

31.030 Authority and duties of department -- Annual report.

The authority and duties of the Department of Public Advocacy shall include but are not limited to:

- (1) Administering the statewide public advocacy system created by this chapter or by any other appropriate legislation or court decision;
- (2) Developing policies and procedures for administration of the defense of indigent defendants in criminal cases that the public advocate, statutes, or the courts determine are subject to public assistance;
- (3) Determining necessary personnel for the department and appointing staff attorneys, who shall be assistant public advocates, and non-lawyer assistants within the merit system, subject to available funding and employee allotments;
- (4) Maintaining and exercising control over the department's information technology system, and working with the Commonwealth Office of Technology to ensure that the department's information technology is in conformity with the requirements of state government;
- (5) Conducting research into, and developing and implementing methods of, improving the operation of the criminal justice system with regard to indigent defendants and other defendants in criminal actions, including participation in groups, organizations, and projects dedicated to improving representation of defendants in criminal actions in particular, or the interests of indigent or impoverished persons in general;
- (6) Issuing rules, promulgating administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A, and establishing standards as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter, the decisions of the United States Supreme Court, the decisions of the Kentucky Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and other applicable court decisions or statutes;
- (7) Being authorized to pursue legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities;
- (8) Being authorized to purchase liability insurance for the protection of all full-time public advocates, deputy public advocates, and assistant public advocates to protect them from liability for malpractice arising in the course or scope of employment and for the protection of attorneys with whom the Department of Public Advocacy contracts to protect them from liability for malpractice arising in the course or scope of the contract;
- (9) Being authorized to seek, apply for, and solicit funds for the operation of the defense of indigent persons or protection of the persons with disabilities programs from any source, public or private, and to receive donations, grants, awards, and similar funds from any legal source. Those funds shall be placed in a special account for the Department of Public Advocacy and, notwithstanding KRS 45.229, those funds shall not lapse;
- (10) Being authorized to assign an attorney, including a conflict attorney under a plan, for good cause, at any stage of representation, including trial, appeal, or other post-conviction or post-disposition proceeding, including discharge revocation hearings, preliminary parole revocation hearings, and conditional discharge revocation

hearings, regardless of whether the hearings are conducted by constitutional judges or executive branch administrative law judges;

- (11) Filing an annual report with the Legislative Research Commission by September 30 of each year, for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary, informing the public of the work of all divisions of the department and setting forth the total number and types of cases assigned to the department by county, the average number of cases per department attorney, all funding available to the department, the average amount of state funds expended per assigned case, and any other information requested by the Legislative Research Commission or that the public advocate finds necessary to inform the General Assembly, the judicial or executive branches, or the public of the activities conducted by the department during the previous fiscal year;
- (12) Performing other activities and instituting other programs as necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter, or those decisions or statutes which are the subject of this section;
- (13)
 - (a) Within sixty (60) days of the end of each fiscal year, filing with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committees on Judiciary and Families and Children a report detailing:
 - 1. The number of alternative sentencing plans submitted to courts that recommended treatment by providers that were nonqualified treatment programs;
 - 2. A breakdown of the number of plans described in subparagraph 1. of this paragraph that were approved, denied, or amended by the courts; and
 - 3. A listing of all treatment programs recommended that did not meet the requirements of a qualified treatment program.
 - (b) As counsel appointed to provide legal representation to an individual under KRS Chapter 31, the department or defense counsel serves at the direction or request of the represented individual and may make recommendations for substance abuse treatment services from a treatment provider that is not a qualified treatment program but shall adhere to the reporting requirements in KRS 222.427(3); and
- (14) Requiring alternative sentencing workers as defined in KRS 31.252 to:
 - (a) Obtain a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing education pertaining to substance use disorder; and
 - (b) Comply with KRS 222.429.

Effective: July 15, 2026

History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 136, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2026. -- Amended 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 68, sec. 6, effective July 15, 2024. -- Amended 2023 Ky. Acts ch. 144, sec. 1, effective July 1, 2024. -- Amended 2014 Ky. Acts ch. 87, sec. 2, effective July 15, 2014. -- Amended 2012 Ky. Acts ch. 151, sec. 4, effective July 12, 2012. -- Amended 2002 Ky. Acts ch. 283, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2002. -- Amended 1978 Ky. Acts ch. 155, sec. 21, effective June 17, 1978. -- Amended 1976 (1st Extra. Sess.) Ky. Acts ch. 14, sec. 8. -- Created 1972 Ky. Acts ch. 353, sec. 3.