

## Land Survey Rate Guide 2026

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Real pricing data — boundary, ALTA, topographic, and subdivision survey costs across all 50 states

- ✓ Survey costs by type (boundary, ALTA, topographic, subdivision)
- ✓ Rates by property size and terrain complexity
- ✓ Hidden fees to watch for (research, travel, rush, re-staking)
- ✓ How to compare quotes and negotiate better rates

# How Land Survey Billing Works

Land survey pricing depends on the type of survey, property size, terrain complexity, and availability of existing records. A simple boundary survey on a small suburban lot costs a fraction of an ALTA survey on a 50-acre commercial parcel. Understanding the billing structure prevents both overpaying for simple jobs and underestimating complex ones.

## Billing Methods

Method	Description	When Used
Flat fee	Fixed price for the entire project	Standard boundary surveys on small lots
Per-acre rate	Charged per acre; rate decreases for larger properties	Larger parcels (5+ acres)
Hourly rate	\$100-\$200/hour for field + office time	Complex projects, litigation support, research-heavy jobs
Per-lot rate	Charged per lot in a subdivision	Subdivision plats
Combination	Flat base + per-acre for additional land	Mid-to-large properties

### Quick Budget Reference

- Small residential lot (< 0.5 acres, boundary): \$300-\$800
- Standard residential lot (0.5-1 acre, boundary): \$500-\$1,200
- Large residential lot (1-5 acres, boundary): \$1,000-\$3,000
- ALTA/NSPS survey (commercial): \$2,500-\$10,000
- Topographic survey: \$500-\$3,000
- Subdivision plat: \$2,000-\$10,000+

# Survey Costs by Type

## What Each Survey Type Costs — And When You Need It

Survey Type	Cost Range	What It Includes	When You Need It
Boundary survey	\$500–\$5,500	Locates and marks property corners and lines; legal description verification	Property purchase, fence installation, boundary dispute, building setback verification
ALTA/NSPS survey	\$2,500–\$10,000	Boundaries + easements + rights-of-way + improvements + zoning + flood zone + utilities	Commercial real estate transactions; required by lenders and title companies
Topographic survey	\$500–\$3,000	Elevations, contours, natural features, existing structures	Site planning, grading design, drainage analysis, building permits
Mortgage/loan survey (location survey)	\$300–\$600	Shows improvements relative to boundary; less detailed than boundary	Lender requirement for residential purchase; shows house location on lot
Subdivision plat	\$2,000–\$10,000+	Divides property into lots; creates recordable plat map	Land development; lot splits; requires government approval
Construction staking	\$500–\$2,000	Stakes building corners, utilities, roads per engineering plans	New construction; must follow approved site plan
Elevation certificate	\$300–\$800	Determines elevation relative to flood levels (FEMA)	Flood insurance; FEMA compliance; required in flood zones
As-built survey	\$500–\$2,000	Documents what was actually constructed vs. plans	Post-construction verification; permit close-out

### The most common mistake: ordering the wrong survey type.

A mortgage survey (\$300–\$600) is NOT a boundary survey. It shows approximate building location but does NOT establish legal property lines. If you need to settle a boundary dispute or build near a property line, you need a full boundary survey.

# Costs by Property Size and Terrain

Property Size	Flat/Clear Terrain	Wooded/Hilly Terrain	Dense Urban	Notes
Under 0.25 acres	\$300-\$600	\$400-\$800	\$500-\$1,000	Typical city lot
0.25-0.5 acres	\$400-\$800	\$600-\$1,200	\$700-\$1,200	Suburban lot
0.5-1.0 acres	\$500-\$1,200	\$800-\$1,800	\$900-\$1,500	Standard residential
1-5 acres	\$1,000-\$3,000	\$1,500-\$4,500	\$2,000-\$5,000	Large residential / small rural
5-20 acres	\$2,000-\$5,000	\$3,000-\$7,000	N/A	Rural / agricultural
20-50 acres	\$3,000-\$8,000	\$5,000-\$12,000	N/A	Per-acre rates: \$70-\$200/acre
50-100 acres	\$5,000-\$12,000	\$7,000-\$18,000	N/A	Per-acre rates: \$70-\$140/acre
100+ acres	\$8,000-\$25,000+	\$12,000-\$35,000+	N/A	Per-acre rates decrease with size

## Terrain is the biggest cost variable.

A 5-acre flat, cleared lot might cost \$2,000 to survey. The same 5 acres covered in dense forest with 200 feet of elevation change could cost \$5,000-\$7,000 due to brush clearing, difficult access, and additional field time.

# Rates by State & Region

State / Region	Boundary (1 acre)	ALTA Survey	Key Notes
California	\$800-\$2,000	\$3,500-\$10,000+	Highest costs nationally; complex regulations; surveyor shortage
New York	\$700-\$1,500	\$3,000-\$8,000	NYC premium; upstate more affordable
Texas	\$700-\$1,300	\$2,500-\$7,000	Large state; rural parcels drive per-acre volume
Florida	\$600-\$1,100	\$2,500-\$6,000	Flat terrain helps; flood zone work common
Colorado	\$700-\$1,400	\$2,500-\$7,000	Mountain terrain increases cost significantly
North Carolina	\$750-\$1,400	\$2,500-\$6,500	Growing market; moderate pricing
Midwest (OH, IN, IL, MN)	\$500-\$1,000	\$2,000-\$5,000	Generally lower costs; flat terrain
Pacific Northwest (WA, OR)	\$600-\$1,200	\$2,500-\$6,000	Dense vegetation increases field time
Southeast (GA, SC, AL)	\$500-\$1,000	\$2,000-\$5,000	Affordable market; growing demand
New England (MA, CT, NH)	\$700-\$1,500	\$3,000-\$7,000	Stone walls and historical boundaries add complexity

*Note: Starting Q2 2026, 14 states are implementing updated survey standards that may increase costs by 8-12%.*

## Supply and demand drives pricing.

Areas with fewer licensed surveyors (rural areas, states with aging surveyor populations) often have higher prices and longer wait times. The surveying profession is facing a nationwide shortage — over 50% of licensed surveyors are over 55.

# Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

Always get an itemized written quote. Survey quotes can vary by 50%+ for the same property. Ensure you understand what's included before signing.

Add-On	Typical Cost	When You Need It
Deed/records research	\$100-\$500	Complex title history; missing prior surveys; disputes
Monument setting (iron pins/pipes)	\$50-\$150 per corner	Replacing missing or disturbed boundary markers
Travel fee (> 25 miles from office)	\$50-\$200	Rural properties; limited local surveyors
Rush service (expedited turnaround)	+25-50%	Real estate closings; permit deadlines
Tree/brush clearing	\$100-\$500+	Dense vegetation on boundary lines
Additional corners (irregular lot)	\$50-\$100 per corner	Properties with 5+ corners or irregular shapes
Staking beyond boundary	\$50-\$150 per stake	Construction layout; building setback marking
Flood zone determination	\$200-\$500	FEMA elevation certificate add-on
Easement research and mapping	\$200-\$800	Utility, access, or drainage easements
Signed and sealed plat map	\$100-\$300	Recordable document for county filing
Expert witness / litigation support	\$150-\$300/hour	Boundary dispute court testimony
Re-survey / re-staking	\$200-\$500	Markers disturbed by construction or landscaping
ALTA Table A optional items	\$200-\$2,000+	Each optional Table A item adds scope and cost

Ask: "Does your quote include records research, monument setting, and a sealed plat?" These are often quoted separately. A "cheap" survey quote that excludes these items can end up costing more than a comprehensive flat-fee quote.

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# How to Compare Quotes & Save Money

## Numbered list

- 1 Get three written quotes.** Survey pricing varies 30–50% in the same market. Provide each surveyor with the same information: address, property size, survey type needed, and any known issues (disputes, missing markers, dense vegetation).
- 2 Provide existing surveys and deeds.** If you have a prior survey, deed with legal description, or plat map, share it. This reduces research time and lowers the quote by \$100–\$500.
- 3 Clear the property yourself.** Brush and debris along boundary lines cost the surveyor time. If you can safely clear sight lines, you can reduce field time and save \$100–\$500.
- 4 Bundle with your real estate team.** Title companies and real estate attorneys often have surveyor relationships with preferred pricing. Ask for referrals.
- 5 Know which survey type you actually need.** A mortgage survey (\$300–\$600) may satisfy your lender. A full boundary survey (\$500–\$1,200+) is only needed if you're settling a dispute, building near property lines, or the lender/title company specifically requires it.
- 6 Avoid rush fees.** Standard turnaround is 2–4 weeks. Rush service (< 1 week) adds 25–50%. Plan ahead and order your survey early in the transaction process.
- 7 Ask about multi-lot discounts.** Developers surveying multiple lots in the same area can negotiate 15–30% volume discounts.
- 8 Don't re-survey unnecessarily.** If a boundary survey was done in the last 5–10 years and markers are intact, you may only need a "survey review" or location survey rather than a full re-survey.
- 9 Understand ALTA Table A options.** Each ALTA optional item (Table A) adds cost. Only request the items your lender or title company actually requires — not the full Table A menu.
- 10 Budget for the unexpected.** Properties with complex title histories, missing monuments, or boundary disputes routinely exceed initial quotes. Budget a 20% contingency.

# Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total land survey costs. Print and fill in for each property.

Line Item	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
Survey fee (type: _____)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Deed/records research	\$ _____	\$ _____
Monument setting (____ corners x \$____)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Brush/tree clearing	\$ _____	\$ _____
Travel fee	\$ _____	\$ _____
Rush fee (if applicable)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Easement research	\$ _____	\$ _____
Flood zone determination	\$ _____	\$ _____
ALTA Table A items	\$ _____	\$ _____
Sealed plat map for recording	\$ _____	\$ _____
County recording fees	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>20% contingency buffer</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____

Complete this worksheet before requesting quotes. The more information you provide upfront (property address, acreage, survey type, deed copy, any known issues), the more accurate your quotes will be.

## CTA box

Want a quick sanity check on your numbers? Email this worksheet to [contact@surveyslate.com](mailto:contact@surveyslate.com) or browse licensed land surveyors at [surveyslate.com](https://surveyslate.com)

# SurveySlate

## SurveySlate

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