

# CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

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<http://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20110414/FREE/110419946/neighborhood-services-organization-to-turn-michigan-bell-building>

## Neighborhood Services Organization to turn Michigan Bell building into apartments for homeless

The **Neighborhood Services Organization** on Tuesday plans to begin renovations to convert the former **Michigan Bell Telephone Co.** building in Detroit into housing for the city's homeless.

The \$50 million project will create 155 one-bedroom apartments and numerous support services to help stabilize formerly homeless adults, along with administrative offices for the NSO, in the 255,000-square-foot building.

The NSO expects to complete the building — at 882 Oakman Blvd., near Woodrow Wilson on the border between Detroit and Highland Park — in the fall of 2012.

The NSO has raised \$40 million of the project's cost through a combination of equity financing, tax credits, loans and grants. The nonprofit has launched a campaign to raise the remaining \$10 million from individual donors, corporations and foundations.

The project is expected to help revitalize the surrounding north-central



The Neighborhood Services Organization plans to convert the former Michigan Bell building in Detroit into 155 one-bedroom apartments for the homeless.

Detroit neighborhood and represents a mix of private and public investment. Contributors include the **Michigan State Housing Development Authority**, city of Detroit, Wayne County, **Kresge Foundation**, **McGregor Fund**, **National Trust Community Investment Corp.**, **Bank of America**, **Corporation for Supportive Housing**, **Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corp.** and the **Opportunity Resource Fund**.

When complete, the building will offer addiction treatment; mental–health counseling and case management services; life skills training; a library; computer, art and music rooms; a gym and fitness center; chapel; laundry; walk–out roof gardens; and a small sundry shop.

Plans also call for locating a federally qualified health care clinic on the site to provide care to residents and the surrounding community.

Last August, the NSO told Crain's that it expects to move all 200 of its employees to the renovated Michigan Bell building from its current home at 220 Bagley by the first half of 2012. The nonprofit employs an additional 125 people at different sites in Detroit and at a Pontiac office.

Residents of the new housing will have access to vocational training and educational programs through nearby **Focus: HOPE**, which sold the building to the NSO for an undisclosed amount.