



**Andy Beshear**  
Governor

**Joni Upchurch**  
Executive Director

## **Kentucky Board of Cosmetology-Executive Briefing**

**Interim Joint Committee on Licensing, Occupations and Administrative Regulations Meeting**

**June 18, 2026; Annex Room 154**

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### **Agency Overview**

#### **Mission**

The Kentucky Board of Cosmetology (KBC) protects the health, safety, and welfare of the public by regulating the practice of cosmetology and related professions throughout the Commonwealth. The Board establishes and enforces standards for sanitation, education, licensure, and professional conduct while ensuring compliance with Kentucky law and supporting a safe and professional beauty industry.

As of June 1, 2026, KBC oversees:

- 35,840 active licensees across 13 license types
- 5,910 licensed facilities
- 56 licensed schools

#### **Core Values**

##### **Public Safety**

Protecting Kentuckians through enforcement of sanitation, infection-control, and professional practice standards.

##### **Professional Integrity**

Maintaining high ethical standards and ensuring fair, consistent enforcement across all regulated professions.

##### **Professional Standards and Quality**

Establishing and enforcing requirements for education, licensing, inspections, and professional practice.



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## **Continuous Improvement and Transparency**

Evaluating and improving agency processes, regulations, and policies while maintaining transparency in decision-making and public communications.

## **Leadership**

The Kentucky Board of Cosmetology is governed by a seven-member Board. Since the appointment of Executive Director Joni Upchurch on October 1, 2024, the agency has focused on operational improvements, modernization, compliance, customer service, and accountability.

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## **Key Accomplishments Since January 2025**

### **Public Engagement and Education**

- Executive Director visited all 56 licensed cosmetology schools across Kentucky, speaking with over 2,000 students.
- School training is now required during the approval process and is offered both in-person and virtually.

### **Testing and Licensing Improvements**

- Secured a permanent PSI practical examination testing facility in Lexington, with examinations offered three days per week.
- Expanded theory examination access through 13 testing locations statewide.
- Theory examinations are now available in seven languages.
- Passage of Senate Bill 22 established consistent testing limitations and reexamination opportunities across all licensed disciplines.

### **Technology and Communication Enhancements**

- Implemented mass email communication capabilities through the licensing system to provide timely updates to licensees and permit holders.
- Established official social media platform dedicated to regulatory information and public education.
- Enhanced the school portal to allow digital submission of extracurricular hour documentation.

### **Website Modernization**

The KBC website was comprehensively updated to improve transparency and public access, including:

- Google Translate functionality
- Public announcements section
- Staff directory with direct contact information and responsibilities
- Fee information section
- School pass/fail reporting data
- Direct access to online renewal services
- Complaint submission portal
- Open records request portal
- Interactive mapping for schools, testing centers, and agency locations

### **Facility and Operational Improvements**

- Relocated agency headquarters to a safer and more publicly accessible facility on Capital Center Drive.
- Achieved full staffing and enhanced employee training.
- Began replacement of inspector body-camera equipment with cloud-based technology to improve efficiency and reduce administrative burden.

### **Regulatory and Records Management Improvements**

- Filed a comprehensive regulatory package to modernize industry regulations and improve statutory alignment.
- Updated all applications, forms, instructions, notices, and communications within the licensing system.
- Worked with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives to establish proper records retention schedules, including inspection photographs and video evidence.

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### **Agency Challenges Identified in Fall 2024**

An internal comprehensive review and LOIC report identified several operational and administrative challenges requiring corrective action.

#### **Staffing**

- Vacancies contributed to service delays and inconsistent customer support.
- Daily operational responsibilities were strained due to understaffing.

#### **Technology**

- The current licensing database was not designed to fully support agency operational needs.



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## **Fiscal Management**

- Signature authority procedures required clarification and correction.
- Processes related to fine collections and transfers to the General Fund required standardization.

## **Operational Processes**

Areas requiring additional structure and consistency included:

- Inspection procedures
  - Gift reporting protocols
  - Appeals and hearing processes
  - Fine assessment and payment procedures
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## **Agency Corrective Actions Implemented**

### **Policy and Governance Improvements**

#### **Signature Authority**

The Board now follows established Personnel Cabinet procedures to ensure signature authority is updated immediately following leadership changes.

#### **Gift Reporting Policy**

Inspectors follow Executive Branch guidance regarding gifts. Any unsolicited monetary gift is reported, secured, documented, and transferred to the Kentucky Employees Charitable Campaign (KECC) as a donation.

#### **Inspection Program**

Regulatory changes now require each licensed facility to receive at least one inspection during the life of its license.

From January 2025 through June 2026, field staff completed:

- 5,123 inspections, including:
  - Routine inspections
  - Complaint investigations
  - Opening inspections
  - Inactive facility inspections



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### **Fine Administration**

Formal procedures now govern issuance, documentation, collection, and tracking of fines in accordance with KRS Chapter 317A and 201 KAR 12:190.

### **Staff Training and Professional Development**

- Monthly staff meetings are established for office and field personnel.
- Quarterly agency-wide training implemented.
- Policy and Procedure Manuals revised, printed, and distributed.
- Inspector Standard Operating Procedures updated, and training completed.

### **Regulatory Improvements**

#### **Senate Bill Implementation**

KBC successfully implemented statutory changes resulting from Senate Bills 14 and 22.

#### **Out-of-State Licensure**

Following regulatory updates effective December 2025:

- 415 out-of-state transfer applications approved.
- Zero appeals filed regarding those approvals.

#### **Emergency Orders**

Emergency closure authority is used only after General Counsel and Executive Director review and is reserved for situations posing immediate risk to public health and safety, including:

- Extensive unlicensed practice
- Severe sanitation violations
- Conditions presenting immediate danger to consumers

#### **Complaint Accountability**

Complaints regarding inspectors are reviewed by agency leadership, including body-camera footage when applicable. Appropriate personnel actions are taken when warranted.

#### **Fiscal Controls**

Significant improvements include:

- Return of \$374,000 to the General Fund.
- Fine revenues deposited into the General Fund within 72 hours of final Board approval.



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- Comprehensive fine tracking through licensing records, EMARS documentation, scanned orders, and supplemental reporting logs.
- Accurate coding and deposit of all FY 2026 financial transactions.
- Updated and compliant personnel records.
- Current contracts and biennium renewals completed.

### **Customer Service Enhancements**

- All vacancies are filled.
- Consistent staff training implemented.
- Updated policies governing communications with licensees and the public.
- Planning underway for a modern licensing database to improve service delivery and online functionality.

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### **Results and Current Agency Status**

Since Fall 2024, KBC has undertaken substantial operational, fiscal, technological, and regulatory improvements.

The agency has focused on strengthening accountability, improving customer service, enhancing transparency, and ensuring compliance with statutory requirements. Existing processes have been reviewed and reinforced to improve consistency, effectiveness, and public confidence.

Policies, procedures, inspections, investigations, and training initiatives continue to be monitored to ensure long-term compliance and performance.

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### **Legislative Considerations**

KBC respectfully requests consideration of:

#### **Statutory Cleanup Legislation**

Technical amendments to align statutory language with current regulations, operational practices, and agency needs.



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## **Future Goals**

### **Modern Licensing System**

Develop and implement a new licensing and regulatory database to replace the current system before its end-of-life date in 2027.

### **Continued Regulatory Modernization**

Continue reviewing and updating statutes and administrative regulations to ensure consistency, efficiency, and clarity.

### **Service Excellence**

Further strengthen policies, procedures, training, and stakeholder engagement to improve service delivery while maintaining public protection as the agency's highest priority.

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## **Conclusion**

The Kentucky Board of Cosmetology has made significant progress in addressing operational, fiscal, regulatory, and customer service challenges identified in 2024. Through strengthened governance, enhanced training, improved transparency, and strategic modernization efforts, the agency is positioned to continue protecting Kentucky consumers while supporting a professional, accountable, and well-regulated cosmetology industry.

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