



Frequently Asked Questions:

Re-Imagining MCI-Framingham, the Nation's Oldest Operating Women's Prison

1. Why is MCI-Framingham being renovated?

The renovation of MCI-Framingham is part of a comprehensive strategy to transform the nation's oldest operating women's prison into a modern and sustainable facility that supports rehabilitation and promotes public safety.

A 2022 independent study concluded that MCI-Framingham is "oversized, physically outdated for its rehabilitative mission, and requires significant capital investment." The study further determined that the facility is currently unable to meet the needs of women due to the infrastructure's physical condition and a layout that is not conducive to a rehabilitative environment.

The phased redevelopment strategy will responsibly downsize **the facility's footprint from 260,000 to 200,000 square feet** and permanently **decrease bed capacity**. Planned improvements will transform the site into a modern recovery-focused environment featuring community-oriented living units, a state-of-the-art medical and mental health treatment center, enhanced program and support spaces, and a fully electrified, energy-efficient infrastructure.

Most of the population is medium custody, and 42% of the criminally sentenced population are within 5 years of release, reinforcing the need for programming that supports rehabilitation and successful reentry.

2. How does this project promote public safety?

Evidence shows that rehabilitative-focused environments reduce recidivism. Renovating the facility will improve conditions for programming, mental health treatment, education, and workforce readiness. These are key factors in lowering reoffending rates and enhancing community safety.

The newly renovated space is intended to create a more healing environment designed to better promote individual well-being, recovery and self-sufficiency and support a woman's pathway to successful reintegration into the community post-release.

3. What specific improvements will be made?

The current facility is severely outdated, with deteriorating housing units from the 1960s and a program building from 1877 that lacks elevators, making critical spaces inaccessible to individuals with mobility impairments. Inadequate infrastructure, poor climate control, and aging medical and mental health areas hinder rehabilitation efforts and make it difficult to deliver modern, effective care.

The renovations will include:

- Building smaller, community-style housing units in a campus-like setting.
- Creating a modern medical and mental health center to provide trauma-informed care and support the complex needs of residents, with dedicated workspaces for health professionals.
- Offering full health services, private counseling rooms, and crisis support in a space that protects privacy and promotes dignity and healing.
- Improving areas for education, job training, recreation, religious services, and everyday needs like dining and laundry.
- Upgrading old systems with energy-efficient, all-electric technology to reduce the facility's carbon footprint and stop using steam.
- Installing air conditioning and climate-controlled systems, which help to mitigate heat-related health risks for incarcerated individuals, particularly those with chronic medical conditions, age-related vulnerabilities, or disabilities.

4. How much will the renovation cost?

With an anticipated total project investment of **\$360 Million**, the phased redevelopment strategy will enhance the health and safety of all who live and work at the facility.

Under the guidance of the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM), the architectural firm HDR has been hired to develop the renovation plan. The initial phase of the work is supported by **\$20.5 Million** in FY26-27 in state capital funding.

5. How will this impact the current housed population?

To ensure safety and continuity of care, phased construction will minimize disruption. Temporary relocations may occur, but all efforts will be made to ensure access to essential services and family contact during the process.

6. How will this impact the facility staff?

The changes will create a safer and more secure facility with fewer staff vacancies. Staff will have a better working environment with more adequate office, shared, training, and storage spaces, improved breakrooms, and upgraded facilities, all of which will lead to a healthier work environment and better morale.

7. How does this renovation align with justice reform efforts?

Renovating this facility is an investment in public safety and better outcomes. This project promotes safer communities by supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of those in the DOC's care. By creating accessible, trauma-informed spaces that prioritize health, education, and dignity, the project advances long-term goals to reduce recidivism and promote successful reentry into the community.

8. When will the renovation begin and how long will it take?

At the direction of Governor Healey, EOPSS and DCAMM have been tasked with completing this project as expeditiously as possible. In alignment with the administration's directive, the agencies are working in close collaboration to ensure the renovation of MCI-Framingham is advanced efficiently and effectively.