



MICHIGAN SENATE

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Date Submitted: 02/11/2026

1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Senator Sean McCann

2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

N/A

3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

Kalamazoo County

4. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:

Kalamazoo County Government - 201 W. Kalamazoo Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Project Location: Adjacent to the existing Kalamazoo County Jail and within the Justice Center campus.

5. The recipient's employer identification number:

386004860

6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

\$2,000,000.00

7. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?

Kalamazoo County is seeking funding to support the Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Design Phase of a much-needed Jail Facility Expansion Project. While the current jail facility provides essential correctional services, it was designed decades ago and is no longer equipped to safely or effectively manage the evolving needs of the population it serves. This includes individuals with complex behavioral health challenges, those experiencing mental illness or substance use disorders (including opioid addiction), and other vulnerable individuals entering the justice system. Rather than focusing solely on adding jail capacity, this project is focused on modernizing and reimagining the facility's design to improve: 1) Safety for staff and

inmates, with updated sightlines, unit configurations, and controlled movement, 2) Behavioral health integration, including medical and mental health pods, de-escalation spaces, and private assessment areas, 3) Dignified, trauma-informed design elements aligned with best practices in corrections and diversion support, 4) Compliance with national standards from the National Institute of Corrections and other regulatory bodies. This request specifically supports the planning and design phase, a critical step toward responsible long-term investment. Advancing architectural work now will allow Kalamazoo County to pursue construction funding through federal, state, and local sources in a timely and informed manner. Investing in the A&E phase ensures taxpayer dollars are spent strategically, aligns with statewide mental health and justice reform goals, and helps deliver a facility that meets the needs of today—and tomorrow. The Board of Commissioners expanded the Jail in 2013 investing more than \$23,000,000. Now, the other half of the jail constructed in 1973 needs to be replaced. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Operating the county jail is a core public purpose and a constitutional duty of local government. Under state and federal law, the county is responsible for the lawful detention of individuals pursuant to court orders, while ensuring conditions of confinement that meet constitutional standards. This responsibility is central to the administration of justice, public safety, and due process. As a public institution, the jail must not only securely house residents but also uphold their constitutional rights, including humane treatment and access to necessary services. The current jail facility, however, is outdated and no longer adequately supports these obligations. While portions of the jail have been renovated over time, the overall design reflects an older correctional model that is ill-suited to today's operational and behavioral health demands. The facility was not designed to address the complex needs of residents experiencing mental illness, substance use disorders, or other behavioral health challenges, including individuals requiring Intensive Stabilization or similar services. As a result, staff are limited in their ability to safely manage residents, deliver appropriate care, and maintain a dignified environment for both those in custody and those who work in the facility. The county is committed to serving the public with dignity and recognizes that a modern jail must account for the diverse and evolving needs of its population. The state-rated capacity of the jail is 482 individuals. Of these, 338 beds are located on the older side of the facility, which includes areas that were renovated and upgraded during the addition. The remaining 144 beds were created with the addition of the new intake area and the POD system. This information has been verified by Dr. Catlin. While the addition improved intake and classification functions, the overall facility still lacks the cohesive, modern design necessary to support effective operations, behavioral health treatment, and rehabilitative programming. This funding request of \$2 million is intended to support preliminary facility planning and design. These funds would allow the county to conduct comprehensive assessments, engage professional planners and designers, and develop a long-term vision for a jail facility that meets constitutional standards, reflects best practices in corrections, and responsibly serves the community. Early planning is essential to ensure that future investments are strategic, cost-effective, and aligned with public safety, health, and legal obligations. Central to this planning effort is a renewed focus on rehabilitation and education for jail residents. Research and correctional

best practices consistently demonstrate that access to educational programming, vocational training, and behavioral health services reduces recidivism and improves community safety. A modernized facility would better support these goals by providing appropriate spaces for programming, counseling, and skill development. By prioritizing rehabilitation and education, the county affirms that incarceration should not merely be punitive but should also serve as an opportunity for positive intervention, personal growth, and successful reintegration—benefiting residents, staff, and the broader public alike

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Portions of the Kalamazoo County Jail continue to rely on an outdated linear housing design that no longer aligns with modern correctional standards or the realities of today's inmate population. Transitioning these areas to a pod-style configuration would significantly improve staff safety, inmate management, and operational efficiency. Changes in inmate demographics, including a higher concentration of felony-level offenders and individuals with complex mental health needs, have further exposed the limitations of the existing design. Modernizing the old wing is necessary to protect staff, improve outcomes for incarcerated individuals, and align the facility with current statutory and operational demands.

BACKGROUND OF PAST RENOVATION AND LINEAR DESIGN: The Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office serves as the primary law enforcement agency for more than 105,000 residents and plays a critical role in regional public safety through participation in specialized response teams and inter-county support. While the Sheriff's Office and County Jail underwent renovations in 2013, the oldest wing of the jail retains a linear design originally constructed for a very different inmate profile. Linear jails rely on long corridors with cells arranged along a single axis, limiting visibility and forcing staff to interact with incarcerated individuals in less controlled environments.

IMPROVED EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND WORKFORCE RETENTION: Staff safety is one of the most significant shortcomings of the linear jail design. Linear housing requires officers to move through narrow corridors with limited escape options, increasing the risk of assault and injury. These conditions contribute to stress, burnout, and difficulty retaining trained correctional staff. Pod-style housing reduces these risks by improving supervision, minimizing direct confrontation, and allowing officers to manage housing units more effectively from secure locations. Modernizing the old wing would align the facility with contemporary correctional practices and demonstrate institutional commitment to employee safety. In an environment where recruiting and retaining qualified staff are increasingly difficult, facility design plays a meaningful role in workforce stability.

MANAGING A CHANGING & MORE COMPLEX FELON POPULATION: The profile of individuals housed in county jails has shifted significantly over time, both in terms of complexity and risk level. There is a growing proportion of inmates with serious mental health needs, substance use disorders, and behavioral challenges that require enhanced supervision, clinical coordination, and controlled movement. At the same time, state-level statutory changes have extended the maximum length of stay in county jails from 1 year to 3 years, resulting in a higher concentration of felony-level offenders housed for longer periods. These changes have fundamentally altered the functional role of county jails and increased security expectations. The linear jail design was not intended to manage extended stays or higher-risk populations and is poorly suited to continuous observation and early intervention. Pod-style housing

better supports these operational realities by allowing constant supervision, improved separation, and safer staff interaction from secure positions. This design enables staff to more effectively balance security with care, reducing incidents and improving outcomes for individuals with complex needs. Modernizing the old wing is necessary to ensure the facility can safely, legally, and effectively meet its evolving responsibilities.

- 8. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply:**

Local

Amount

\$23,000,000.00

- 9. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:**

Fall of 2027

- 10. Is the recipient a nonprofit corporation?**

No

Additional Information for Nonprofit Corporations (if applicable)

The answer to questions 1 to 3 must be "Yes" for the nonprofit corporation to qualify for a legislatively directed spending item.

- 1. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?**

No

- 2. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?**

No

- 3. Does the organization have a board of directors?**

No

4. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:

N/A

Certification By Sponsoring Legislator

"I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."

"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."

"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."

Senator Sean McCann