

ReUSE Minnesota

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



LETTER FROM PRESIDENT

2020 was an incredibly difficult year for many in the reuse, rental, and repair community. While the COVID-19 pandemic forced many ReUSE Minnesota members to close their stores and adjust their operations, it also advanced the urgency to re-imagine, redesign, and rebuild American supply chains. As our state reopens again, ReUSE Minnesota is supporting businesses and organizations to embrace a circular, regenerative supply chain, where producers and consumers look first to reuse before purchasing and consuming new products.

This past year was also a time of grieving for our community: ReUSE Minnesota is based in the Twin Cities, and a number of our members are located in South Minneapolis near the 38th and Chicago intersection where George Floyd was killed by the police. In the wake of the unrest that followed and demand for accountability and change, many local businesses boarded up their storefronts.

As businesses started reopening and taking down plywood from windows across the metro, ReUSE Minnesota wanted to minimize unnecessary disposal and encourage reuse of the boards in the community. We created the Twin Cities Plywood Rescue, and over the course of the summer, we coordinated volunteers to collect and transport hundreds of sheets of used plywood for reuse, connecting with local Black-led organizations to preserve any boards with writings or artwork.

At ReUSE Minnesota, we recognize the path to restorative justice includes eliminating environmental destruction and our dependence on single-use practices. Waste incinerators, petrochemical plants and many more polluting facilities are disproportionately located near and actively harm already marginalized communities.

We stood, and continue to stand, with our neighbors advocating for systems change and pursuing justice for George Floyd.

As Sam Grant, director of MN350 said at our 2020 conference, “the same system that creates throwaway products creates throwaway places and peoples.” Waste justice is closely linked to racial justice, and as we reopen and recover from the traumas of COVID-19, we will focus on creating a circular economy that actively breaks down structural inequalities.

JENNY KEDWARD

Board President

LEADERSHIP

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President
Dakota County



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Vice President & Treasurer
Eureka Recycling



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Secretary
Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency



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ANNIE POTTORFF



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MN Computers for Schools

Rethos: Places Reimagined

Tech Discounts

Tech Dump

Tennant Company

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Vibrant Technologies, Inc - Eden Prairie

Eureka Recycling

SMALL ORGANIZATION

7elements, LLC

Bauer Brother's Salvage

Brio Marketing

Community Exchange for Change

Costume Rentals

EcoConsilium, Inc.

Free Geek Twin Cities

Hayes Window Restoration

Hennepin Restomods LLC

Makeville

Miller Upholstering

Old School by Steeple People

Relan

Repair Lair

reTHINK Tailoring

The Next Frontier

USAgain

PUBLIC / GOVERNMENT

Carver County

City of Columbia Heights

City of Lilydale

City of St. Louis Park

City of West St. Paul

Dakota County

Dakota Valley Recycling

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Otter Tail County Solid Waste

University of MN

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Chuck Nemer

Michelle Palm

Deborah Callander

Nancy Drach

Donna Meyer

Peter Truitt

Fred Olson

Shari Hansen

Jennifer Victor-Larsen

Sharon Fischman

Steve Pincuspy

Ellen Lindahl

TESTIMONIALS



Amanda LaGrange, Tech Dump and Tech Discounts

"Tech Dump and Tech Discounts have benefitted from our membership in ReUSE Minnesota. The directory listings and the events have helped us connect to new donors and new customers."



Greg Rue, Arc's Value Village

"Reuse is at the core of Arc's Value Village Thrift Stores. Through ReUSE Minnesota we're able to connect with like-minded groups throughout the community."



Kristen McCoy, reTHINK Tailoring

"What brought me to ReUSE Minnesota is that it's my mission too. It was kind of a no-brainer that I should be a part of that and get involved with what they're doing. It's the exact community that I want to be around."



Nancy Ford, Repair Lair

"Years ago I started buying used clothing and household stuff out of economic necessity and continued out of habit. There's always been an overabundance of used items waiting for new homes and I'm doing my part to provide consumers the best opportunity possible to buy used instead of new."

I worked in the outdoor industry for close to fifteen years selling gear and clothing to campers, skiers, and hikers. The outdoor industry perpetuates the myth that a person needs to spend a bunch of money to be able to fully enjoy the outdoors. My counterattack was to open Repair Lair five years ago. We specialize in repair and consignment of outdoor gear and clothing and have seen double-digit growth every year since we opened.

My ultimate goal is to provide consumers the knowledge to make educated, thoughtful purchases of secondhand goods. Shopping secondhand and repairing what you have is good for the environment and good for your wallet."

2020 BRIGHT SPOTS

COVID-19 Support Webinars

In March and April 2020, we hosted webinars to help our members adapt to our new reality under COVID-19 precautions. These included a webinar about how businesses can receive loans under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; how reuse, rental, and repair businesses were continuing to connect with customers; and how to safely and strategically re-open when the time is right.

Fighting for Our Right to Repair

Over the course of 2020, we shared many ways our members could show their support for Right to Repair legislation, which would require manufacturers to provide access to repair information, manuals, and replacement parts for digital equipment like computers, cellphones, refrigerators and tractors. We urge anyone interested in getting involved to join the Minnesota Right to Repair Coalition, led by Tim Schaefer from Environment Minnesota. If you'd like to get involved, reach out to Tim at tschaefer@environmentminnesota.org.

Twin Cities Plywood Rescue

As businesses across the Twin Cities boarded up their windows in response to community uprisings for justice for George Floyd, we wanted to make sure the leftover plywood wasn't wasted and could be reused. We started the Twin Cities Plywood Rescue and coordinated a volunteer effort to collect plywood and redistribute it to others who could use it.



Overall, over 600 pieces of plywood were donated, and over 500 pieces have been repurposed across the metro. Pillsbury United Communities used the plywood to expand its food shelf, and an international nonprofit, Mano A Mano, used the boards to make shipping crates to send PPE and other medical supplies to Bolivia. The wood was also repurposed to help build a stage for a George Floyd memorial concert and boards were borrowed by Matters and their event vendor, Big Events, for an outdoor benefit concert to raise money to build hospitals around the world.

2020 BRIGHT SPOTS

ReUSE Minnesota understood the historic and emotional value of plywood boards that were painted with messages and images. As our Executive Director Jenny Kedward told KSTP,

“Someone painted this and put their time into it. Not only that it protected a family business. There's so much behind that and we don't want to lose that.”

We connected with Save the Boards and Memorialize the Movement, two Black women-led organizations that sprung out of the need for mural preservation. They added the 50 artboards saved from the Plywood Rescue to their growing collection.



The rescue was covered by local news and radio:

- [Plywood protecting businesses across the metro repurposed after civil unrest](#) - KSTP
- [Recycling the plywood from boarded-up businesses](#) - Southwest Journal
- [Group hopes to save plywood covering Twin Cities businesses](#) - WCCO
- [The Creative Repurposing of Plywood From Boarded-up Stores](#) - Bloomberg City Lab



642 boards collected

500+ blank boards reused in the community

50 boards with artwork or messages given to Memorialize the Movement

46 direct pickups

dozens of active volunteers

6 temporary drop off sites

2020 BRIGHT SPOTS

ReUSE 2020 Conference

Due to the pandemic, we made the decision to move our first national conference online. This increased accessibility for reuse leaders around the country and beyond as we welcomed passionate attendees from 23 U.S. states and 3 Canadian provinces.



VISION FOR A CIRCULAR FUTURE
REUSE2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE • JULY 2020

Hosted by ReUSE Minnesota

Topics included sustainable consumption, how reuse impacts climate change, equity and social justice, marketing, organizational best practices, extending the life of products, and reuse in the building sector. The conference also included breakout sessions, coffee chat roundtables, and reuse trivia.

We were honored to host keynote speakers Sam Grant, Executive Director of MN350, and Will Steger, arctic explorer and founder of Climate Generation. Steger told attendees: **"In addition to helping the environment, repurposing and reusing is great for the mind and for the spirit"**

Grant emphasized to conference attendees that we need to co-create a circular economy without reproducing structural racism. He reminded us: **"2020-2030 is the zero decade for climate justice, and this necessitates making it also the zero decade for zero waste!"**

212 participants from 23 US states and 3 Canadian provinces

76 reuse trivia attendees

50 speakers

15 moderators

9 exhibitors

View the conference agenda and speakers at reusemn.org/2020Conference

Thank you to our sponsors!



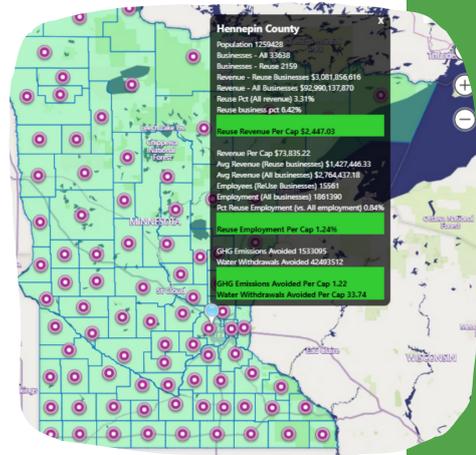
This conference was also made possible by funding from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

2020 BRIGHT SPOTS

ReUSE Impact Report

With funding from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, we conducted a study from late 2019 through early 2020 on the environmental, economic, and social impacts of reuse, rental, and repair activities statewide.

Findings are visualized in the interactive maps published on our website, and key findings include:



Environmental Impacts

- Avoidance of over 2.7 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent emissions per year, including greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons.
- Reduction of over 67 billion gallons in withdrawals of freshwater each year from ground or surface water sources.

Economic Impacts

- Statewide, the reuse economy generates about \$5.8 billion each year – \$1,035 per capita per year.
- The 10,631 reuse businesses make up 7% of all statewide businesses.
- The reuse sector accounts for over 55,000 jobs in Minnesota, about 1 percent of overall employment in the state.

Social Impacts

- Reuse businesses build a community of like-minded individuals. They encourage community identity and involvement.
- Reuse businesses provide value, opportunity, and access to individuals.

In March of 2021, we hosted a webinar to dive into the results and discuss questions from interested stakeholders. Over 100 listeners heard about the impact study results. The methodology and findings have already helped start conversations in counties working to boost their reuse business sector to reduce environmental impacts.

Both the report and the map can be viewed at:
reusemn.org/ImpactReport

2020 BRIGHT SPOTS

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Update

The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources makes recommendations to the state legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF).

From 2018 - 2020, we received ENRTF funding to further support the reuse, repair, and rental sector. We:

- Hired a management company to streamline organizational processes, update our website, and improve our membership structure.
- Hosted two conferences that highlighted reuse innovations, programs, policies, and research. The 2019 conference was the state's first reuse-focused conference, and welcomed 118 attendees. The 2020 virtual national conference, discussed above, welcomed 212 attendees.
- Hosted 20 webinars and educational sessions.
- Staffed booths and presented about reuse at 17 events hosted by other organizations.

We continued to grow our network of nonprofits, businesses, policymakers, educators, and consumers with paid memberships increasing to 205 – a nearly seven-fold increase over the grant period.

We are excited that we have been recommended for ENRTF funding for 2021 - 2023. Funding is contingent on the approval of the 2021 state budget by the Minnesota Legislature and Governor.

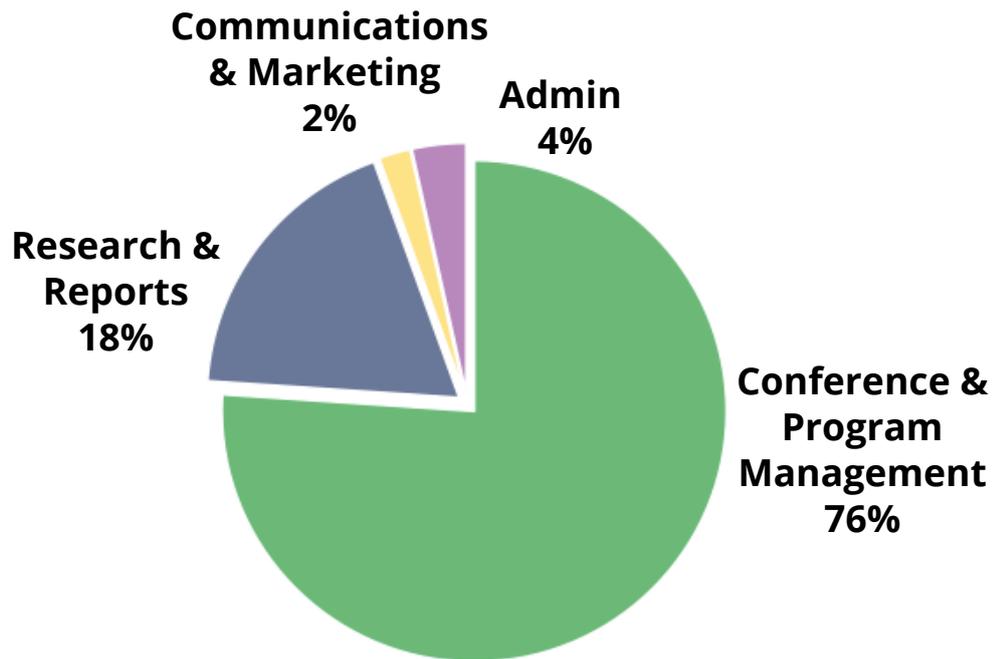
We have proposed to:

- Expand partnerships.
- Create a training plan to bring in the next generation of reuse business owners.
- Host educational events including a national conference and professional development sessions.
- Create policy templates and advocate for reuse practices that decrease use of natural resources.
- Test and implement social marketing techniques to drive consumer behavior towards reuse.
- Measure the impact of reuse across the state through tested, pre-defined tools to prove growth in the reuse, repair and rental sector and environmental, economic and social impacts.

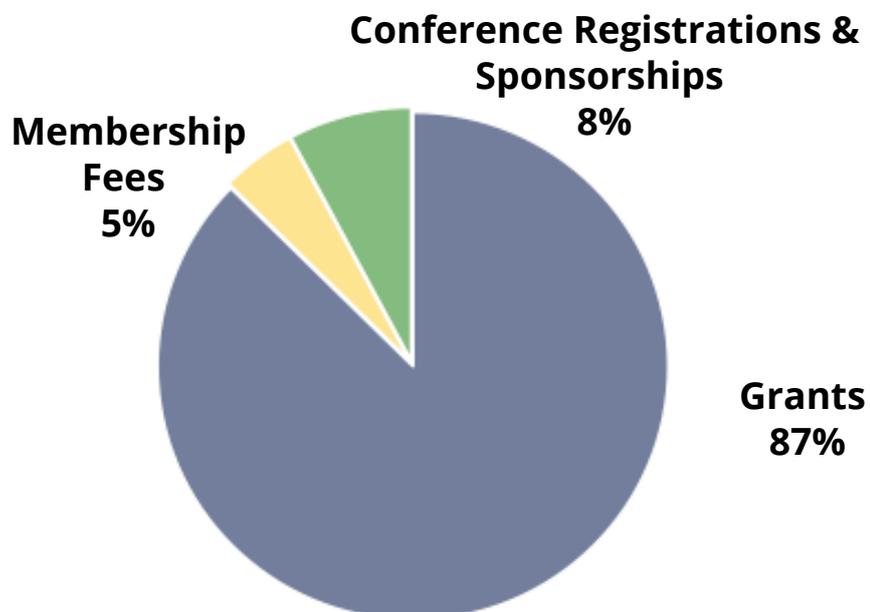


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Operating expenses 2020: \$99,129



Revenue 2020: \$119,936



LOOKING AHEAD

ReUSE Minnesota has several key goals driving our organization's efforts:

- Hire a our first full-time Executive Director, with the guidance of a volunteer hiring committee.
- Support our current members and continue growing our network with new members throughout the state.
- Host virtual events, including monthly ReUSE Minnesota roundtables that will continue to reach new audiences and engage current members.
- Advocate for reuse-related legislation that advances more sustainable consumption, reduces the environmental impacts of new manufacturing and production, and reduces waste generation:
 - Right to Repair
 - Landfill Responsibility Act (LRA)
- Continue research on the impacts of reuse, rental, and repair, writing reports and white papers that identify key findings and trends.
- Continue to support the local economy and reuse community, acting as a resource for Minnesota businesses, job creation, and skills-building.

Join ReUSE Minnesota!

Become a member, donate,
or volunteer.

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