

July 29, 2026

Houghton County Jail Committee
49850 Highway US-41
Hancock, MI 49930

Jail & Sheriff's Office - Rough Order of Magnitude

Members of the Houghton County Jail Committee,

We commend your efforts and foresight to involve industry experts in the process of budgeting and planning for a new justice facility in Houghton County that meets the needs of the community. We are eager to provide input developed through 45 years of constructing justice facilities such as the one your committee is endeavoring to get started. We have reviewed all of the documents that the Jail Committee has made public to get an understanding of the needs of Houghton County Sheriff's Office. We feel that the best way to provide rough order of magnitude pricing is to provide benchmark costs and project statistics for facilities that we have recently constructed. Accordingly, the following data represents costs and characteristics of similar projects that all had both a jail and sheriff's office.

The sample conceptual below costs represent "construction costs" which includes all bricks and mortar, sitework, and all Construction Manager or Design/Build costs and fees. To arrive at Total Project Cost, you should also anticipate and include Owner Soft Costs such as design fees; furniture, fixtures & equipment (FF&E); utility provider fees; legal fees; and Owner provided systems such as jail management systems, law enforcement radios, and video visitation, etc. Owner soft costs typically range from 15% - 25% of the construction costs (For instance, \$600/SF construction costs X 20% Owner soft cost = \$720/SF total project cost).

				
Project	Alpena Co Jail	Monroe Co Jail	Fairfield Co Jail	Fayette Co Jail
Total SF	32,441	33,000	110,786	46,249
# Beds	94	114	382	104
Const. Cost (In 2026 \$)	\$19,992,566	\$21,057,330	\$57,608,662	\$34,952,982
Construction Hard Cost \$/SF	\$616.27	\$638.10	\$520.00	\$755.76



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Typical Owner Costs 15% - 25%	\$92 - \$154	\$96 - \$160	\$78 - \$130	\$113 - \$189
Total Project Cost Construction Hard Cost + Owner Soft Cost	\$708 - \$770	\$734 - \$798	\$598 - \$650	\$869 - \$945

In summary, the total project cost for a jail and sheriff's office in Houghton County a rough order of magnitude (ROM) should be between \$709/SF - \$945/SF. This cost range is the result of many factors:



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- **Building structure:** Projects listed above that are at the low end of the ROM price range are a pre-engineered metal building (PEMB) which is the least expensive structure and envelope system. Precast concrete wall panels are a close second. Steel framed and masonry building structures are typically the most expensive up front but provide the most flexibility with improved performance.
- **Cell types:** Along with type of cell, cell configuration is a big driver in jail cost. The least expensive cell configuration and type is when prefabricated cells are configured in a "pod style" stacked (mezzanine) configuration where the top of the lower cell serves as the floor for the cell above and the rear of the cells serve as the secure perimeter and the exterior wall and envelope. Projects above with higher square foot cost are one or two level masonry cells with Y chases for utilities.
- **Dayroom Configuration:** Projects with lower cost per square foot maximize beds per cell. Dorm style dayrooms have the least cost followed by 4-man cells with single man cells being the most expensive. There needs to be a mixture of different dayroom configurations to meet inmate classifications but having the ability to increase beds per dayroom reduces cost.
- **Level of finishes:** Jails aren't known for extravagant finishes but there is a cost gradient which has upsides for cost or longevity and maintenance. For instance, sealed concrete is much less expensive than epoxy flooring. High abuse drywall ceilings are less expensive than security metal ceilings.
- **Building density:** The easiest way to affect the cost of a new law enforcement facility is to reduce square footage. The jail and sheriff's office projects listed above have a range of building densities from 311 SF/Bed – 445 SF/Bed. The program in the published study has a building density much larger. This appears to be the first area to address. If the team is willing to sacrifice space either through

program reductions or flexible spaces, it should be achievable to arrive at a total building size of 28,000 SF, which using the numbers above have a total project cost of approximately \$25M - \$28M.

In conclusion, as the region's largest and most experience builder of county jails and sheriff's offices, it is our opinion that Houghton County work with an experienced design firm and a construction manager to reduce square footage and conduct a value engineering exercise aimed at reducing project costs in an effort align the project with a cost that voters will support. We believe that there is enough flexibility in the program and the budget to accomplish this goal for the citizens of Houghton County. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or clarifications. We are happy to help in any way possible.



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