

# What is CoreCivic? Inside private prison's troubled Leavenworth tenure

BY MATTHEW KELLY  
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CoreCivic, the largest private prison chain in the U.S., won a hard-fought victory in Leavenworth on Tuesday evening, when the city commission granted a special use zoning permit that will allow the company to reopen its shuttered detention center under a contract with ICE.

The 4-1 zoning decision comes after nearly a year of CoreCivic arguing in court that it should be allowed to reopen its facility without a permit.

The debate roiled a community divided over both the prospect of playing a role in President Donald Trump's mass deportation campaign and allowing CoreCivic to reopen following its previous stint in Leavenworth, which ended in a run of months marked by chronic violence and understaffing.

Now that local leaders have cleared the way, CoreCivic can begin accepting detainees under its \$60 million-a-year contract with ICE. Company officials say the rebranded Midwest Regional Reception Center can accommodate up to 1,033 adult detainees.



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Anti-ICE protesters gathered outside of Leavenworth City Hall after the Leavenworth city commission meeting which approved a zoning permit Tuesday, March 10, 2026, that allows CoreCivic, a private prison company, to reopen its facility as an ICE detention center.

## CORECIVIC'S HISTORY IN LEAVENWORTH

The Brentwood, Tennessee-based company first opened a detention center in Leavenworth in 1992.

Before its closure at the end of 2021, the facility served as a maximum-security federal prison, housing violent offenders on behalf of the U.S. Marshals Service in 192,000 square feet of stark white cinder blocks, drywall and closed-circuit television

cameras.

That contract lapsed after then-President Joe Biden issued an executive order barring the Department of Justice from contracting with private prisons.

Conditions at the facility deteriorated in its final year of operation, as chronic violence and the stockpiling of weapons and drugs threatened the safety of employees and inmates. Attorneys representing inmates there said the

facility's culture of violence and inattentiveness led to two suicides and at least 10 severe beatings and stabbings in its final year of operation.

The company blamed the understaffing and dangerous conditions on industry-wide challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## WHO OWNS CORECIVIC?

CoreCivic is a privately traded company. Public

records show that institutional investment groups BlackRock and The Vanguard Group own the most shares of the company.

CoreCivic's current CEO is Patrick Swindle, who took over on Jan. 1 after serving in several other leadership roles, including executive vice president and chief operating officer.

The company reported record revenue in 2025, thanks in large part to the Trump administration's immigration crackdown and the federal government's need to enter into new contracts with private prisons to house ICE detainees.

"Our business is perfectly aligned with the demands of this moment," CoreCivic's former CEO Damon Hininger said during an August 2025 earnings call.

## PROBLEMS AT CORECIVIC ICE PRISONS

The company operates at least 14 immigrant detention centers around the country.

Despite CoreCivic's insistence that it prioritizes inmates' medical care and provides adequate accommodations, the company has faced numerous lawsuits in recent years over conditions at its facilities.

Those lawsuits allege a wide array of misdeeds by

CoreCivic, including accusations of medical neglect, falsifying records to cover up unsafe conditions, human rights violations and failure to protect inmates from harm, including physical and sexual assaults.

There have also been a number of deaths in CoreCivic facilities in recent years, including 32-year-old Lorenzo Antonio Barez Vargas, a Mexican man who died last September at the CoreCivic-managed Central Arizona Correctional Complex in Florence.

His cause of death is still unknown, but he had multiple medical conditions, and his family members have raised questions about the adequacy of his care.

## JOBS AT CORECIVIC

CoreCivic says it has already hired around 280 of the roughly 300 workers it plans to employ at the Midwest Regional Reception Center.

The company's website listed 27 active job openings for its Leavenworth facility on Friday evening. Open positions include detention officer, recreation supervisor, certified medical assistant, psychiatrist, shift supervisor, assistant shift supervisor, master scheduler, locksmith, maintenance worker and human resource assistant.

Detention officer pay is listed as \$28.25 an hour. Some hourly workers make more than that and others make less, according to the website. Shift supervisors have a listed salary of \$80,027.



ARASH KHAMOOSHI NYT

A crowd, holding images of the two, gathers to celebrate Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of the recently killed supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as his father's successor Monday at Enghelab Square in Tehran.

# New Iranian leader wounded early in war, officials say

BY FARNAZ FASSIHI AND RONEN BERGMAN  
NYT News Service

Three days after Mojtaba Khamenei was proclaimed to have succeeded his slain father as Iran's supreme leader, he has not appeared on video or in public nor issued any written statements.

One reason is concern that any communication could reveal his location and put him in danger, according to three Iranian officials speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive subject in Iran.

But another factor is that Khamenei, 56, was injured on the opening day of the attack by Israel and the United States, they said.

The three Iranian officials said they were told by more senior figures in

the government over the past two days that Khamenei had suffered injuries, including to his legs, but that he was alert and sheltering at a highly secure location with limited communication.

Two Israeli military officials said information gathered by Israel had also led the defense establishment to believe that Khamenei suffered leg injuries on Feb. 28, a conclusion they reached even before he was selected as the new supreme leader Sunday. The Israeli officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

The full circumstances and extent of Khamenei's injuries were unclear.

His father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in Israeli airstrikes on a leadership compound in the heart of Tehran, also on Feb. 28. The new supreme leader's mother, wife and

son as well as several top Iranian defense officials were also killed in that daytime attack.

One hint of Mojtaba Khamenei's condition has been references on state television and the state news agency IRNA, which called him the "wounded war veteran" supreme leader. Also, a statement from Komiteh Emdad, a powerful government religious charity, congratulating Khamenei calls him a "janbaz jang," the Persian term for a veteran wounded in war.

On Tuesday, local media in Iran asked Esmail Baghaei, the spokesperson of Iran's Foreign Ministry, if Khamenei had taken charge and assumed his new role as the country's top religious and political figure and the commander in chief of armed forces.

Baghaei would not an-

swer the question directly and said, "those who have to receive the message have received the message."

Khamenei has remained a mysterious figure. He has seldom, if ever, delivered public speeches or attended public events. Iranian media began circulating a half-minute-long video with just still photographs of him and a short biography.

On Friday, when it emerged that Khamenei was the front-runner in the succession selection, Israeli fighter jets dropped bunker-busting bombs on the remaining structure of the supreme leader's office and living compound, shattering it into rubble, satellite photographs showed.

Iranian officials said they believed that the target of the strikes was Khamenei but that he was not there. Israel's defense minister, Israel Katz, had said in a social media post that any successor to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei would be a target. President Donald Trump said he was not happy with Mojtaba Khamenei's ascent but that he would not address whether or not the U.S. planned to try to kill him.

In Iran, Khamenei may be physically out of public view, but his face is already on large banners installed around Tehran and on a gigantic mural showing his late father handing him the flag of Iran.

Khamenei, who has deep ties to Iran's Revolutionary Guard, was a power player in the shadows for years. He coordinated security and military affairs for his father's office. But little is known about his personality or plans for ruling Iran other than his deep ties to the Guard and the hard-line faction.

# Officers find man fatally shot near Kansas City's North Town Fork Creek neighborhood

BY CAROLINE ZIMMERMAN  
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One man is dead Tuesday evening following a shooting near Kansas City's North Town Fork Creek neighborhood.

Officers with the Kansas City Police Department responded to the area of **Chestnut Avenue and East 55th Street** just after 5:45 p.m. on reports of a shooting, department spokesperson Alayna Gonzalez said in a news release.

There, investigators found a man unresponsive in a grassy area suffering from gunshot wounds, Gonzalez said. The man was transported to an area hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

Gonzalez said the department didn't have any

details about the incident Tuesday as detectives continued to process the scene. Police have not yet released the victim's name.

The shooting is being investigated as a homicide, and a person of interest has not been identified.

The man's death marks **Kansas City's 24th homicide of 2026**, compared to 26 at this time last year, according to data tracked by The Star, which includes fatal police shootings.

Anyone with information regarding the incident is asked to call KCPD homicide detectives at 816-234-5043 or the anonymous TIPS Hotline at 816-474-TIPS (8477). Tips submitted to the hotline may be eligible for a reward of up to \$25,000.

## BIRTHDAYS: MARCH 12

### Britannica

Biographical information from March 12 is from Encyclopaedia Britannica. Explore more at [britannica.com](https://www.britannica.com).

**James Taylor**, American musician (b. 1948).

**Liza Minnelli**, American actress and singer (b. 1946).

**Jack Kerouac**, American writer (b. 1922).

**Jane A. Delano**, American nurse and educator (b. 1862).

**George Berkeley**, Irish philosopher (b. 1685).

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