

150.061 Commissioner -- Appointment -- Qualifications -- Term -- Removal -- Vacancies in office -- Compensation -- Oath -- Bond -- Duties -- Annual report -- Salary structure guidelines -- Authority to appoint additional employees if grant funds available. (Effective July 15, 2026)

- (1) (a) Notwithstanding any provisions of KRS Chapter 18A, 42, 45, 45A, 56, or 64 to the contrary, the commission shall have the sole authority to appoint a commissioner of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, who shall be a person:
 1. With knowledge of and experience in the requirements for the protection, conservation, and restoration of the wildlife resources of the Commonwealth;
 2. Who has demonstrated active participation in hunting, fishing, or both for ten (10) years prior to appointment;
 3. Who, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, has held a hunting and fishing license in Kentucky or another state for at least the previous ten (10) consecutive years; and
 4. Who has not served on the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission or in the General Assembly for at least two (2) years.
- (b) The commission shall be the sole contracting body for the purposes of KRS Chapter 45A and shall submit any proposed personal service contract with a commissioner to the Government Contract Review Committee for its review pursuant to KRS 45A.690 to 45A.725. The commissioner shall serve for a defined employment contract term not to exceed four (4) years and shall be subject to:
 1. Annual review by the commission in closed, executive session;
 2. Removal by the commission for the same cause and in the same manner in which the Governor may remove a member of the commission;
 3. Reappointment by the commission; and
 4. Confirmation by the Senate in accordance with KRS 11.160.
- (2) For commissioner vacancies that occur after April 10, 2026, the commission shall conduct a national search to identify the best qualified individual to hold the position and carry out the requirements of this chapter.
- (3) The commissioner shall receive such compensation as the commission may solely determine, and shall be reimbursed for all actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred by him or her in the performance of his or her official duties.
- (4) Before entering upon the duties of his or her office, the commissioner shall take and subscribe to the constitutional oath of office, and shall, in addition thereto, swear or affirm that he or she holds no other public office, nor any position upon or under any political committee or party. Upon appointment by the commission, the commissioner shall execute a bond of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) in favor of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, the premium on said bond to be paid out of department funds.
- (5) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the commissioner shall be the

sole appointing authority for the department for the purposes of KRS Chapter 18A and shall have general supervision and control of all activities, functions, appointments, and employees of the department. He or she shall enforce all provisions of the laws of the state relating to wild animals, birds, fish and amphibians, and shall exercise all powers necessarily incident thereto not specifically conferred on the commission. The commissioner shall make an annual report of all receipts and disbursements and file same with the Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

- (6) (a) Notwithstanding any provision of KRS Chapter 18A to the contrary, the commissioner shall establish a salary structure for the sworn employees of the department's Division of Law Enforcement that is competitive with the pay structures for other state and local law enforcement personnel in the Commonwealth and is adequate to meet the department's recruitment and retention goals.
 - (b) The secretary of the Personnel Cabinet established under KRS Chapter 18A shall take every action necessary to implement the requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection and to ensure that the sworn employees of the department's Division of Law Enforcement are otherwise subject to the requirements and benefits of KRS Chapter 18A.
- (7) If federal or other grant funds become available to pay their salaries, the commissioner may appoint and employ other persons that he or she may deem necessary or desirable to accomplish the purposes of this chapter. The commissioner shall determine the compensation, duties, and terms of employment of these employees, and grant funded, time-limited positions shall be approved by the commission as needed. Employees whose salaries are funded through federal or other grant funds shall not be counted in any tally of permanent employees made for employee cap or budgetary purposes.

Effective: July 15, 2026

History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 93, sec. 6, effective April 10, 2026; ch. 148, sec. 2, effective July 15, 2026; and ch. 178, sec. 9, effective April 16, 2026. -- Amended 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 197, sec. 6, effective April 13, 2022. -- Amended 2021 Ky. Acts ch. 161, sec. 2, effective March 29, 2021. -- Amended 2010 Ky. Acts ch. 158, sec. 7, effective July 15, 2010. -- Amended 2003 Ky. Acts ch. 170, sec. 1, effective June 24, 2003. -- Amended 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 386, sec. 28. -- Amended 1956 Ky. Acts ch. 115, sec. 4, effective May 18, 1956. -- Amended 1952 Ky. Acts ch. 200, sec. 8. -- Created 1944 Ky. Acts ch. 6, sec. 1.

Legislative Research Commission Note (7/15/2026). This statute was amended by 2026 Ky. Acts chs. 93, 148, and 178, which do not appear to be in conflict and have been codified together.