KACo

Kentucky Association of Counties

2026 HB 557:

Reshaping the Shared Responsibility of County Jails in Kentucky

County jails at a crisis point

County general fund support for jails FY2019 - FY2025



Source: KACo analysis of Uniform Financial Information Reports, FY2019-25 (excludes Fayette and Jefferson)

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Comprehensive approach:

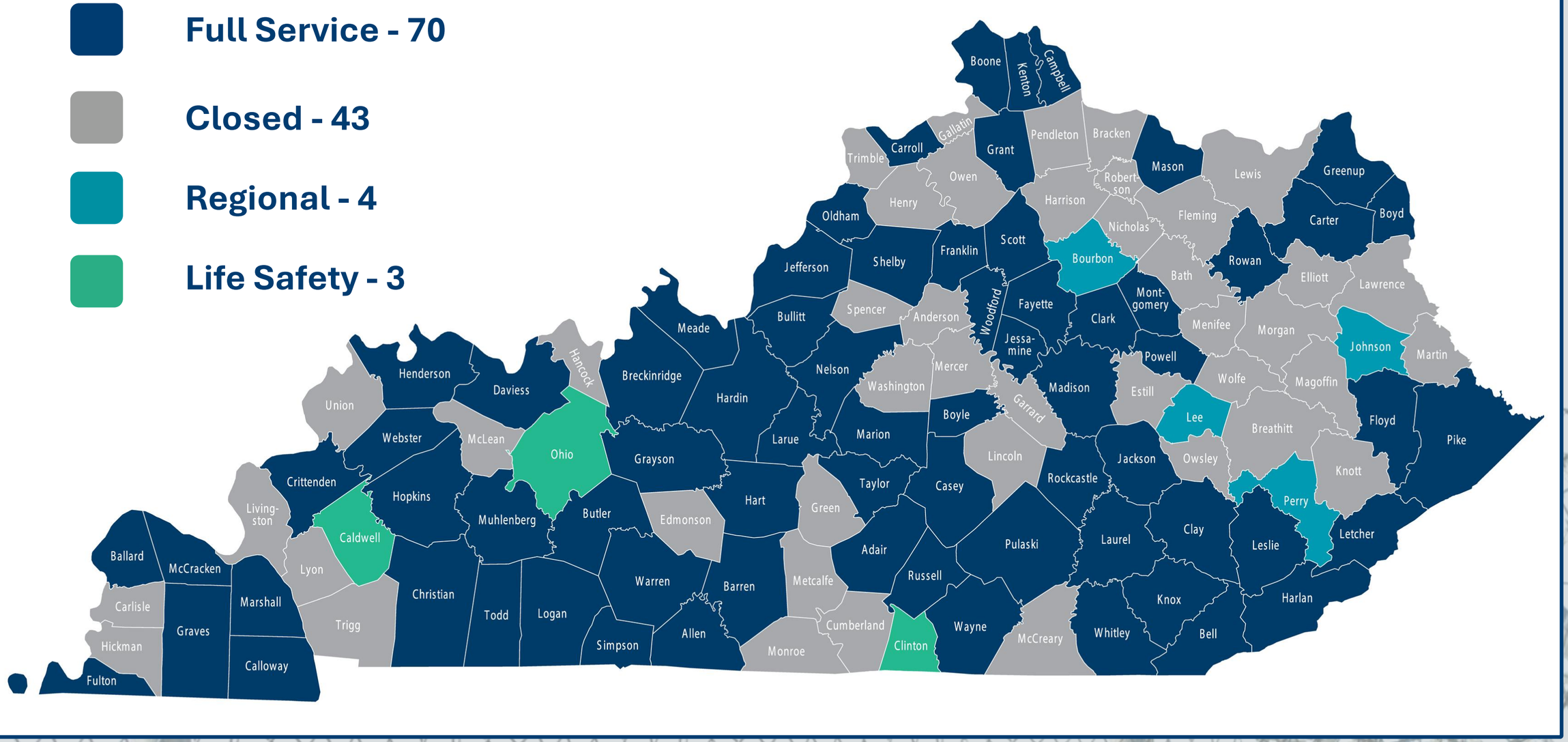
- Incentivizing regional jails
- Clarifying responsibility for pre-trial felony detainees
- Redefining the state inmate housing model

Total fiscal impact: Approximately $200 million excluding one-time funding incentives and construction.

Incentivize Regional Jails



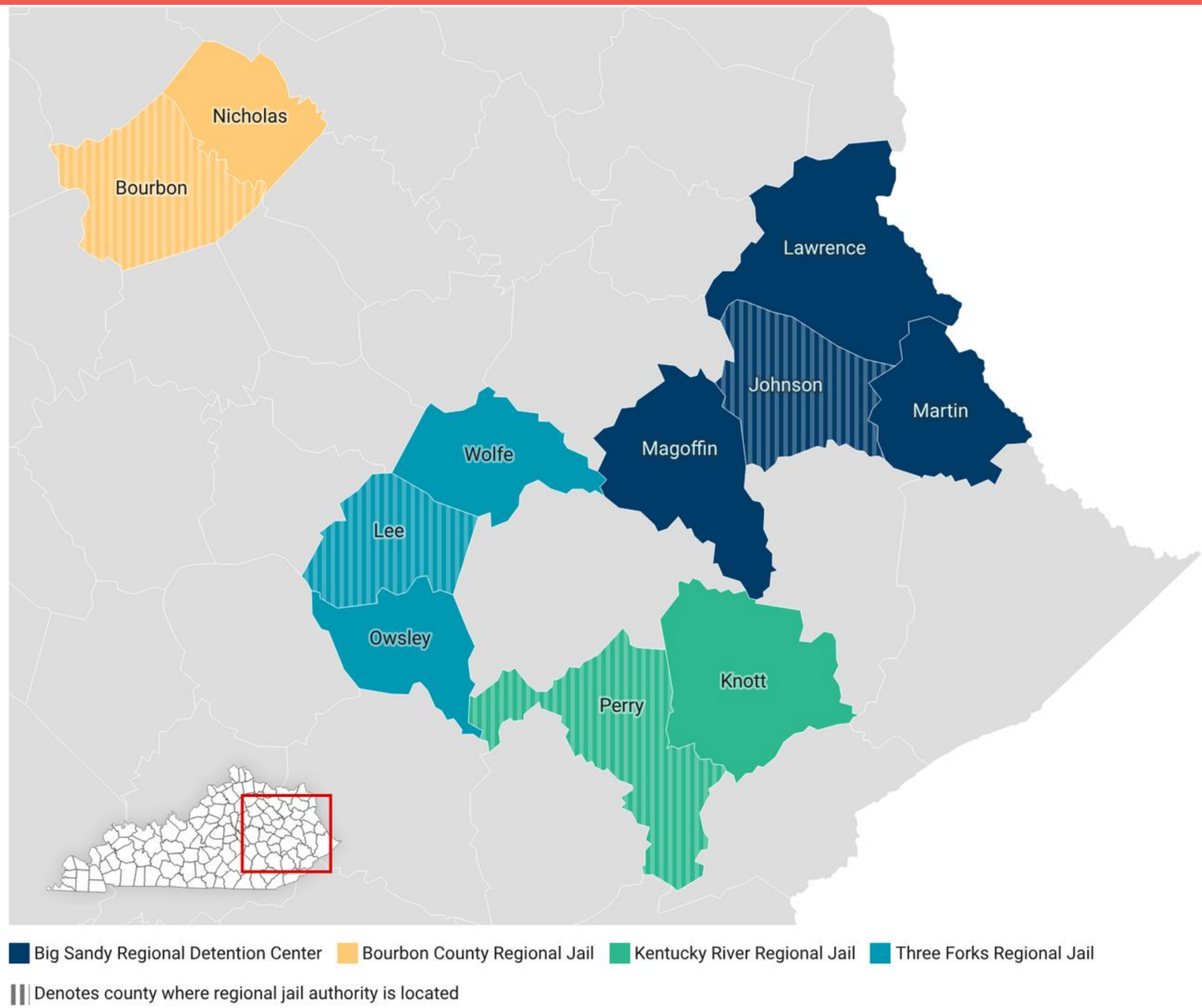
County jail classifications



Regional jail authorities

RJAs are created by ordinance of participating counties and **governed by a multi-county board** rather than a single fiscal court.

KRS 410.800-820



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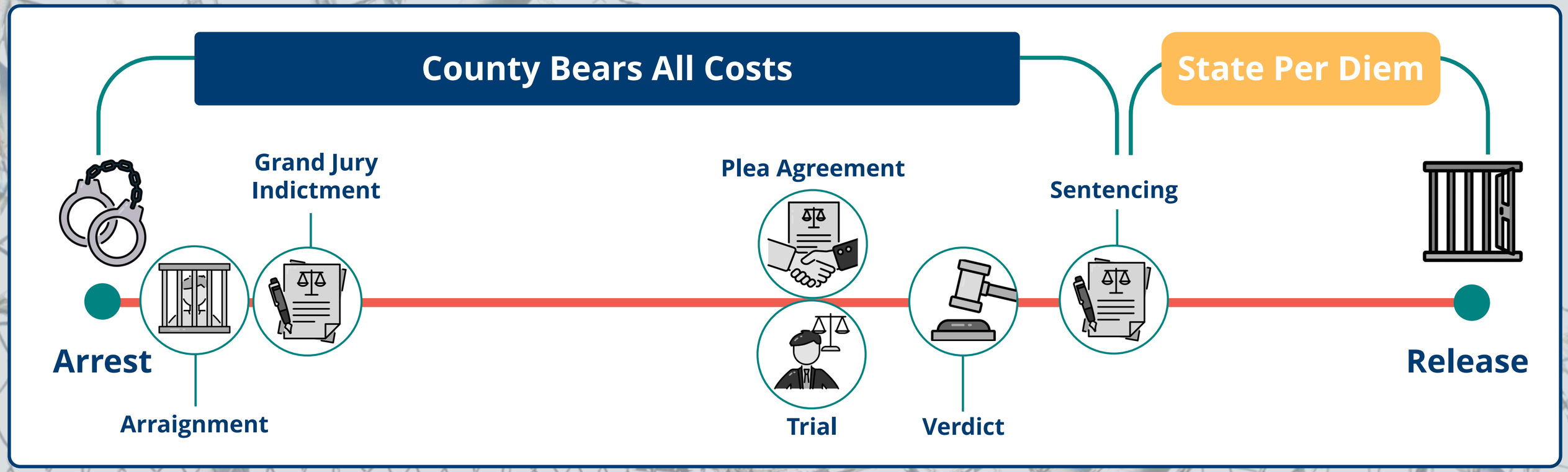
Incentivize regional jails

- Establish a process for RJAs to apply for funding from the state for **construction of new facilities or expansions and improvements** of existing facilities.
- Provide a **$1 million incentive grant** to any fiscal court that establishes a new RJA or joins an existing RJA; provide a **$500,000 incentive grant** to each county already in an RJA that agrees to accept a new county into the authority.
- Allow **96-hour holdover** facilities.
- Allow the jailer of each county participating in a RJA to automatically be a **member of the RJA board**.

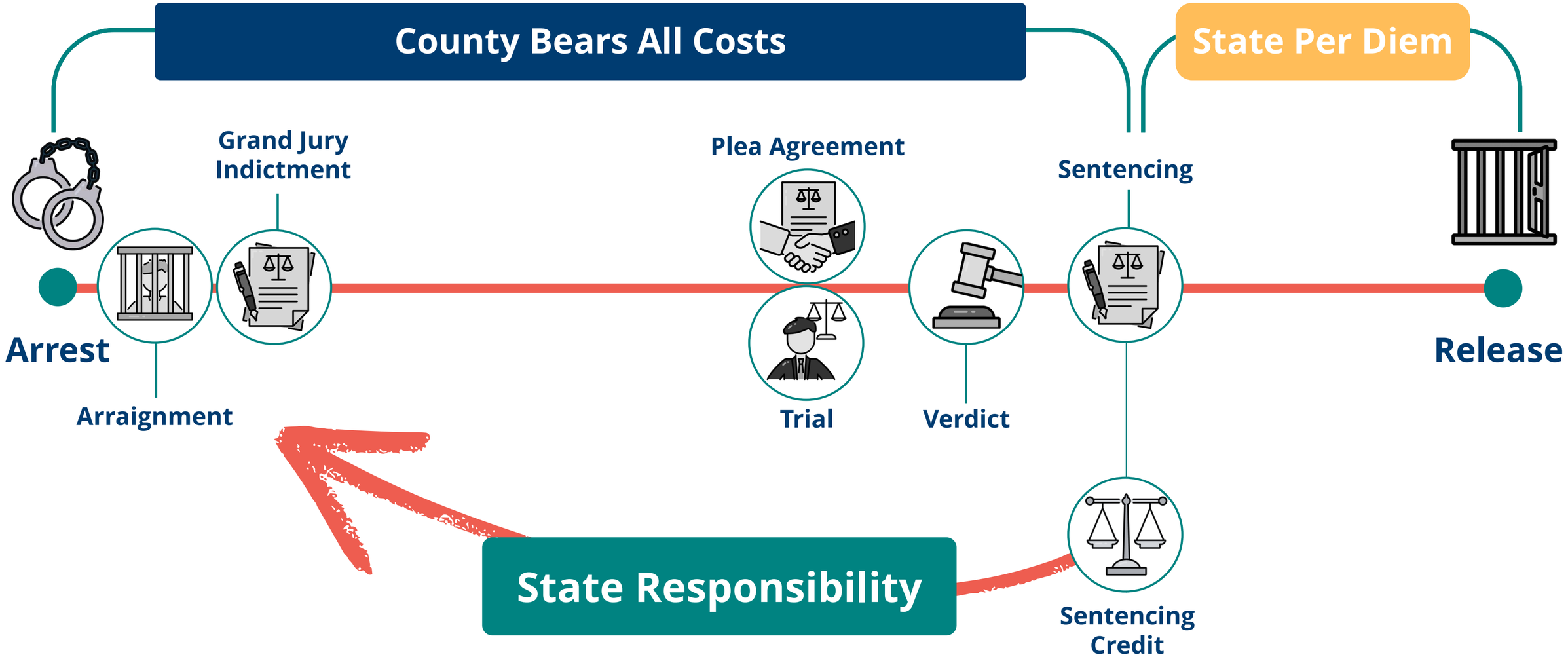
Clarify Responsibility for Pre-Trial Felony Detainees



Who’s responsibile: Felony charges



Credit for time served



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Clarify Responsibility for Pre-trial Felony Detainees:

- **Credit for time served:** reimburse counties for the credit for time served an inmate receives when sentenced on a felony charge.
- ***Fiscal impact:***
  - $35.34 per diem = approximately $82 million
  - $63.44 per diem* = approximately $146 million

*Based on actual cost estimate

Credit for time served

Example county estimates:

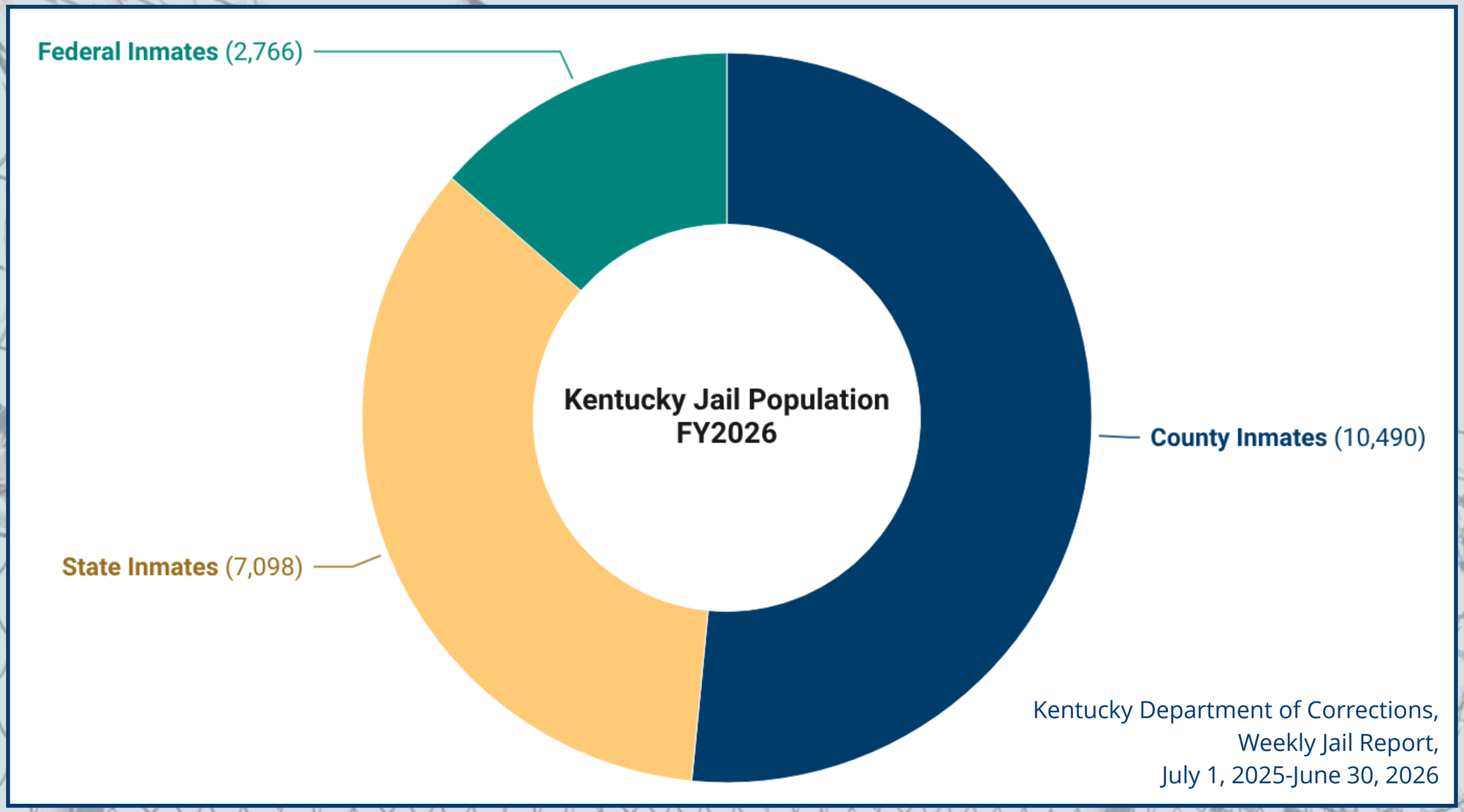
County	Reimbursement Estimate
Boone	$1,747,315
Boyd	$1,376,464
Crittenden	$100,980
Grant	$463,575
Henry	$217,100
Madison	$3,034,433
Todd	$219,659
Union	$273,192
Warren	$2,170,038
Whitley	$1,113,294

See your county's estimate:

Redefine State Inmate Housing Model



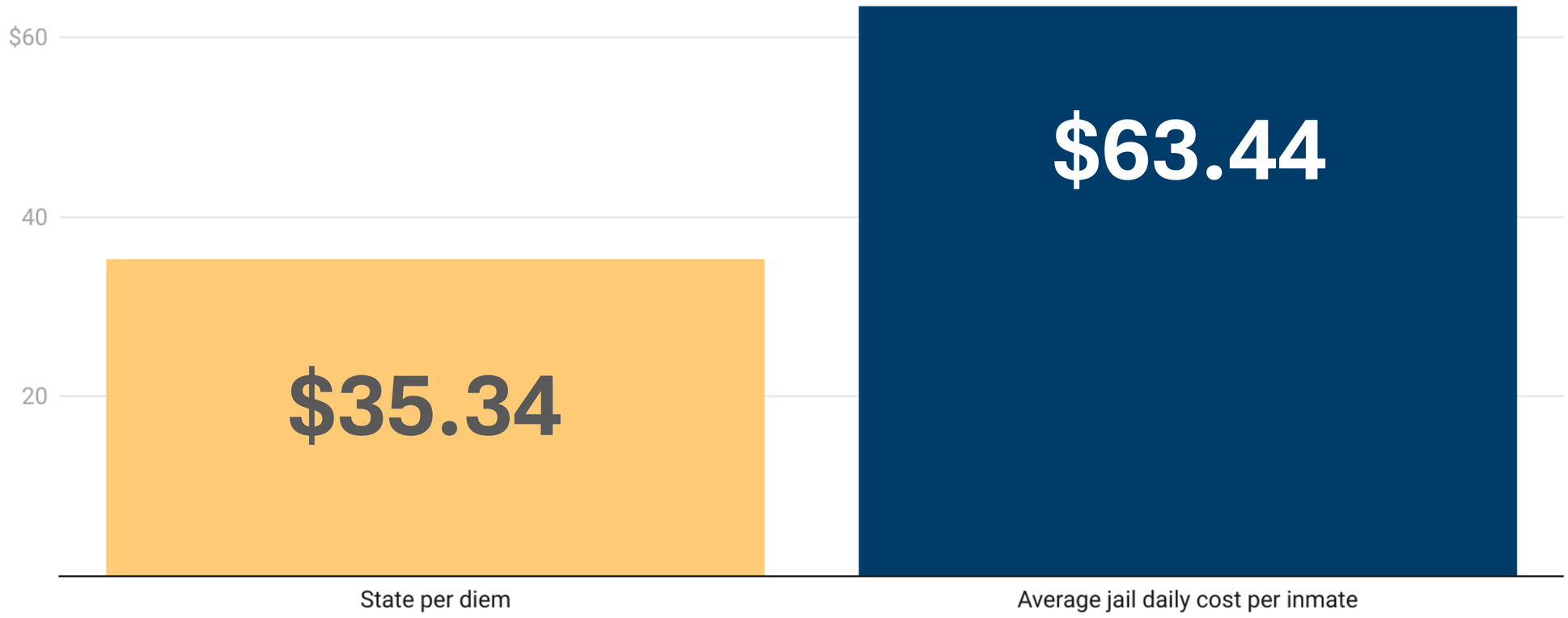
County jail population



Kentucky Department of Corrections,
Weekly Jail Report,
July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

State inmate per diem

FY2025 state per diem vs actual jail costs



Source: KACo analysis of Uniform Financial Information Reports, FY2025 (excludes Fayette and Jefferson)

State inmate medical costs

501 KAR 2:080E

- **Emergency regulation** took effect Aug. 17, 2026
- **New definitions** for “routine care” and “beyond regular and routine care.”
- Previous definitions: counties reimbursed only for care requiring hospital stay of at least one night or general anesthesia.
- Note: New regulation applies only to **state inmates**.

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Redefine State Inmate Housing Model:

- Require DOC to have **contracts** with each fiscal court or regional jail authority based on **actual costs**.
- Require jails to provide **inmate programming** and a **daily medical presence**.
- **Limit transfer** of state inmates without prior DOC approval.
- ***Fiscal impact:*** Approximately $53 million

Interim feedback

Feedback from legislators over the interim:

- Statutory tweaks to allow counties to pay for home incarceration.
- Docket requirements when a felony case begins.

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Questions?