

EHR Consultant Rate Guide 2026

Real pricing data — hourly rates, project fees, and hidden costs for EHR implementation and migration consulting

- ✓ Hourly rates by consultant tier and specialty
- ✓ Project-based pricing for implementations, migrations, and optimizations
- ✓ Hidden fees to watch for (change orders, data migration, training overruns)
- ✓ How to negotiate better rates with firms and independents

How EHR Consulting Billing Works

EHR consulting billing is multi-layered. Unlike a flat hourly rate, engagements typically combine discovery fees, implementation labor, data migration costs, training, and post-go-live support. Understanding the structure is the first step to controlling costs.

Billing Structure Overview

Component	Description	Typical Range
Discovery / needs assessment	Workflow analysis, gap assessment, vendor evaluation	\$5,000-\$25,000
Implementation labor	Configuration, build, testing, go-live support	\$150-\$300/hr or project-based
Data migration	Extract, transform, validate, load patient records	\$20,000-\$150,000
Training	End-user, super-user, and administrator training	\$1,000-\$5,000 per staff member
Post-go-live support	Stabilization, optimization, issue resolution	\$100-\$250/hr or monthly retainer

Quick Budget Reference

- Small practice EHR implementation (1-5 providers): \$50,000-\$200,000 total
- Mid-size clinic migration (6-20 providers): \$200,000-\$750,000 total
- Hospital system implementation (50+ providers): \$2,000,000-\$10,000,000+
- Post-go-live optimization engagement (any size): \$25,000-\$100,000

Consultant Hourly Rates by Tier

EHR Consultant Rate Tiers — Your Benchmark

EHR consulting rates vary dramatically based on certifications, EHR platform expertise, and engagement type. Independent consultants typically charge 20–40% less than large advisory firms for equivalent work but lack bench depth for large-scale implementations.

Consultant Tier	Hourly Rate	Typical Role	Certifications
Junior / Associate	\$75–\$125/hr	Configuration, testing, training delivery	CAHIMS, vendor-specific basics
Mid-Level Analyst	\$125–\$200/hr	Workflow design, build, data mapping	CAHIMS/CPHIMS, Epic/Cerner certified
Senior Consultant	\$200–\$350/hr	Project management, architecture, go-live lead	CPHIMS, PMP, Epic Certified
Principal / Director	\$300–\$500/hr	Strategic advisory, vendor selection, C-suite advisory	CPHIMS-CA, FHIMSS, multiple platform certs
Interim CMIO / CIO	\$250–\$400/hr	Fractional executive leadership during transitions	MD/DO + CPHIMS, board-level experience

Firm vs. Independent Rates

Engagement Model	Typical Rate Premium	Notes
Big 4 / Large advisory (Deloitte, Accenture)	\$250–\$500/hr	Deep bench, brand credibility, higher overhead
Mid-tier HIT firms (Nordic, Tegria, Optimum)	\$175–\$350/hr	EHR-specialized, strong vendor relationships
Boutique / regional firms	\$125–\$250/hr	Niche expertise, lower overhead
Independent consultants	\$100–\$200/hr	Lowest cost, single point of failure

Sources: Glassdoor 2026 salary data, ZipRecruiter, industry surveys.

Key Rule of Thumb

The consultant's hourly rate is rarely the largest cost. Data migration and training typically account for 40–60% of total project cost. A more expensive consultant who scopes the migration correctly can save you 3-5x their rate premium.

EHR Platform-Specific Pricing

Per-Provider Costs by EHR Vendor

EHR Platform	Monthly Cost/Provider	Implementation Range	Best Fit
Epic	\$1,200+/user/mo or \$500K+ license	\$500,000–\$10,000,000+	Large health systems, academic medical centers
Oracle Health (Cerner)	\$25–\$200/user/mo (cloud)	\$150,000–\$2,000,000	Mid-size hospitals, community health
athenahealth	\$150–\$300/provider/mo + 4-8% of collections	\$2,000–\$15,000 setup	Small-to-mid practices, value-based care
eClinicalWorks	\$250–\$450/provider/mo	\$5,000–\$20,000 setup	Multi-specialty groups, FQHCs
NextGen Healthcare	\$300–\$500/provider/mo	\$10,000–\$50,000 setup	Specialty practices, ambulatory
DrChrono	\$200–\$400/provider/mo	Minimal setup fees	Solo/small practices, iPad-first
Kareo (Tebra)	\$150–\$350/provider/mo	\$1,000–\$5,000 setup	Independent practices

First-Year Cost Example

A 3-physician family practice implementing athenahealth: ~\$400/provider/month (\$14,400/yr) + \$5,000 implementation + \$9,000 training (3 providers x \$3,000) + \$15,000 consultant fees = ~\$43,400 first year. By year two, ongoing costs drop to ~\$17,000–\$20,000/yr.

Data Migration Cost Breakdown

Data Migration — The Budget Item Everyone Underestimates

According to Gartner, 83% of data migration projects either fail or exceed their budgets and schedules. Nearly 40% of healthcare leaders report their recent EHR implementations encountered major issues. Most budget overruns trace back to data migration.

Migration Component	Cost Range	Key Variables
Data extraction from legacy system	\$5,000–\$25,000	Proprietary formats increase cost 2-3x
Data mapping and transformation	\$10,000–\$50,000	Number of data fields, format mismatches
Data cleansing and deduplication	\$5,000–\$30,000	Years of accumulated data, duplicate records
Validation and testing	\$10,000–\$40,000	Regulatory requirements, clinical safety checks
Historical data conversion	\$15,000–\$75,000	Volume, complexity, years of history
Interface builds (lab, pharmacy, billing)	\$5,000–\$15,000 per interface	HL7/FHIR compatibility, number of systems
Total migration (typical)	\$50,000–\$200,000	Small practice to mid-size hospital

Red Flag

If a consultant quotes data migration as a flat fee without first auditing your legacy data, they're guessing. Demand a data assessment phase before committing to a fixed migration price. Budget 30-50% contingency on all migration estimates.

Hidden Fees & Add-Ons

Always get an itemized SOW. The hourly rate or project fee is rarely the final number. Budget 25-40% above the base consulting estimate for change orders and scope creep.

Add-On	Typical Cost	When You Need It
Change orders (scope changes)	\$150-\$350/hr	Every project — workflows change during implementation
Extended training sessions	\$1,000-\$5,000/day	Staff turnover, slow adoption, new hires
Go-live on-site support (per day)	\$1,500-\$3,500/day + travel	Critical for first 2-4 weeks post-launch
After-hours / weekend support	+50-100% premium	Go-live weekends, urgent fixes
Interface development (per interface)	\$5,000-\$15,000 each	Lab, pharmacy, imaging, billing integrations
Custom report development	\$2,000-\$10,000 per report	Regulatory reporting, clinical dashboards
Workflow redesign consulting	\$10,000-\$50,000	When current workflows don't map to new EHR
Vendor management / liaison	\$150-\$250/hr	Coordinating between practice and EHR vendor
Post-go-live optimization sprints	\$15,000-\$50,000/sprint	3-6 months after go-live to fix adoption gaps
Meaningful Use / MIPS attestation	\$5,000-\$15,000	Ensuring regulatory compliance metrics are met
Travel expenses	\$500-\$2,000/trip	On-site consultants; flights, hotel, per diem
Project management overhead	15-25% of total project	Some firms add PM as a separate line item

Require your contract to specify a not-to-exceed cap on change orders, a fixed per-diem for on-site support, and travel expense limits. Open-ended change order clauses are the #1 source of budget blowouts.

How to Negotiate Better Rates

Numbered list

- 1 Compare firm vs. independent.** Large advisory firms charge \$250-\$500/hr with significant overhead markup. Independent consultants with the same certifications charge \$100-\$200/hr. For small practice implementations, independents often deliver better value.
- 2 Negotiate fixed-fee milestones.** Convert hourly engagements to fixed-fee phases (discovery, build, testing, go-live). This transfers scope risk to the consultant and gives you budget certainty.
- 3 Bundle implementation + optimization.** Consultants who handle both initial implementation and post-go-live optimization (3-6 months later) will often discount the bundle 10-20%.
- 4 Demand a data migration audit first.** A \$5,000-\$10,000 pre-migration data assessment can save \$50,000+ in migration cost overruns. Never skip this step.
- 5 Verify platform-specific certification.** Epic-certified consultants command 25-50% premiums, but only Epic-certified consultants can access the Epic build environment. Don't pay the premium if you're implementing athenahealth.
- 6 Leverage "train the trainer" models.** Instead of paying consultants \$1,000-\$5,000/day to train every staff member, have them train 2-3 super-users who train the rest. Saves 40-60% on training costs.
- 7 Time your engagement strategically.** Q1 (January-March) is peak EHR consulting demand. Q3 (July-September) is slower — consultants are more negotiable on rates.
- 8 Get three quotes.** Rate variation between firms for the same scope can be 40-100%. Always compare at least 3 proposals.
- 9 Negotiate travel policies upfront.** Require economy flights, government per diem rates, and pre-approval for all travel. Open travel policies can add \$10,000-\$30,000 to a project.
- 10 Include a post-go-live warranty.** Negotiate 30-90 days of included support after go-live. Most consultants expect this ask and will build it in.

Budget Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to estimate total EHR consulting costs. Print and fill in for each project.

Line Item	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost
Discovery / needs assessment	\$ _____	\$ _____
EHR software licensing (Year 1)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Implementation consulting labor	\$ _____	\$ _____
Data migration	\$ _____	\$ _____
Interface builds (x interfaces)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Training (x staff members)	\$ _____	\$ _____
Hardware / infrastructure upgrades	\$ _____	\$ _____
Go-live on-site support	\$ _____	\$ _____
Post-go-live optimization	\$ _____	\$ _____
Workflow redesign consulting	\$ _____	\$ _____
Custom report development	\$ _____	\$ _____
Travel expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
30% contingency buffer	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL ESTIMATED	\$ _____	\$ _____

Complete this worksheet before requesting proposals. Knowing your full scope — number of providers, legacy system, interfaces needed, and training headcount — helps consultants give accurate all-in pricing and prevents surprise change orders.

CTA box

Need a reality check on your budget? Email this worksheet to contact@ehrintel.com or browse vetted EHR consultants at ehrintel.com

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