

IRN - The Reuse Network

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Case Study in Reuse Howard University

Overview

Howard University requested removal of 315 sets of residential furnishings from about 200 rooms scattered among eight dormitories. Separately, Howard requested removal of about 700 mattresses. Howard had a four-day window to complete the project.

With an 11-man crew, IRN and Olympia Moving filled nine trailers with the dorm furnishings, which were sent through IRN partner Food for the Poor to recipients in Guatemala and El Salvador. Three trailers containing 681 mattresses were provided to villages in Nicaragua. An additional trailer of dorm furnishings was provided to a school for disadvantaged children in Rhode Island.

Setting

Howard has a compact urban campus surrounded by residential and commercial neighborhoods. Only five of the eight dormitories in the project were located on campus. Two were on residential streets several blocks away, and one was located on commercial streets about a mile from the main campus. No two dorms shared a common access point.

Composition

Item	#	Item	#	Item	#
Bed (3 pieces)	226	Captain's bed	67	Wardrobe	17
Desk	273	Bookshelf	167	Mattress (dorm sets)	957
Chair	226	Bureau	215	Total	2,528

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Key Concerns

Location: Howard's location presented many challenges. Drivers got lost and needed to be guided to the campus. Tractor trailers had to be moved through narrow, crowded city streets. Parking had to be reserved and streets had to be blocked off so that trailers could be loaded. DC police had to be appeased when trailers were blocking their streets.

Schedule: Howard imposed a four-day window to complete the project. The start was dictated by the end of summer classes. Completion faced a hammer deadline laid down by students moving in for the fall semester.

Complexity: Because furnishings were scattered in eight buildings, trailers were received at a central location and then directed to specific load points. Only five of thirteen trailers were loaded from a single building. Eight were loaded from two or (in two cases) three different buildings. Balancing loads to fill trailers quickly and efficiently was a significant challenge. Additionally, partly filled trailers had to be secured and moved through DC streets to complete their loads.

Onsite Management: Each building had its own supervisory team; there was no single list of rooms to be emptied or furniture removed. IRN was required to coordinate with each of the individual residential supervisors, who were simultaneously juggling many other tasks associated with building touch-up and students moving in.

Access and Carries: The rooms to be emptied were scattered within the dorms. There were long carries within each building; only one building had more than a single elevator, and three buildings had no elevators. Some large furnishings did not fit in the elevators and had to be hand-carried to street level. Not one building had a loading dock, and several had long outside carries to trailers.

Crew Assignment: With multiple buildings and access points, and trailers being loaded simultaneously, it was necessary to divide and reconfigure the moving crew every day, sometimes several times a day, to load efficiently.

Scheduling Trailers: Because of shipping destinations and schedules, the trailers for this project were routed out of the port of New York, and several were seriously delayed en route to the project. This necessitated ad hoc changes in the moving and loading schedule, staging furniture in halls and common areas when trailers didn't arrive on time, and further reassignment of crews.

Implementation

From its inception, this was anything but a simple project. One key to success was the efficiency and flexibility of Olympia's moving crew, who were reassigned and moved from location to location several times. A second key to success was effective coordination between IRN's onsite manager and headquarters logistics staff. The product of hundreds of projects' experience, this

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allowed the many challenges encountered on the project to be addressed with no impact on the project's successful and on-time conclusion.

Destination

Nine trailers of dorm furnishings were sent to communities in Guatemala and El Salvador. One trailer of dorm furnishings was provided to a school for disadvantaged children in Rhode Island. Three trailers with nearly 700 mattresses were provided to communities in Nicaragua.



Loading at Howard's Meridian Hall. This eight-story dormitory is located a mile off campus on a busy intersection. 800 pieces of furniture and some 160 mattresses were removed from Meridian Hall during the project.