CLARK COUNTY WASHINGTON

clark.wa.gov

1300 Franklin Street
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000
564.397.2000

Jail Remodel and Expansion
Sheriffs Office Headquarters
Bond Proposition 12 and Levy Lid Lift Proposition 13
Frequently Asked Questions

BOND PROPOSITION 12 AND LEVY LID LIFT PROPOSITION 13 PURPOSE

Why is Clark County putting a bond proposition and a levy lid lift proposition on the ballot?
The Clark County Jail is the hub of the law and justice system. The jail was built in 1984. The bond and levy lid lift will provide safer conditions for employees and those housed in the jail, additional bed capacity and services to meet current needs as well as needs in the future and reduce costs for out-of-county rentals.

BOND PROPOSITION 12 – LAW AND JUSTICE INFRASTRUCTURE

Why do we need a bond proposition?
The current jail was built in 1984. The Bond Proposition is needed for the following reasons:

- Remodel current jail to ensure safety of those housed in the jail as well as those who work in the jail.
- Connect incarcerated people to treatment and re-entry services.
- Add/expand capital infrastructure to increase the beds available in the jail.
- Provide new headquarters for the Sheriff's Office; which is currently located in the basement of the jail.
- Add courtrooms in the jail.

How much is the total cost for the bond proposition?
The estimated cost is $366 million, which includes:

- $346 million for the jail remodel and expansion
- $20 million for the Sheriff's Office headquarters.

How much will this cost a homeowner?
Based on a medium home price of $550,000, the estimated annual cost would be approximately $86 per year or $7.17 per month.

Who will have an opportunity to vote on the bond?
All registered voters in Clark County, including those who live within a city in the county.

What outcome is needed for this to pass?
To be approved, these two things need to happen:

- Voter turnout needs to be at least 40% of the voters who participated in the last gubernatorial election.
- A super majority approval or 60% of the votes cast.

If this passes, will it apply to all homeowners in Clark County?
No. Homeowners who qualify for the **senior exemption program** will not be impacted by this bond proposition.

What is the current number of beds available in the jail?
Currently, there are 519 beds available in the jail.

How often does the jail get full with no available beds?
There are no available beds 88% of the time since January 2025.

With the proposed expansion, how many total beds will be available in the jail?
After the expansion, the total available beds will increase to 739. The additional 220 beds will provide a 42% increase in jail capacity.

How does law enforcement know if there are available beds?
There is a system that provides the current capacity for law enforcement similar to a traffic light.

- Red is for mandatory arrests only, others will be booked and released.
- Yellow is for mandatory arrests and local, Clark County-only arrests.
- Green means accepting all types of arrests.

How often has the jail been in the red, yellow and green categories?
Since January 2025, the amount of time at each level has been:

- Red: 88%
- Yellow: 10%
- Green: 2%

What are the typical charges of those who are housed in the jail?
Approximately 90% of those housed in the jail have felony charges such as first- or second-degree murder, assault, vehicle theft, etc. The remaining 10% are individuals who have misdemeanor charges, which include lower-level crimes like driving with a suspended license, negligent driving, disorderly conduct, etc.

Who was involved in reviewing the current facility to determine what is needed?
There have been a couple of large evaluation processes with similar stakeholder groups involved. During the most recent review, stakeholders included, but were not limited to:

- Contractors with multiple experts, including, but not limited to, architectural firm, operations/housing methods, staffing analysis, financing, etc.
- Elected officials.
- County staff.
- Law and Justice partners: Superior, District and Juvenile courts, Prosecuting Attorney, law enforcement, Clerk's Office, Public Defense and contracted defense attorneys etc.

- Community partners: business community, mental/behavioral health service providers, etc.
- Current medical and mental health providers.
- Other members of the public.

What considerations were reviewed to determine the scope of the expansion/remodel of the jail?
There were many considerations, including, but not limited to:

- Safety for those housed in the jail and those who work in the jail.
- Facility layout and current methods to manage inmate populations.
- Sufficient jail capacity to accommodate the demands today and for at least the next 30 years.
- Current structure conditions to determine viability for remodeling vs demolition.
- Maintain proximately to the courts.
- Currently provided services and other necessary services that are needed such as medical, mental/behavioral health services, etc.
- Population growth with increase in diversity.

Was there an opportunity for the community members to provide input and if so, how was their feedback incorporated into the recommended proposal?
Yes, there were several opportunities for the community to provide input. The first was during many public discussions during County Council meetings. Here is **link** to the Jail Remodel and Expansion Project website.

Secondly, the county worked with a consultant to conduct a market analysis that included phone surveys and in-person forums with community members from diverse backgrounds. Feedback included educational opportunities needed regarding the jail, support of public safety and community concerns about taxes, and the current cost of living. Due to that important feedback, the project was scaled back to a 'partial build'. The partial build will still provide adequate facilities for decades in the future and will reduce the cost of the project by approximately $140 million.

How long will the expanded/remodeled jail last and how do we know it will meet any unknown future needs?
The new facility is anticipated to last for decades in the future. The facility will also be constructed/remodeled in a manner that allows for flexibility to meet any change in needs in the future.

LEVY LID LIFT PROPOSITION 13 – LAW AND JUSTICE SERVICES

Why do we need a Levy lid Proposition?
The levy lid lift will pay for law and justice staffing, including, but not limited to:

- Employees (e.g. corrections officers, professional support staff, medical staff, etc.) to staff and operate the expanded jail.
- Additional Sheriff's Office employees (e.g. deputies, professional support staff, etc.).
- Law and justice impacts for additional Sheriff's Office Deputies, Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys, court staff, Deputy Clerks, public defense attorneys, etc.
- Four prosecuting attorney staff currently funded by one-time grant funding.
- Other law and justice staff.

How much is the total cost for the Levy lid Lift Proposition?
The estimated cost is $51.4 million, which includes:

- $26.3 million for the jail staffing for the expanded jail.
- $19.1 million for the Sheriff's Office and law and justice impacts.
- Other law and justice staffing.

How much will this cost a homeowner?
Based on a median home price of $550,000, the estimated annual cost would be approximately $242 per year ($20.17 per month), which includes:

- $122.36 for jail staff.
- $89 for Sheriff's staff and law and justice impacts.
- Less than $5.56 for four Prosecuting Attorney staff.
- $25 for other law and justice staffing.

Who will have an opportunity to vote on the levy lid lift?
All registers voters in Clark County, including those who live withing a city in the county.

What outcome is needed for this to pass?
The proposition would need a simple majority to pass which is 50% plus one.

If this passes, will it apply to all homeowners in Clark County?
No. Homeowners who qualify for the **senior exemption program** will not be impacted by this levy lid lift proposition.

OTHER GENERAL INFO RE: THE BOND AND LEVY LID LIFT PROPOSITIONS

Why are you putting both on the same ballot?
The bond pays for the capital infrastructure; the levy lid lift pays for the staffing and operations.

What happens if the bond is approved but not the levy lid lift?
The county understands the importance of having the financial capacity secured to staff and operate the jail before constructing it. The county will not move forward with issuing any bonds until the operational funding is secured; and during such time, homeowners will not see the estimated $86 per year impact.

What happens if the levy lid lift passes and not the bond?
As mentioned earlier, the levy lid lift is tied to staffing and operations for the expanded jail, additional sheriff's office staff and other law and justice services. The county can apply the new revenue to the Sheriff's Office staffing and law and justice services.

Does Clark County have current funding to pay for the capital infrastructure and staffing?
No. The county's general fund is the only fund with no restrictions. The 2026 general fund budget is approximately $222 million, of which 75% is for law and justice services. The remainder of the budget is allocated to other mandated services provided by the Auditor,

Treasurer, Assessor, other internal services that support the entire county, and subsidies to other funds including parks, public health, etc.

What are the law and justice services?
The law and justice services include, the Sheriff's Office, Jail, Prosecuting Attorney, Public Defense, Clerk, Superior, District, and Juvenile Courts, most of which are mandated.

Does the county receive other funding that can support law and justice?
Yes. Many of the law and justice departments and offices apply and receive grants from local, state and federal agencies.

JAIL GENERAL INFORMATION AND HISTORY

When was the current jail built?
The current jail was built in 1984.

What was the population of Clark County in the 1980s?
The 1980 census reported there were 192,227 residents in Clark County.

How many residents live in Clark County today?
Clark County has approximately 538,000 residents.

What was the jail capacity (number of beds available for housing people in the jail) in the 1980s?
The jail capacity was around 300 beds increasing to 426 beds in the 1990s.

What is the jail capacity today?
There are 519 beds today.

Has the jail been expanded and/or remodeled since it was built in the 1980s?
There have been minimal remodels since the jail was built. A couple examples include:

- 1989 – modifications of existing areas to house female inmates more effectively
- 1992 – additional beds were added to existing medium security cells, increasing the total number of beds.
- 2006 – addition of video arraignment booths.

In the last year, the jail remodeled a closed portion of the jail, known as H-pod, adding 28 minimum security beds. Additionally, there is work underway at a facility known as the Jail Work Center, located by the Port of Vancouver, which will add an additional 64 beds in early 2027.

Where can I find the full details of the history at the jail?
A full history of the jail is available on the Clark County **website**.

JAIL SERVICES AND OPERATIONS

Are there laws governing who can bring in individual to the jail?
Yes, there are federal and state laws that govern what agencies can bring individuals to the jail.

What jurisdictions can bring individuals to the jail?
All law enforcement agencies, including, but not limited to, the Sheriff's Office, the cities of Vancouver, Camas, Battle Ground, La Center, Washougal, Woodland, and Ridgefield Police Departments as well as other law enforcement agencies (e.g. state, federal, etc.)

Who is responsible for determining who is brought in the jail and how long they stay?
Law enforcement determines if there is probable cause to detain and transport to the jail. The Prosecuting Attorney determines if and what charges will be filed. The courts make the decision how long individuals will be in the jail and when they will be released.

How many staff are currently working in the jail?
There are 210 employees who currently work at the jail, including: 1 director, 2 deputy directors, 5 commanders, 20 sergeants, 135 corrections officers, 47 support staff who provide services for food, laundry, records, administrative, etc.

Are all the positions in the jail currently filled?
Currently, most of the positions in the jail are filled. It is important to note that many employees have been working for the county for years, and we are seeing some retiring.

What efforts are in place to recruit new employees?
The jail has developed and implemented intentional recruitment efforts over the past few years; resulting in most positions being filled today. Efforts include maximizing visibility through online recruitment sites, holding informational community meetings to discuss the duties of an employee and the process to get hired, etc. Due to these strategic efforts, the jail is better staffed now than it has been in decades.

Does the jail contract out for any services?
Yes, Jail Services currently contracts out medical services, peer support, medications for opioid use disorder, etc.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE GENERAL INFORMATION

How many staff are currently working in the Sheriff's Office?
There are 260 positions that are budgeted in the Sheriff's Office, of which 231 are currently filled; including, the sheriff, undersheriff, 3 chiefs, 6 commanders, 23 sergeants, 121 sheriff deputies, and 76 professional support staff.

Are all the positions in the Sheriff's Office currently filled?
Over the last 12 months, the average vacancy rates have been 6.14% for deputies and approximately 6% for professional support staff. Currently, there are 9 professional support staff vacancies, 11 deputy vacancies, and 10 new deputy positions that were approved in August 2026.

It is important to note that recruitment must keep pace with ongoing retirements and normal attrition. Additionally, the hiring process, including recruitment and selection, academy training, and field training can take up to 18-24 months for a new deputy to be able to independently provide law enforcement services.

What efforts are in place to recruit new employees?
The Sheriff's Office has developed and implemented intentional recruitment efforts over the past few years; resulting in successful hiring. Efforts include maximizing visibility through online recruitment platforms, attending career fairs and community events, hosting and overseeing local public safety testing and having recruiters connect directly with interested candidates for one-on-one conversations. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office holds informational meetings to help prospective applicants better understand career opportunities, job expectations, and the hiring process. Despite these strategic efforts, attracting a sufficient number of qualified applicants remains challenging.

What services does the Sheriff's Office provide?
The Sheriff's Office provides comprehensive law enforcement services in all of unincorporated Clark County, as well as mutual aid and specialized services to other jurisdictions. Services and several specialty units include but are not limited to, SWAT, air support, k9, major crimes, marine patrol, traffic homicide, Children's Justice Center, concealed pistol licensing, etc.

What type of calls does the Sheriff's Office respond to?
The Sheriff's Office responds to a wide range of calls for service, from routine public assistance to violent crimes and life-threatening emergencies. These include crimes in progress, assaults, domestic violence, sexual offenses, thefts, and many other threats to public safety. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office responds to traffic/driving concerns, handles civil matters and community assistance, and supports fire, emergency medical services, and other law enforcement agencies.

What is the call volume per year and has that number increased over the years?
The Sheriff's Office responds to approximately 70,000 calls for service each year. Over the past 10 years, annual call volume has remained relatively consistent, ranging from approximately 68,000 to 79,000 calls.

While overall call volume has remained steady, the time and resources required to safely resolve calls have increased. Changes in Washington law and policing practices emphasize de-escalation and other alternatives before the use of force, which can require additional deputies and more time on scene. As a result, call volume alone does not fully reflect the staffing resources needed to provide effective law enforcement services.

What is the average response time for the Sheriff's Office to respond to an emergency?
Calls are prioritized based on immediate risk to life and public safety, with deputies dispatched to the highest-priority incidents first.

<u>Average response times vary based on the priority and severity of the call:</u>

Priority 1: 8 minutes 04 seconds
Priority 2: 10 minutes 37 seconds
Priority 3: 16 minutes 54 seconds

What does Priority 1, 2, and 3 mean?

- Priority 1: Includes the most urgent incidents, such as rape, robbery in progress, assault with a weapon, and kidnapping in progress.
- Priority 2: Includes assaults or robberies that just occurred, burglaries in progress, and auto thefts in progress.
- Priority 3: Includes lower-priority or non-active incidents such as cold burglaries, cold auto thefts, thefts from vehicles, and unwanted persons.

What will the Sheriff's Office be able to do with additional staff that is not done today?

Additional staffing would allow the Sheriff's Office to move beyond a largely reactive model and dedicate more resources to proactive policing, crime prevention, thorough investigations, and community problem solving. Examples include:

- Traffic Enforcement Unit: Establish a dedicated unit focused on proactive enforcement of speeding, reckless and impaired driving, school-zone violations, and other traffic safety concerns.
- Tactical Detective Unit: Add detectives to investigate property crimes and serious and complex felony crimes, including shootings, robberies, sexual assaults, kidnappings, human trafficking, and serial burglaries.
- Children's Justice Center: Add dedicated detectives to investigate felony-level physical and sexual abuse cases involving victims under age 18 and support the prosecution of these cases.
- Support Branch: Additional deputies also increase the workload for the non-sworn professional staff who support patrol and investigative operations. Additional civilian staffing would strengthen functions such as records, civil processes, extraditions, public disclosure, concealed pistol licensing, accreditation, financial oversight, and other administrative and operational services.

*These are just some of the opportunities additional staffing could provide. More personnel would also allow for directed patrols in areas experiencing recurring crime, stronger investigative follow-up, increased visibility in neighborhoods and rural communities, and greater capacity to address recurring problems before they generate additional calls for service. It could also help restore services previously reduced due to staffing limitations, improve service to the public, and reduce overtime and employee fatigue.

OTHER LAW AND JUSTICE GENERAL INFORMATION

What are the law and justice services?

The law and justice services include, the Sheriff's Office, Jail, Prosecuting Attorney, Public Defense, Clerk, Superior, District, and Juvenile Courts, most of which are mandated.

What does the law and justice system mean and why is it important?

A complete law and justice system ensures public safety in our community. Without one part it will fail. For example, a jurisdiction can have plenty of law enforcement staff available, but if there isn't a bed in the jail, the system will fail, if there is no prosecution, the system will fail, if there are no courts available, the system will fail. All parts of the law and justice system must be in place to ensure it works and provides public safety in our communities.

Where can I go if I have any questions: Email questions to Prop12and13@clark.wa.gov**.**

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

What is the projected interest rate on the bond? What portion of the $86 is interest?

The interest cost on the bonds is estimated at 4.85% and 5.34% for the first and second bond issues (assumed to be 2027 and 2030, respectively). The aggregate true interest cost is estimated at 5.14%. Approximately 50% of the total debt service is estimated to be interest payments.

Will the annual tax burden per property be $86 per year for all 31 years, or will the annual amount change and if so, how?

The estimated annual tax impact to the average homeowner will vary each year depending on growth in countywide assessed value, growth in the assessed value of each property, actual interest rates on each bond issue, and the timing, amount, and structure of each bond issue. The preliminary analysis suggests, due in part to additional new construction, a declining annual payment for the average homeowner, with an average annual payment of approximately $86 over the 31 years.

What is the total assessed value being used to calculate the bond impact?

The countywide assessed value is $117,127,003,657 for 2026 and assumed to grow at 4% annually.

What will the total cost (principal plus interest) be over the term of the bond?

The estimated total debt service on all authorized bonds is $710.7 million.

Where can someone read what the projected use of funds will be?

Details on the projected use of funds for Proposition 12 are included in the General Election Voters Guide, **page 82**. As well as on Clark County's website: **Jail Remodel and Expansion Project | Clark County**.

Will the cost be spread on an assessed value basis? That is, for a median home value of $550,000 it would be $0.0001563 per $1000 of assessed value?

Yes. The property tax levy associated with the bonds will be applied based on a uniform rate to properties countywide.

Is there a provision to retire the bond and/or adjust the interest rate based on market conditions?

Interest rates on the bonds will be established based on market conditions at the time each series of bonds is sold. Municipal bonds typically have a provision allowing refunding (refinancing) at or before year 10, and it is expected that the county's bonds would have this feature as well.

How do we know that the money raised by the Proposition 12 bond (if approved) will be used for the jail project, that is, will that money go into the General Fund?

The council approved a resolution that identified the bond will pay for the capital infrastructure of the jail remodel/expansion, courtrooms in the jail, and a Sheriff's Office headquarters. Clark County is required to follow the approved resolution and ballot language. The ballot language states the following:

The Clark County Council adopted Resolution 2026-07-08, concerning public safety and criminal justice infrastructure. This proposition would allow Clark County to acquire, construct, remodel, and equip public safety and criminal justice infrastructure in dark County; including the remodel and expansion of the Clark County Jail and courtrooms and a new or remodeled Sheriff's Office Headquarters; issue no more than $366, 204,000 of general obligation bonds maturing within 31 years; and levy annual excess property taxes on all taxable property within Clark County to pay the bonds, pursuant to Resolution 2026-07-08.

Because the Bond will be collected by a levy, those funds will go into the General Fund.

If so, could it be used for another purpose?
No. The issuance of the bond can only cover those projects identified in the ballot measure.

Similarly, for the funds raised by Proposition 13 for staffing, will those funds go into the general fund, or is there a requirement that that money be spent on the stated objectives?
The funds raised by Proposition 13 will go into the General Fund as they are collected through a levy. The county will be earmarking this revenue and expense authority within the General Fund for transparency.

Could those funds be used for another purpose?
Funds can only be used to cover law and justice services (e.g. jail staffing, Sheriff's Office staffing, etc.) that are outlined in the Resolution approved by Council and language in the proposition. The ballot language states:

The Clark County Council adopted Resolution 2026-07-09, concerning public safety and criminal justice services. This proposition would provide funds for public safety and criminal justice services, including additional correction deputies, sheriff deputies, prosecuting attorney staff, and other services. It authorizes a maximum regular property tax levy for collection in 2027 of $1.15 per $1,000 of assessed value, an increase of approximately $0.44 from 2026. The 2027 levy amount would be used to compute the limitations for subsequent levies under chapter 84.55 RCW. Qualifying persons are exempt under RCW 84.36.381.