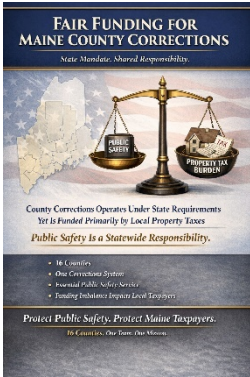




MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION

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OPTION 1-The bottom line is county jails are an important entry point for state's criminal justice system. We must have appropriate state funding to required services. The property tax payer cannot be the dumping point for financial responsibilities. WE pay the state a number of taxes, that money is to be applied for services citizens expect, education, infrastructure and safety. The Legislature needs to recognize and honor this commitment.

broken
budget deficits—up to \$4 million—just to keep their jails running. When the state doesn't pay its fair share, **you** pay the difference through higher property taxes.

OPTION 2-Our local property taxpayers are being unfairly burdened by a funding system. Right now, counties like Penobscot are facing massive

Current legislation, like the proposal to increase the **County Jail Operations Fund** to \$28 million, would finally provide the relief our communities need.

OPTION 3-~~X~~ (Policy & Public Safety Focus)

County jails shouldn't be de facto mental health facilities. ⚖️

State hospitals have closed, and our jails are left to pick up the pieces without the necessary funding for medical care or specialized staffing. Underfunded jails lead to:

- Overcrowding & unsafe conditions
- Skyrocketing costs for boarding inmates elsewhere
- Lack of critical mental health and drug epidemic support

The proposed 4% annual funding growth and \$5M for community programs are vital steps toward a sustainable system.

OPTION 4-Instagram (Human Interest & Reform Focus)

Slide 1: Did you know? Many county jails are operating in a state of disrepair because they haven't been properly funded in years.

Slide 2: It's not just about buildings. It's about people. Proper funding means:

- 24/7 access to mental health care.
- Fair wages for the professionals who keep these facilities safe.
- Community programs like pretrial release that help break the cycle of incarceration.

Slide 3: We need a "true 20%" state allocation to ensure our jails meet modern standards of care and safety.

Slide 4: Support the bill to increase county jail funding. Use the link in our bio to find



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#Reform #HumanRights #CommunityFirst #CountyJailFunding

Quick Facts to Include in Your Advocacy

- **The Deficit:** Some counties are currently \$1.2 million to \$4 million "in the hole" due to rising jail costs. These have been covered with fund balances or reserve accounts, affecting maintenance, and capital replacement programs.
- **The Proposal:** Advocates are asking for a state funding increase from \$20.3 million to **\$28.3 million** annually.
- **The Goal:** To shift the burden away from local property taxes and toward a more balanced state-county partnership.

These news articles detail the financial challenges and legislative proposals surrounding county jail funding in Maine.

<https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/local/penobscot-county-20-percent-tax-hike-jail-deficit-budget-shortfall-maine/97-d5d5ff7b-3b26-483b-bc59-01d6fcb9b475#:~:text=PENOBSCOT%20COUNTY%2C%20Maine%20%E2%80%94%20Leaders%20in,other%20jails%20across%20the%20state.>

<https://www.wabi.tv/2026/03/18/bill-introduced-increase-funding-maines-county-jails/>

<https://www.mainepublic.org/maine/2026-02-04/council-recommends-8-million-increase-in-annual-county-jail-funding-from-state>

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2391600/episodes/18842070>