

**186.164 Collection and distribution of special license plate fees -- Design, printing, and replacement -- Application process -- Voluntary contribution for designated group -- Administrative regulations -- Audit of special license plate funds -- Annual report. (Effective July 15, 2026)**

- (1) The SF portion of the fee required under KRS 186.162 shall include the fee to reflectorize all license plates under KRS 186.240. All EF fees required under KRS 186.162 shall be collected at the time of an initial or renewal application by the county clerk who shall forward the EF fee to the cabinet. The cabinet shall remit EF fees to the fund, group, or organization identified in KRS 186.162 on a quarterly basis. The cabinet may retain any investment income earned from holding EF fees designated to be remitted under this subsection to offset administrative costs incurred by the cabinet in the administration of EF fees.
- (2) A special license plate shall be the color and design selected by the group or organization identified in subsection (13) of this section, contingent upon the approval of the Transportation Cabinet. In addition to the design selected for a special license plate, the name "Kentucky," an annual renewal decal, and any combination of letters or numerals required by the cabinet in the design shall also appear on the plate.
- (3) An actual metal special license plate shall be issued on the same schedule as regular license plates are issued under KRS 186.240. The cabinet shall have the discretion to extend the time period that will exist between the date a metal special license plate is issued and the date that regular plates are issued under KRS 186.240. A renewal registration decal shall be issued all other years during the owner's or lessee's birth month, except as provided in KRS 186.041(2) and 186.042(5). A person seeking a special license plate for a vehicle provided as part of the person's occupation shall conform to the requirements of KRS 186.050(14).
- (4)
  - (a) If a special license plate issued under this chapter deteriorates to the point that the lettering, numbering, or images on the face of the plate are not legible, the plate shall be replaced free of charge, if the owner or lessee has not transferred the vehicle to which the plate was issued during the current licensing period.
  - (b) If a special license plate issued under this chapter is lost, stolen, or damaged in an accident, the county clerk shall issue a new plate upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee, if the owner or lessee has not transferred the vehicle to which the plate was issued during the current licensing period.
- (5) Upon the sale, transfer, or termination of a lease of a vehicle with any special license plate issued under this chapter, the owner or lessee shall remove the special plate and return it and the certificate of registration to the county clerk. The county clerk shall reissue the owner or lessee a regular license plate and a certificate of registration upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee. If the owner or lessee requests, the county clerk shall reissue the special plate upon payment of a three dollar (\$3) county clerk fee for use on any other vehicle of the same classification and category owned, leased, or acquired by the person during the current licensing period. If the owner or lessee has the special plate reissued to a vehicle which has been previously registered in this state, the regular license plate

that is being replaced shall be returned to the county clerk who shall forward the plate to the Transportation Cabinet.

- (6) A special license plate may be issued to the owner or lessee of a motor vehicle that is required to be registered under KRS 186.050(1), (3)(a), or (4)(a), except a special license plate shall not be issued to a taxicab, limousine, or U-Drive-It registered and licensed under this chapter or KRS Chapter 281. A person applying for a special license plate shall apply in the office of the county clerk in the county of the person's residence, except as provided in KRS 186.168(3). All special license plates issued under this chapter may be combined with a personalized license plate under the provisions of KRS 186.174. The fee to combine a special license plate with a personalized license plate shall be as established in KRS 186.162(3).
- (7) Within thirty (30) days of termination from election to, appointment to, or membership with any group or organization, an applicant to whom a special license plate was issued under this chapter shall return the special license plate to the county clerk of the county of his or her residence, unless the person is merely changing his or her status with the group or organization to retired.
- (8) A group wanting to create a special license plate that is not authorized under this chapter on June 27, 2019, shall comply with the following conditions before being eligible to apply for a special license plate:
  - (a) The group shall be nonprofit and based, headquartered, or have a chapter in Kentucky;
  - (b) The group may be organized for, but shall not be restricted to, social, civic, or entertainment purposes;
  - (c) The message to be placed on the license plate, if created, shall not discriminate against any race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, and shall not be construed, as determined by the cabinet, as an attempt to victimize or intimidate any person due to the person's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
  - (d) The plate shall not represent a political party and shall not have been created primarily to promote a specific political belief;
  - (e) The plate shall not have as its primary purpose the promotion of any specific faith, religion, or antireligion;
  - (f) The plate shall not be the name of a special product or brand name, and shall not be construed, as determined by the cabinet, as promoting a product or brand name; and
  - (g) The plate's lettering, logo, image, or message to be placed on the license plate, if created, shall not be obscene, as determined by the cabinet.
- (9) If the cabinet denies to issue a group a special license plate based upon the conditions specified in subsection (8) of this section, the cabinet shall, immediately upon denying to issue a group a special license plate, notify in writing the chairperson of both the House and Senate standing committees on transportation of the denial and the reasons upon which the cabinet based the denial.
- (10) If the cabinet approves a request for a special license plate, the cabinet shall begin designing and printing the plate after:

- (a) The group collects a minimum of nine hundred (900) applications with each application being accompanied by a fee as set forth in KRS 186.162. The applications and accompanying fee shall be submitted to the cabinet at one (1) time as a whole and shall not be submitted individually or intermittently; and
  - (b) The group submits to the cabinet the programming and production costs for the plate.
- (11) A group that is approved for a special license plate shall maintain a minimum number of five hundred (500) registrations annually for the cabinet to continue production of the plate.
- (12) An initial applicant for, or an applicant renewing, his or her registration for a special license plate shall, at the time of application, make a contribution that the county clerk shall forward to the cabinet as set forth in KRS 186.162. The cabinet shall, on an annual basis, remit the contributions to the appropriate group identified to be used for the declared purpose stated under subsection (13) of this section. The cabinet may retain any investment income earned from holding contributions designated to be remitted under this subsection to offset administrative costs incurred by the cabinet in the administration of the contributions. Any group or organization that receives a mandatory EF fee under KRS 186.162 shall maintain the information required under subsection (13)(a) and (c) of this section with the Transportation Cabinet.
- (13) The group shall, at the time the nine hundred (900) applications are submitted to the Transportation Cabinet, also submit a notarized affidavit to the cabinet attesting to:
  - (a) The name, address, and telephone number for the group or organization. If the group or organization does not have its headquarters in the Commonwealth, then the name, address, and telephone number for the group or organization's Kentucky state chapter shall be required. The names of the officers of the group or organization shall also be required. If the entity receiving funds under subsection (12) of this section is not a state governmental agency, a program unit within a state governmental agency, or is a group or organization that does not have a statewide chapter, then a donation for use by the group or organization shall be prohibited;
  - (b) The amount of the monetary donation the group wants to receive when a person purchases the group or organization's special license plate; and
  - (c) The purpose for which the donated funds will be used by the group or organization. Donated funds shall not be limited for use by members of the group or organization, and shall not be used for administrative or personnel costs of the group or organization.
- (14)
  - (a) All funds received by a group or organization under subsection (12) of this section shall be deposited into an account separate from all other accounts the group or organization may have.
  - (b) If the amount of money received in any fiscal year by a group or organization under subsection (12) of this section is:
    - 1. Equal to or greater than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), the account shall be audited yearly at the expense of the group or

organization and the completed audit shall be forwarded to the Transportation Cabinet; or

2. Less than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), the group or organization shall submit a form to the cabinet attesting to its compliance with this section.
- (c) One hundred percent (100%) of the funds received by a group or organization under subsection (12) of this section shall be used for the express purpose identified by the group in subsection (13) of this section.
  - (d) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this subsection, any agency, group, or organization that receives a mandatory EF fee under KRS 186.162 shall comply with this subsection.
  - (e) If a mandatory EF fee under KRS 186.162 is directed into a fund established in statute, the agency controlling the fund shall not be required to keep the EF fee proceeds in a separate account.
- (15) (a) No later than October 1, 2026, and each October 1 thereafter, any group or organization that receives funds under this section or EF fees under KRS 186.162, or any agency that administers a fund established in statute that receives funds under this section or EF fees under KRS 186.162, shall submit a report on the use of these funds in the previous fiscal year to the:
1. Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue; and
  2. Auditor of Public Accounts.
- (b) The report required under paragraph (a) of this subsection shall include:
1. The total receipts of the fund;
  2. The sources of those receipts;
  3. An accounting of all expenditures from the fund;
  4. A detailed summary of the activities supported by EF fee proceeds, including the amount of money spent on each activity;
  5. The identification of any unexpended funds and the reason why the funds were not expended; and
  6. An explanation of how all expenditures align with program objectives.
- (16) The secretary of the Transportation Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A to establish additional rules to implement the issuance of special license plates issued under this chapter, including but not limited to:
- (a) Documentation that will be required to accompany an application for a special license plate to provide proof of:
    1. Election to the United States Congress or the Kentucky General Assembly;
    2. Election or appointment to the Kentucky Court of Justice;
    3. Membership in a Masonic Order, Fraternal Order of Police, or emergency management organization;

4. Eligibility for membership in the Gold Star Mothers of America;
  5. Eligibility as a father for associate membership in the Gold Star Mothers of America;
  6. Eligibility for membership in the Gold Star Wives of America;
  7. Ownership of an amateur radio operator license;
  8. Receipt of the Silver Star Medal;
  9. Receipt of the Bronze Star Medal;
  10. Receipt of the Air Medal;
  11. Receipt of the Distinguished Flying Cross;
  12. Receipt of the Combat Action Badge;
  13. Receipt of the Combat Infantry Badge;
  14. Eligibility for a Gold Star Siblings license plate for a person whose sibling died while serving the country in the United States Armed Forces. As used in this subparagraph, "sibling" means a sibling by blood, a sibling by half-blood, a sibling by adoption, or a stepsibling; or
  15. Eligibility for a Gold Star Sons or Gold Star Daughters license plate for a person whose parent or stepparent died while serving the country in the United States Armed Forces;
- (b) The time schedule permissible for a group or organization to request a design change for the special license plate; and
- (c) The procedures for review of proposed license plates and the standards by which proposed special license plates are approved or rejected in accordance with subsection (10) of this section.
- (17) Any individual, group, or organization that fails to audit any funds as required under this section, or that intentionally uses any funds received in any way other than attested to under subsection (13) of this section or for administrative or personnel costs in violation of subsection (13) of this section, shall be guilty of a Class D felony and upon conviction shall, in addition to being subject to criminal penalties, be assessed a mandatory five thousand dollar (\$5,000) fine.

**Effective:** July 15, 2026

**History:** Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 161, sec. 100, effective July 15, 2026. -- Amended 2021 Ky. Acts ch. 92, sec. 3, effective June 29, 2021. -- Amended 2019 Ky. Acts ch. 107, sec. 2, effective June 27, 2019. -- Amended 2018 Ky. Acts ch. 148, sec. 2, effective July 14, 2018. -- Amended 2017 Ky. Acts ch. 50, sec. 2, effective January 1, 2018. -- Amended 2015 Ky. Acts ch. 19, sec. 39, effective June 24, 2015; and ch. 32, sec. 2, effective January 1, 2016. -- Amended 2010 Ky. Acts ch. 33, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2010, ch. 40, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2010; ch. 72, sec. 2, effective July 15, 2010; and ch. 113, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2010. -- Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 30, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2007 Ky. Acts ch. 40, sec. 1, effective June 26, 2007. -- Amended 2006 Ky. Acts ch. 40, sec. 2, effective July 12, 2006; and ch. 200, sec. 1, effective July 12, 2006. -- Created 2005 Ky. Acts ch. 133, sec. 2, effective June 20, 2005.