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**Keith L. Jackson**  
Secretary

**Col. Phillip Burnett, Jr.**  
Commissioner

November 17, 2025

Senator Jimmy Higdon, Co-Chairman  
Representative John Blanton, Co-Chairman  
Interim Joint Committee on Transportation  
Capitol Annex  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Co-Chairmen:

The 2025 General Assembly passed Senate Bill 43, directing the Department of Kentucky State Police to prepare a report on the technological and budgetary requirements of expanding access for instructional permit testing at the local level. The report is to include an estimate of budgetary and technology needs to allow for proctored instruction permit testing by third-party entities, recommendations of procedures, and requirements for becoming a test proctor for instruction permit testing. The report is to also provide an estimate of budget needs to expand driver's skills testing at the three regional offices funded in the 2024 biennial budget and the potential budget needs if up to four additional offices are funded in the 2026 biennial budget.

### **Third-party Permit Testing**

Authorizing third-party proctored permit testing must consider safety and security, processes, and accessibility, and there are concerns with implementing third-party proctored permit testing. The most significant concern involves the integrity of proctored testing and the incidence of fraud in other states that use third-party testing. Third-party proctored testing would require contractual agreements between the commonwealth and authorized proctors. A new compliance section within KSP would need to be created to provide oversight of the authorized proctors. These systems and employees would create added expenses that must be funded initially and on an ongoing basis. Those same funds could instead be directed to expanding current testing and addressing the barriers to access that applicants are experiencing.

If third-party proctored testing is authorized, test sites should be limited to Class D operator and Class M motorcycle permit testing. Locations should be limited to schools, government entities, or those licensed by Kentucky State Police. These should be governed and licensed similarly to driving instruction schools as provided by KRS Chapter 332 and 502 KAR Chapter 10. Driving instruction schools may be licensed to proctor permit tests, but they should be prohibited from testing their own students as a conflict of interest. Driving instruction schools make money by instructing students. They would have an incentive to ignore or bend security measures to ensure a high pass rate for their students.

All proctors should be licensed by Kentucky State Police similarly to driving school instructors as described in KRS Chapter 332 and 502 KAR Chapter 10. There should be provisions for fees, renewals, suspension, revocation, and refusal to issue or renew a license to operate as a testing site and as a proctor. Proctors should be initially certified by Kentucky State Police through driver testing certification training, passing a knowledge exam, and submitting to a background investigation and fingerprint-based criminal history check. Fingerprint-based criminal history checks are recommended every year at renewal.

The cost to Kentucky State Police to contract for web-based access to the permit test for third parties is estimated at \$300,000 annually. The contract would be subject to annual renewal at increasing expense. The vendor for the tablet-based permit test also charges a fee for each test administered, at a rate determined by the number of tests administered per year, which should be passed on to the third-party proctors if they are collecting fees from applicants.

Kentucky State Police would develop auditing positions for ensuring compliance of third-party test proctoring. Eight auditors would be required to begin the program. Additional positions would be anticipated, depending on the number of test sites that are established. Each auditor would require support equipment, including a vehicle for travel, cellphone, laptop, and technology licensing. The initial cost is \$119,100 annually per auditor (\$73,500 salary with retirement and benefits; \$5,600 technology and travel costs; and \$40,000 vehicle.) The ongoing cost would be \$81,500 annually per auditor (\$75,900 salary with retirement and benefits; \$5,600 operating cost).

The total estimated cost to KSP for year one, including eight auditors and the web-based permit testing contract, would be \$1,252,800, and a minimum estimate of \$952,000 annually thereafter.

Third-party sites would be responsible for their own costs related to administering permit testing, including capital investment, operating costs, and staffing.

Vision screening at the time of permit testing must be addressed per KRS 186.577. Visual acuity is a critical qualification of driving a motor vehicle. Applicants who wish to use a third-party proctor for their permit test should be restricted to vision screening by a credentialed medical specialist or a vision specialist as described in 601 KAR 12:120. Vision screening at the third-party test site should not be authorized due to risk of inaccurate vision tests or fraud.

Applicants using a third-party proctor should be required to pre-register with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to submit their documents and with Kentucky State Police to ensure they are eligible to hold an instruction permit.

### **Additional Regional Driver Testing Office Costs**

Section 5(3) requires that KSP provide an estimate of budget needs to expand driver's skills testing at the three regional offices established in the 2024 budget. Please see attached budget request as submitted by KSP for Driver's Testing offices, which includes a phased approach through FY2027 to staffing the three additional offices. Estimated costs for these offices are \$1,302,900 in FY2027, and \$1,507,000 in FY2028 and all subsequent years.

Section 5(3) also requires that KSP provide an estimate of budget needs if up to four additional offices are funded in the 2026 biennial budget. The attached budget request includes a cost estimate for KSP to provide driver skills testing at six additional regional offices, mirroring KYTC's budget request for six additional offices. These additional offices are estimated to cost \$1,846,000 in FY2028. KSP assumes no cost in FY2027, as KYTC would first need to establish each location before KSP could begin testing.

## **Conclusion**

Kentucky State Police recommends that the Driver Testing Branch be funded to expand into more KYTC regional offices to administer tests so that third-party testing is not needed. Third-party testing creates safety and security concerns, as well as funding and logistical requirements. If driver testing is available in all regional offices, especially in central Kentucky where demand is the highest, KSP would be able to meet the testing needs of all applicants.

Sincerely,



Col. Chad White  
Deputy Commissioner

Attachment

**2026-2028 KENTUCKY BRANCH BUDGET**  
**Additional Budget Request: Program Narrative/Documentation Record**

**PRIORITY**  
**Cabinet #: 9**  
**Agency #: 7**

**OPERATING BUDGET REPORT B-4**

**Agency: State Police**  
**Appropriation Unit: State Police**  
**Program/Service Unit: Operations**  
**Sub Program:**  
**Posting Unit:**

**Governmental Branch: Executive**  
**Cabinet/Function: Justice and Public Safety**

**REQUEST TITLE: Driver Testing Additional Offices**

**I. PROGRAM/RESULTS  
DOCUMENTATION**

**Requested**      **Requested**      **Requested**  
**FY 2025-26**    **FY 2026-27**    **FY 2027-28**

(a) Total Funding      \$1,302,900      \$3,416,000

(b) Quantitative Data

Location	Staff Required FY27	Staff Required FY28
Bardstown*	7	7
Leitchfield*	4	4
Hurstbourne – Louisville*	11	11
6 KYTC Proposed Offices	--	27
<b>TOTAL STAFF REQUIRED</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>49</b>

\* Location is an existing KYTC Driver's Licensing  
Regional Office

**II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/PURPOSE**

To meet the increasing demand for driver's testing services across the Commonwealth, the Kentucky State Police (KSP) Driver Testing Branch requests funding to establish additional testing locations at three (3) existing Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Regional Driver's Licensing Offices in FY2027 and additional funding in FY2028 to establish six (6) additional testing locations in accordance with KYTC's proposed additional locations.

The KSP Driver Testing Branch administers all driver's tests in the state of Kentucky. This includes both written and skills tests for all licenses issued in Kentucky, including commercial driver's licenses. KSP Driver's Test Administrators work at the Regional Driver's License Offices operated by KYTC. All licenses are issued by KYTC, but KSP Driver Testing Branch administers all testing.

Through budget appropriations provided in 2024 RS HB 265, KYTC received funding for three additional Regional Driver's Licensing Offices. KSP did not receive additional funding to provide driver's testing services at any newly established offices.

Additionally, in 2025, House Bill 15 passed allowing 15-year-olds to test for their driver's permit. This has caused an overwhelming increase in demand, and appointments for driver's tests are extremely difficult to obtain.

KSP currently offers driver's tests at 28 KYTC locations. To meet the demand for driver's testing, the KSP Driver Testing Branch needs to expand to offer services in Leitchfield, Bardstown, and the Louisville - Hurstbourne location.

KSP is also requesting funding to provide driver's testing services at six (6) additional drivers testing offices in FY2028, based on KYTC's budget request to fund and establish six (6) additional KYTC Driver's Licensing Regional Offices.

### III. PROGRAM RESULTS/FISCAL JUSTIFICATION

The KSP Driver Testing Branch intends to open one additional location in each quarter of FY2027 with all three (3) offices opened in FY2028 and is requesting funding in accordance with that phased approach.

The estimated cost to operate the proposed six (6) additional locations assumes each location includes four (4) staff and three (3) supervisors overall. KSP is requesting funding for these offices in FY2028, to allow KYTC time to establish the offices in FY2027.

<b>FY2027</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>OPERATING</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Existing Locations (3)	\$1,049,700	\$253,200	\$1,302,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,049,700</b>	<b>\$253,200</b>	<b>\$1,302,900</b>

<b>FY2028</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>OPERATING</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Existing Locations (3)	\$1,396,800	\$173,200	\$1,570,000
Proposed Locations (6)	\$1,453,800	\$392,200	\$1,846,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,850,600</b>	<b>\$565,400</b>	<b>\$3,416,000</b>