest-value recovery option.

Key components include transport and sortation, where collected items will be efficiently transported to our processing center for assessment and material separation. Usable goods will then move to distribution and delivery, providing recovered materials to resale markets, donation centers, or recycling facilities. Additionally, detailed data on material composition and recovery rates will be collected, helping to evaluate curbside collection as a scalable solution for furniture resiliency in greater Minnesota.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Finalize agreement with Saint Paul on program expansion scope, service areas, and performance targets.	October 31, 2027
Scale operational capacity (staffing, fleet, routing systems, scheduling) to support expanded collection	December 31, 2027
Launch expanded curbside furniture collection in initial service zones	January 31, 2028
Expand processing, sortation, and repair capacity to manage increased material flow.	March 31, 2028
Establish and grow reuse and distribution partnerships (furniture banks, nonprofits, resale channels)	April 30, 2028
Achieve at least 40% citywide household coverage with consistent and efficient collection services	June 30, 2028
Reach 60% citywide household coverage with consistent and efficient collection services.	September 30, 2028
Track and report key metrics (tons collected, % reused, %recycled, households served, cost per ton)	April 30, 2029
Reach 100% citywide household coverage with consistent and efficient collection services.	December 31, 2029
Complete final report with scalability recommendations for other MN communities. Present to LCCMR Staff.	June 30, 2030

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Sarah Haas	City of Saint Paul	Partner	No
Trista Martinson	Ramsey Washington Recycling & Energy	Partner	No
Victor Krause	NRRI UofM	Partner	Yes
Public Works Official	TBD Out-state Metropolitan Area	Partner	No

Dissemination

Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.

Second Chance Recycling has participated in multiple presentations at the county and city board levels as well as Reuse Minnesota conferences. Dissemination and acknowledgment will continue to reflect the ENRTF Logo, and verbiage as outlined in the ENRTF Acknowledgements Requirements and Guidelines on the Saint Paul route, on the websites, social media and any PPT presentations created for use during these meetings. All local marketing materials, websites, and email blasts for outstate pilots (once approved) will also follow the ENRTF Acknowledgements Requirements and Guidelines as outlined.

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

Following ENRTF funding, operations will transition to a self-sustaining model supported by service agreements with municipalities and counties, along with cost-share partnerships. Participating local governments will integrate furniture recovery into existing solid waste systems, leveraging significant avoided disposal costs to support ongoing operations. Cost-share partnerships may include furniture banks charging modest program fees or county-supported housing programs contributing toward the cost of furnishing households. The project will establish standardized processes, cost models, and partnership structures that enable replication without reliance on future ENRTF funding, delivering a scalable, sustainable framework for long-term furniture recovery across Minnesota.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Statewide Diversion of Furniture and Mattress Waste Pilots	M.L. 2023, , Chp. 60, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 08q	\$2,833,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Shawn Dolan

Job Title: General Manager

Provide description of the project manager’s qualifications to manage the proposed project.

As the General Manager at Second Chance Recycling, I have direct responsibility and oversight of operational performance, contract fulfillment, financial performance and reporting, customer relationship management and enterprise growth. I am a decisive and intuitive leader with experience and passion for bringing diverse people together to exceed both customer expectations and company objectives. 35+ years experience in leadership within the printing and distribution industry. I have a proven ability to implement strategy, aligned with expense and profitability measurements that drive results in all aspects of business. I am experienced with both production and customer support operations managing multiple channel, market and product strategies on a local, regional and national level. My background is in logistics, operations, staff development and technical support services. I form solid partnerships and trust between the marketing, sales, support, operations and fulfillment priorities to exceed both customer and organizational expectations.

Organization: EMERGE Community Development

Organization Description:

Second Chance Recycling is a social enterprise of EMERGE Community Development and provides high quality recycling services coupled with a vitally needed social mission. Beyond the environmental impact of mattress recycling, Second Chance makes a profound impact in the community with our re-entry program. The majority of employees at Second Chance are formerly incarcerated individuals with significant barriers to employment opportunities who benefit from a variety of support services in addition to a much needed job. On average, 150 individuals each year are employed for 6 to 9 months. During this time, they develop solid work habits and skills necessary to obtain and keep their next job and, in many cases, the opportunity for vocational training that leads to a career.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
EMERGE Project Manager - Site 2		Overall leader of the entire project			24%	0.28		\$37,510
Program Coordinator - St Paul		Day-to-day operational oversight of the operation			24%	1		\$86,800
Business Director - Site 2		Consultive leadership for the entire project			24%	0.14		\$27,280
St Paul Drivers and Assistant		Staff to Collect product for reuse or recycling			12%	8.25		\$384,384
Site 2 Drivers and Assistant		Staff to Collect product for reuse or recycling			12%	2		\$93,184
St Paul Whse Staff		Operations Staff that process all the furniture for reuse and recycling			12%	13.75		\$544,544
Site 2 Whse Staff		Operations Staff that process all the furniture for reuse and recycling			12%	6		\$237,619
Program Coordinator - Site 2		Operational oversight of site 2			24%	1.2		\$89,280
							Sub Total	\$1,500,601
Contracts and Services								
Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) - St Paul	Subaward	Personnel - \$181,600 Travel - \$3,000 Supplies - \$10,000 Services - \$5,000 Shipping - \$ 400 TOTAL \$ REQUEST =\$200,000				2		\$200,000
Facility Lease - St	Service Contract	2.75 year lease. The City of St Paul providing a significant discount as a contribution to the project.				2.75		\$100,000

Paul 2.5 years								
Facility Lease - Site 2 - 2 years	Service Contract	2 year lease for warehouse space in the new site. \$9/sq ft gross. 20,000 sq ft				2		\$360,000
Truck Lease St Paul	Service Contract	Two leased trucks for collection of product for the most of city of St Paul				2.75		\$62,500
Truck Lease site 2	Service Contract	One leased truck for the collection of product at the new site.				2		\$50,000
							Sub Total	\$772,500
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	St Paul	Equipment and supplies used to clean, repair and deconstruct furniture for either reuse or recycling.					\$34,219
	Tools and Supplies	Site 2	Equipment and supplies used to clean, repair and deconstruct furniture for either reuse or recycling.					\$25,000
	Equipment	Site 2 Forklift	Leased forklift for two years					\$25,000
							Sub Total	\$84,219
Capital Equipment								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Two trips per month @ 100 miles each way @ .80 per mile						\$7,680
							Sub Total	\$7,680
Travel Outside Minnesota								

							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$2,365,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	City of Saint Paul	Processing Space	Secured	\$200,000
In-Kind	Ramsey Washington Recycling & Energy	Grant Funding and Unrecoverable Indirect Expense	Secured	\$80,000
In-Kind	TBD Municipality outside the metro area	Unrecoverable Indirect Expenses	Pending	\$20,000
In-Kind	Emerge Community Development	Unrecoverable Indirect Expenses	Secured	\$150,000
			Non State Sub Total	\$450,000
			Funds Total	\$450,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,815,000

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [9fdc65da-061.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Photos of the Second Chance Recycling Facility (1179 15th Ave SE Minneapolis) and the City of Saint Paul Public Works Facility (60 W Sycamore St. Saint Paul)...

Financial Capacity

Title	File
Audit: Emerge Community Development	622f7fd0-3b6.pdf
ECD 990 Public Document March 2026	ccacafe7-7cb.pdf

Board Resolution or Letter

Title	File
ECD Board Resolution Letter March 2026	a40c45c9-65a.pdf

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
Letter of Support: Blue Earth County	0b6de9af-245.pdf
Letter of Support: Bridging (Furniture Bank)	1d11cc9e-fd5.pdf
Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) Scope of Work and Proposed Budget	38c31868-eef.pdf
Letter of Support: Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) UofM	5d5fc4a5-d5a.pdf
Letter of Support: Olmsted County, MN	3d9d7cc5-6c8.pdf
Letter of Support: City of Saint Paul	0954050f-d6c.pdf
Letter of Support: Ramsey/Washington County Recycling & Energy	44424b2b-ca4.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

Yes, I understand the Commissioner's Plan applies.

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

Shawn Dolan - Second Chance Recycling - General Manager

Kevin Engdahl - Emerge Community Development - Executive Vice President of Enterprises

Mike Wynne - Emerge Community Development - President and CEO

Anne Stamos - Emerge Community Development - Grants Management

Trista Martinson - Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy - Executive Director

Sarah Haas - City of Saint Paul Public Works - Solid Waste Program Administrator

Victor Krause - Natual Resources Research Institute (UofM) Duluth

Cathleen Hall - Olmsted County - Environmental Resources Director

Diana Dalsin - Bridging - Director of Strategic Partnerships

Jason Steffen - Blue Earth County - Property and Environmental Resources Supervisor - Landfill

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

Yes, I understand