



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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News release

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## **Kenosha County, project partners break ground on Human Services Building relocation**

Construction work on Kenosha County’s Human Services Building project is now officially underway.

County Executive Samantha Kerkman joined other officials and project partners Tuesday, at a groundbreaking ceremony for the long-awaited project.

The county, in an innovative public-private partnership with Bear Development, is developing a facility that will better serve the needs of county residents, while addressing a longstanding facilities issue in county government, Kerkman said.

“This project is of great significance to Kenosha County, and to the entire community,” Kerkman said. “With this location, we are moving vital services to the center of the populations that we serve.”

Once complete, the new facility at 3500 52<sup>nd</sup> St. will house the many Human Services functions that are currently located in the Job Center building at 8600 Sheridan Road, a structure in need of significant repairs.

The new 147,000-square-foot facility will consist of 68,000 square feet of existing retail space that is being thoroughly renovated, as well as a two-story, 79,000-square-foot addition. It is located in the Sun Plaza shopping center, alongside the Kenosha Human Development Services headquarters and across the parking lot from the Kenosha Unified School District Educational Support Center.

Operations to be located in the new facility include the Division of Aging, Disability and Behavioral Health Services; Public Health; Workforce Development and its various functions; the Division of Children and Family Services, Child Support Services and Veterans Services.

“We are breaking ground today on a facility that will not only be efficient for employees, but also a warm, inviting and functional space for all who enter,” said Kenosha County Human Services Director John Jansen. “We look forward to continued collaboration with all of our partners as the project moves forward.”

County Board Chairman Gabe Nudo was also among the dignitaries who spoke at Tuesday’s ceremony.

“The County Board has been supportive of this project from Day 1, and I’m pleased to see construction underway,” Nudo said. “This is a win-win for the county and the community at large.”

Kerkman joined Nudo in thanking the County Board for its ongoing support, offering particular credit to Supervisors Laura Belsky and Zach Stock. Belsky was the Human Services Committee chair when the project was initially approved, while Stock is the current chair overseeing the committee as the work begins.

The county executive also thanked the state for its support. Gov. Tony Evers in March 2022 awarded a \$9.85 million Neighborhood Investment Fund grant to benefit the project.

Under the public-private partnership arrangement, Bear Development is redeveloping and will own the property for five years after the county’s occupancy begins, at which point ownership will transfer to Kenosha County.

As part of the agreement, Bear will assume ownership of the Job Center property on Sheridan Road upon Kenosha County taking occupancy at Sun Plaza. The Job Center property will be used for future private development.

Bear Real Estate Development Group President S.R. Mills said the company is pleased to be a partner in the project.

“The relocation of Kenosha County Human Services is a major catalyst for existing retail businesses in Sun Plaza,” Mills said. “The redevelopment of the center will spur additional investment opportunities along the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street corridor and throughout the Wilson Heights neighborhood.”

Other project partners include Bear-affiliated general contractor Construction Management Associates Inc. and Kenosha-based Partners in Design Architects.

Occupancy of the building is currently expected at roughly midyear 2025.

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