

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Between

Ashtabula County Family YMCA

and

Kent State University at Ashtabula

Effective Date: March 1, 2026

I. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a framework for exploring a collaboration between the Ashtabula County Family YMCA ("YMCA") and Kent State University at Ashtabula ("KSU Ashtabula").

The parties are in the early stages of exploring a potential partnership related to the YMCA's planned new facility project and a future capital campaign. This MOU is intended to support productive dialogue as both organizations seek to better understand potential partnership models, shared services, costs, opportunities, and community benefits that could arise from working together.

This MOU reflects a mutual commitment to learning, planning, and exploration of how the missions, assets, and resources of both organizations—including existing campus facilities and potential new construction—might complement one another for the benefit of students, families, and the broader Ashtabula County community.

II. Shared Vision and Intent

Through this collaboration, the YMCA and KSU Ashtabula intend to:

1. Explore the potential strategic alignment between the YMCA's planned new facility project and KSU Ashtabula's campus, programs, and student experience.
2. Assess possible opportunities for shared services, programming, and facilities that could enhance efficiency and community impact.
3. Identify potential partnership models that may support the YMCA's future capital campaign.
4. Evaluate potential costs, benefits, and operational considerations associated with any collaborative initiatives.

5. Evaluate potential opportunities to strengthen community access to wellness, education, and recreational opportunities.

Both parties acknowledge that creative use of existing campus space, as well as potential new construction, could play a role in future collaboration.

III. Connection to the New YMCA Facility Project and Campus Facilities

The parties agree that discussions of possible collaboration opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the following as they relate to the YMCA's planned new facility and existing KSU Ashtabula campus assets:

- Potential programmatic collaboration benefiting both YMCA members and KSU Ashtabula students
- Exploration of shared or complementary spaces, services, or amenities, where feasible
- Consideration of how a YMCA facility could serve as a community and student wellness hub
- Discussion of how proximity, access, or partnership could benefit both organizations over the long term

Exploration of Existing KSU Ashtabula Space

As part of these discussions, the parties may explore, at a conceptual level:

- The potential repurposing or shared use of the existing KSU Ashtabula bookstore space for preschool or early learning programming affiliated with the YMCA, subject to further study and separate agreement between the parties.
- The potential repurposing of the existing KSU Ashtabula Library to support a YMCA presence, with opportunities for shared programming, community engagement, student wellness initiatives, and other mutually beneficial uses.

Exploration of Potential New Construction or Build-Out

The parties may also discuss the feasibility of:

- A possible build-out or construction of facilities such as, but not limited to, a gymnasium, aquatics center (pool), and associated locker room facilities as part of a future YMCA facility concept.

- How such facilities could serve both KSU Ashtabula students and the broader community while aligning with the YMCA's mission and long-term capital plans.

Any specific facility arrangements, renovations, construction projects, leases, or shared-use models would require separate, formal agreements approved by both parties and their respective governing bodies consistent with the requirements of applicable Ohio law.

IV. Alignment with a Future Capital Campaign

The YMCA anticipates launching a future capital campaign related to its new facility project. Through this MOU, the parties agree to:

- Engage in dialogue regarding how KSU Ashtabula might be involved as a strategic partner, community collaborator, or supporter of the capital campaign.
- Explore potential mutual benefits that could arise from alignment between the campaign and KSU Ashtabula's institutional priorities.
- Consider how the campaign could support broader community outcomes that align with KSU Ashtabula's mission of education and community engagement, including potential shared facilities or campus partnerships.
- Explore how a potential partnership could increase awareness and engagement for both organizations by introducing new users to each other's spaces, programs, and services—supporting both KSU Ashtabula enrollment and YMCA membership growth.

Nothing in this MOU obligates KSU Ashtabula to provide financial support. Any future commitments between the parties would require separate agreements and approvals by the parties' respective governing bodies.

V. Areas for Exploration

The parties agree to engage in good-faith discussions regarding:

- Student wellness, recreation, and engagement opportunities
- Internship, experiential learning, or workforce development collaborations
- Community programming and partnerships
- Potential shared services or operational efficiencies

- Long-term strategic alignment related to facilities and community impact
- Potential shared or complementary use of campus facilities, including library, bookstore, or new construction opportunities

No specific programs, services, or financial commitments are approved under this MOU.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

Each party will designate a primary contact to guide ongoing discussions:

- **YMCA Primary Contact:** _____ Eric Stinehelfer _____
- **KSU Ashtabula Primary Contact:** ___ Bill Ayres _____

Both parties commit to transparent, respectful, and collaborative communication throughout the exploratory process. Each organization retains full autonomy over its operations, finances, and decision-making.

VII. Financial Understanding

This MOU does not create any financial obligation for either party.

Any future financial commitments, cost-sharing arrangements, leases, renovations, construction agreements, or resource investments will require separate written agreements approved by both organizations.

VIII. Term and Termination

This MOU shall remain in effect for twelve (12) months from the effective date and may be extended by additional 12 month increments by mutual agreement of the parties.


Either party may terminate this MOU with thirty (30) days written notice.

IX. Non-Binding Nature

This MOU is non-binding and does not create a legal partnership, joint venture, or contractual obligation. It is intended solely as a framework for collaboration and exploration.

X. Signatures


Ashtabula County Family YMCA

Name: Eric Strohelfer
Title: CEO
Signature: 
Date: 2/19/26

Reviewed as to legal form and sufficiency for YMCA:

Name: N/A Eric Strohelfer
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Kent State University at Ashtabula

Name: Re William Ayres
Title: Dean + Chief Administrative Officer
Signature: 
Date: 2/26/26

Reviewed as to legal form and sufficiency for KSU:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Reviewed as to legal
sufficiency and form

Kent State University
Office of General Counsel

