

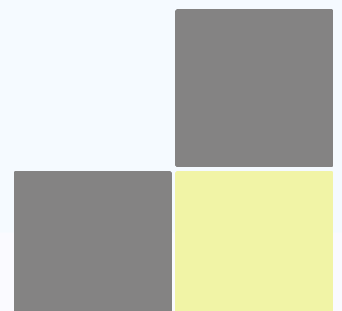
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Working together to address
homelessness in Kenosha County



Prepared by

The ESN Public Relations Committee



WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK

Mission

To strengthen the impact of service delivery in meeting emergency needs through coordinated planning and cooperative delivery of services.

Vision

To be widely known as a leader and trusted hub for information, referral, and collaboration that meets the needs of people experiencing homelessness and poverty.

A Legacy of Working Together

The Emergency Services Network began in the mid-1980s as an effort to bring community organizations together around hunger and shelter needs.

ESN is currently a coalition of over 30 agencies across the public and private sectors that come together monthly to learn, share resources, and coordinate care to ensure all our neighbors in Kenosha County have access to the resources they need to be safe and stable.

Over the years, ESN has:

- Expanded from a small group of “core agencies” to a countywide network of agencies.
- Supported shared funding initiatives such as SHARES and the Emergency Food & Shelter Program
- Helped Kenosha secure its first HUD Continuum of Care program funding.
- Continues today with 5 homeless programs supporting 78 housing units at any given time, and 2 supportive services-only funded programs.
- Helps Kenosha secure State of Wisconsin Funding to support 2 shelters and 7 Rapid Rehousing housing units across the community.
- Adapted to changing community needs, including economic downturns and the COVID-19 pandemic

What ESN Does

- Brings agencies together to share information and coordinate services
- Reduces duplication and identifies gaps in the local system
- Aligns local efforts with state and federal homelessness strategies
- Supports data-informed decision-making and planning

“ESN has been a constant presence through decades of change.”

WHY ESN



Homelessness in Kenosha County: A Shared Community Challenge

Homelessness affects individuals and families across Kenosha County, including seniors, veterans, youth, and working families. Rising housing costs, limited affordable units, and unexpected crises can quickly push people into instability. Addressing homelessness requires coordination, shared responsibility, and solutions that reflect the full complexity of people's lives.

No single organization can respond to this challenge alone. Collaboration is essential to ensure resources are used effectively, services are coordinated, and people are connected to the right support at the right time. In 2025, ESN partner agencies worked together to serve **843 individuals and provided 21,318 nights of shelter*** across Kenosha County. This reflects the scale of coordinated services addressing homelessness and housing instability.

ESN hosted external presenters throughout the year, and used presentations to strengthen shared understanding and improve referrals across agencies.

2025 ESN Guest Presenters

Housing & Homeless Systems

- Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Kenosha Human Development Services

Legal Services

- Legal Action of Wisconsin
- ELCA Outreach Center

Education & Workforce

- Gateway Technical College
- UW-Parkside
- UW-Parkside Educational Opportunity Center

Local Government & Community Development

- City of Kenosha Department of City Development

Emergency Response & Disaster Services

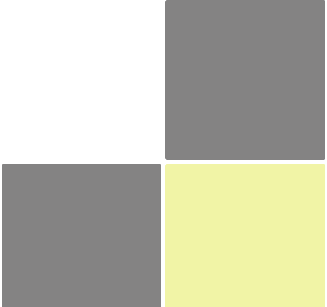
- The Salvation Army

“The strength of ESN is that it evolves with the community while staying rooted in collaboration.”

“ESN provides a space where agencies can communicate openly, problem-solve together, and better support the people we serve.”

“Having the people who work with our neighbors in need all in the same space is extremely valuable. It works against silos, prevents redundancy, and reminds nonprofit leaders they are not alone.”

**Data from Kenosha County HMIS system*



COORDINATED ENTRY & CASE CONFERENCING

Coordinated Entry: A No-Wrong-Door Approach

Coordinated Entry is Kenosha County’s system for assessing housing needs and prioritizing assistance for people experiencing homelessness.

It ensures:

- Equal access regardless of where someone first seeks help
- Consistent assessment tools and shared standards
- Prioritization based on vulnerability and need

“Collaboration through ESN allowed us to connect clients to housing resources we wouldn’t have accessed on our own.”



Connect with CE Providers:

KHDS (262)764-8555

Shalom Center (262)658-1713

The Sharing Center (262)298-5535

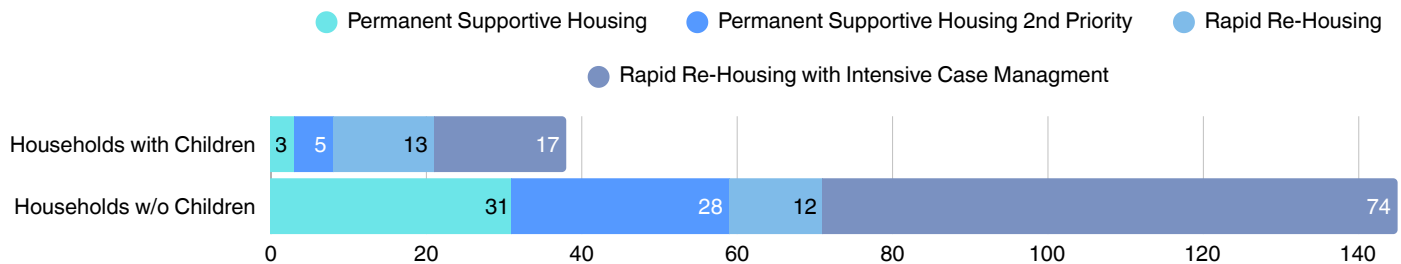
Women’s and Children’s Horizons (262)652-9900

Learn about becoming a CE Provider

Contact Cheryl Kobs, SSO Coordinated Entry Specialist: ckobs@khds.org

Housing needed to resolve current priority list:

For the households who identified as homeless on March 3, 2026, these are the number of housing units needed to move every household directly from homelessness into housing that meets their needs. Kenosha County could reach “functional zero,” meaning homelessness is rare and quickly resolved.



This information is based on households on the priority list as of the date this report was run. PSH = Chronic. PSH 2nd Priority = not chronic, but has disability & 12+ months homeless in past 3 years. RRH w/ ICM = not chronic, has disability and <12 months homeless or no disability and 12+ months homeless. RRH = not chronic, no disability, < 12 months homeless.

Case Conferencing: Adding the Human Element

Through regular Coordinated Entry Case Conferences, service providers come together to review the priority list, share insights, and problem-solve barriers to housing. This process adds a critical human perspective to data-driven systems and improves housing matches and outcomes.

“Case Conferencing introduces the essential human element into Coordinated Entry, fostering thoughtful and person-centered decision-making.”

2025 IMPACT

Making a Difference Together

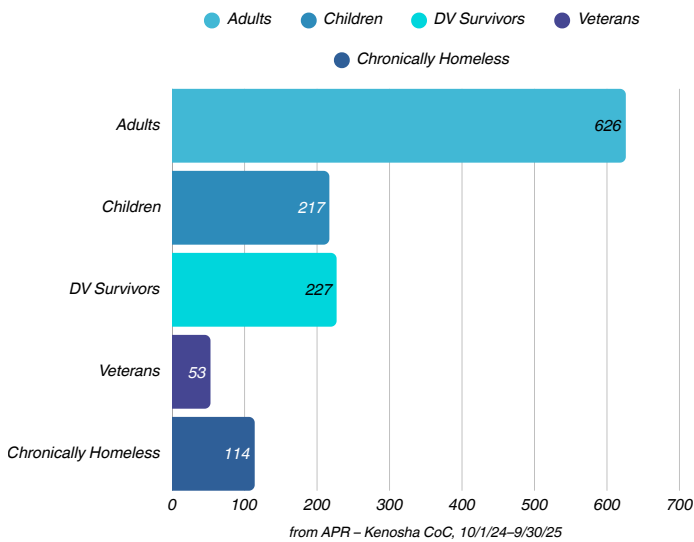
In 2025, ESN partners made measurable and meaningful impacts across Kenosha County. These successes reflect what is possible when agencies work together.

ESN provides access to Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding. ESG is a consolidated application that provides funding for emergency shelter, rental assistance, and prevention funds for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.

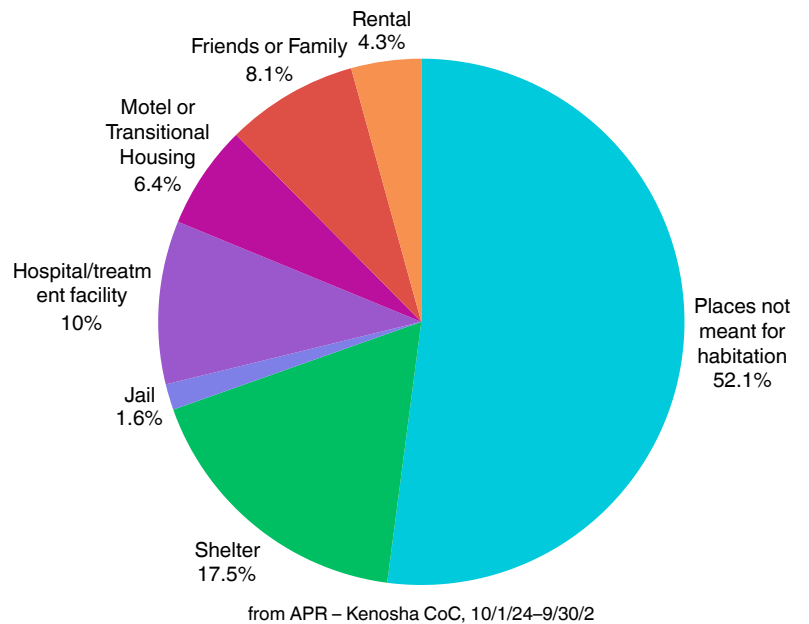
Who Was Served in 2025



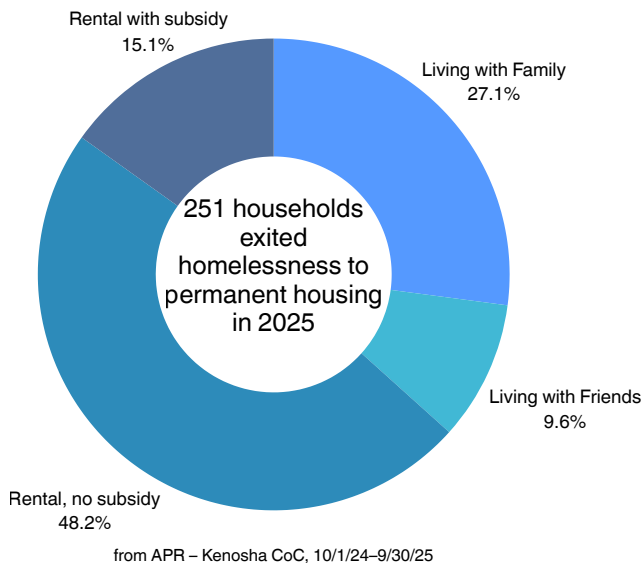
Individuals Served Through the ESN System in 2025



Living Situation
Night before first accessing services



Exits to Permanent Housing

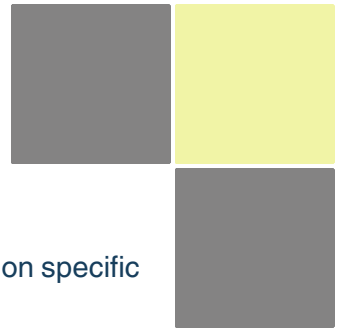


“Having multiple agencies at the table leads to better outcomes for clients.”

Programs included in this data:

- 7 Homeless programs
- 2 Shelter programs
- 2 Outreach programs
- 2 Supportive services programs
- 1 Prevention program
- 1 Emergency motel voucher program

COMMITTEES & COLLABORATION



From Planning to Action

ESN's work is carried out through standing committees and workgroups that focus on specific aspects of homelessness response and system coordination.

Standing Committees

“ESN committees give agencies a place to contribute beyond their own programs.”



Public Relations Committee

Role: Communication, membership, outreach, and engagement

In 2025: Strengthened ESN's visibility and communication by launching the annual impact report, streamlining membership processes, and introducing new tools to support engagement and transparency.



Homeless Awareness & Prevention Partnership Committee

Role: Education, trends, prevention strategies, and landlord engagement

In 2025: Coordinated community education and prevention efforts throughout 2025, including Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, seasonal planning, and cross-agency dialogue focused on reducing housing instability before crises occur.



Point in Time Committee

Role: Planning and conducting twice annual counts and reviewing trends

In 2025: Planned and executed twice annual PIT Counts, maintained data tools and Care Pages, and used results to inform system planning and funding readiness.



Action Plan Committee

Role: Coordination of goals and reporting aligned with CoC requirements

In 2025: Advanced system performance improvement by reviewing outcome data, initiating a NIATX process study, and aligning local priorities with state and federal expectations.

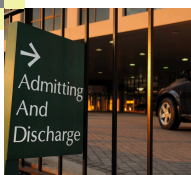
“Committee work helps move conversations into action.”



Humane Advocacy Committee

Role: Promoting access, best practices, and human-centered care

In 2025: Elevated lived experience voices by designing and implementing a countywide survey that informed system improvements, access gaps, and dignity-centered practices.



Discharge Planning Committee

Role: Preventing discharge into homelessness through cross-system collaboration

In 2025: Re-established cross-system coordination to address institutional discharges that place individuals at risk of homelessness, with renewed focus on prevention and continuity of care.

Together, these committees turn collaboration into action and ensure ESN's work remains responsive and strategic.



Lived Experience: What People Told Us

In 2025, the Humane Advocacy Committee gathered feedback from people with lived experience of homelessness in Kenosha County. Their responses offer critical insight into how people experience homelessness, how they connect to services, and where gaps remain.

Who Responded

- Most respondents were age 45 and older, with the largest group between 55 and 61
- Three-quarters reported living alone
- More than 70% reported annual income below \$20,000

Living Situations: Ongoing Instability

- 86% reported staying in a place not meant for human habitation in the past year
- Nearly half reported living on the street at the time of the survey
- Many moved between the street, shelters, and temporary arrangements within the same year



Accessing Help: The First 24 Hours Matter

62% of respondents were unable to connect to help within the first 24 hours of becoming homeless or facing immediate housing loss

How People Connect to Services

Most respondents reported accessing services by calling or walking into an agency, while others connected through direct contact by Outreach Staff. These findings underscore the importance of visible, accessible entry points and proactive outreach efforts.

What's Working

- Two-thirds said services helped meet at least some of their needs

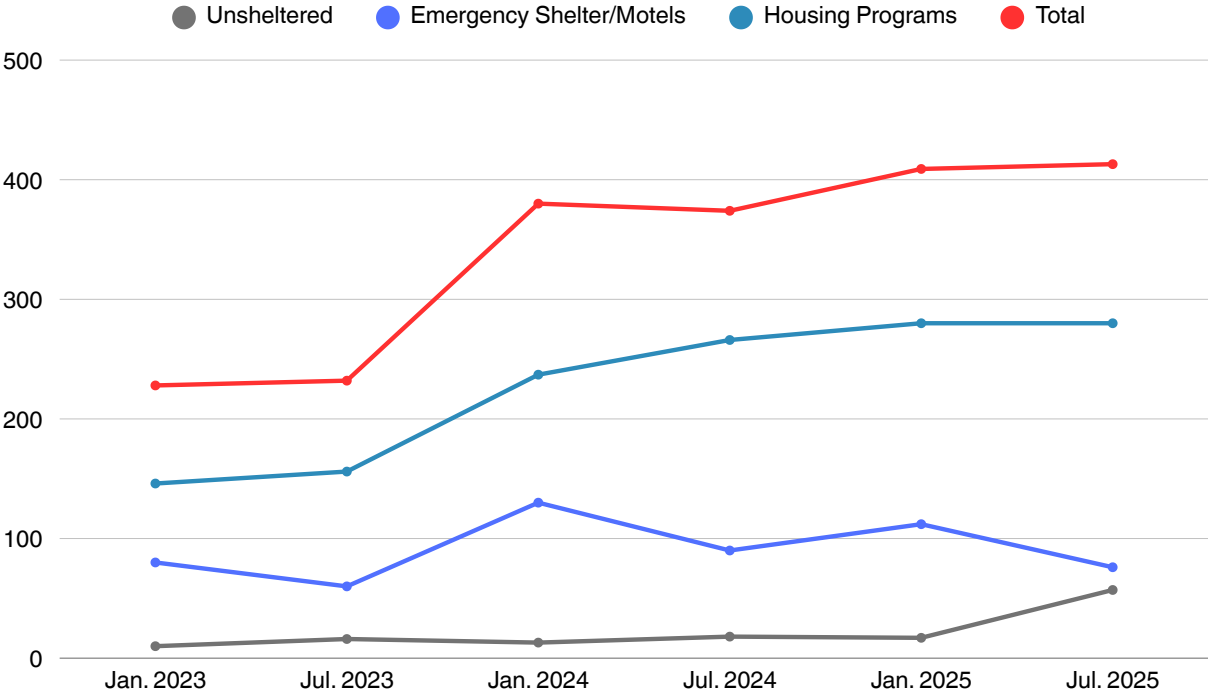
While many appreciated the support they received, respondents also cited long waitlists, limited shelter availability, and challenges with follow-up as ongoing barriers.

What Gaps Remain

- More immediate and accessible housing options
- Additional shelter capacity, especially during winter months
- Clearer communication and follow-up
- Shorter wait times and fewer barriers
- Respect, compassion, and dignity
- Support for pets, transportation, and basic needs like hygiene

Point In Time Data

Point In Time Count



Looking Ahead: Working Toward Solutions Together

As housing challenges continue to evolve, ESN will use data, lived experience feedback, and cross-sector collaboration to:

- Strengthen prevention and early intervention
- Align resources with the greatest needs
- Advocate for housing solutions that reflect community realities

Ensure Kenosha County remains prepared, coordinated, and responsive



ESN MEMBERS

A Countywide Network

Membership in the Emergency Services Network includes nonprofit, public, and private partners working across housing, health, food security, workforce development, education, and public systems.

Together, ESN members represent a coordinated response that spans prevention, crisis intervention, and long-term stability.

- Aurora Kenosha Medical Center - aurora.org
- Boys & Girls Club of Kenosha - bgckenosha.org
- Calderon Property Management LLC - calderonpropertymanagementllc.com
- Captain James A. Lovell - va.gov/lovell-federal-health-care-va
- City of Kenosha Housing Authority - kenosha.org/departments/housing_authority
- ELCA Outreach Center - elcaoutreachcenter.org
- EQUUS Workforce Solutions - equusworks.com
- Gateway Technical College - gtc.edu
- Goodwill Industries of SE WI, Inc. - goodwillgreatermc.org
- Habitat for Humanity of Kenosha - habitatkenosha.org
- Kenosha Community Health Center - pillarhealthcare.org
- Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center - kenoshacountywi.gov/155/Aging-Disability-Resource-Center
- Kenosha County Division of Workforce Development - kenoshacountywi.gov/264/Workforce-Development
- Kenosha County Veterans - kenoshacountywi.gov/368/Veterans-Services
- Kenosha Human Development Services, Inc. - khds.org
- Kenosha Unified School District - kUSD.edu
- Legal Action of Wisconsin - legalaction.org
- Local Missions, Immanuel United Methodist Church - facebook.com/immanuelkenosha/
- MHS Health Wisconsin - mhswi.com
- PSN Family Resource Center - psnfamilyresourcecenter.com
- Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency, Inc. - rkcaa.org
- Salvation Army - salvationarmyusa.org/wi/kenosha/75th-street-corps/
- Shalom Center - shalomcenter.org
- Sharing Center Inc. - thesharingcenter.net
- UMOS - umos.org
- United Health Care - uhc.com
- United Way of Kenosha County - kenoshaunitedway.org
- University of Wisconsin-Parkside - uwp.edu
- Veterans Path to Hope - veteranspathtohope.org
- Vivent Health - viventhealth.org
- Wisconsin Department of Corrections - doc.wi.gov
- Women and Children's Horizons - wchkenosha.org

THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Connecting Kenosha to State and Federal Solutions

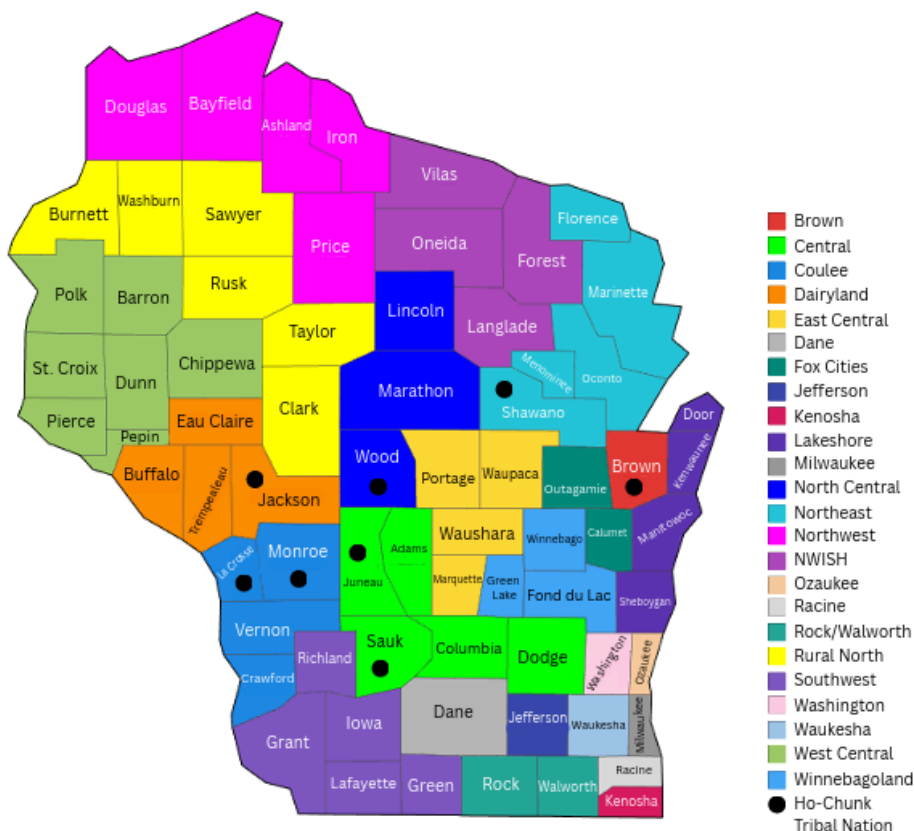
- The Emergency Services Network is Kenosha County’s local homeless coalition and is part of the Wisconsin Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC).
- The Continuum of Care is a federal framework designed to:
 - Promote community-wide commitment to ending homelessness
 - Coordinate housing and service resources
 - Prioritize people with the greatest vulnerability
 - Ensure accountability and effective use of public funds
- Through ESN’s participation in the Balance of State CoC, Kenosha County agencies are connected to statewide planning, federal funding opportunities, and shared best practices.



Why This Matters for Kenosha

- Access to critical housing and homelessness funding
- Shared standards and coordinated systems
- Stronger outcomes through collaboration

The WI BOS COC serves 69 counties in WI, all except Dane, Milwaukee, and Racine. WI BOS COC gathers four times per year to learn, celebrate, encourage, and equip our membership body. Anyone can register for our quarterly meetings.



“Being part of ESN ensures Kenosha has a voice at the state and federal level.”