

1 AN ACT relating to coroners.

2 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

3 ➔Section 1. KRS 64.185 is amended to read as follows:

4 (1) (a) Coroners shall receive out of the county, consolidated local government,
5 charter county government, urban-county government, or unified local
6 government treasury, whichever is appropriate, the monthly compensation the
7 fiscal court of each county shall fix, subject to the following minimums:

8	County	Monthly Minimum
9	Population	Compensation
10	1. 10,000 or less	\$200
11	2. 10,001 to 20,000	300
12	3. 20,001 to 40,000	350
13	4. 40,001 to 60,000	400
14	5. 60,001 to 100,000	450
15	6. 100,001 to 150,000	800
16	7. 150,001 or more	1,000

17 (b) Coroners who hold a current certificate of continuing education, issued jointly
18 by the Department of Criminal Justice Training, Justice and Public Safety
19 Cabinet, and the Office of the Kentucky State Medical Examiner, Justice and
20 Public Safety Cabinet, **and who have completed the course described in**
21 **subsection (4)(b) of this section,** shall be paid the following minimum
22 monthly compensation set forth in this subsection in recognition of the
23 training:

24	County	Monthly Minimum
25	Population	Compensation
26	1. 10,000 or less	\$400
27	2. 10,001 to 20,000	500

1	3.	20,001 to 40,000	650
2	4.	40,001 to 60,000	750
3	5.	60,001 to 100,000	850
4	6.	100,001 to 150,000	1,100
5	7.	150,001 or more	1,300

6 (2) Deputy coroners who hold a current certificate of continuing education, as described
7 in subsection (1)(b) of this section, and have completed the course described in
8 subsection (4)(b) of this section, shall receive out of the county, consolidated local
9 government, charter county government, urban-county government, or unified local
10 government treasury, whichever is appropriate, the monthly compensation the fiscal
11 court of each county shall fix, subject to the following minimums:

12	County	Monthly Minimum
13	Population	Compensation
14	(a) 10,000 or less	\$200
15	(b) 10,001 to 20,000	250
16	(c) 20,001 to 40,000	275
17	(d) 40,001 to 60,000	300
18	(e) 60,001 to 100,000	400
19	(f) 100,001 to 150,000	900
20	(g) 150,001 or more	1,100

21 (3) The fiscal court of any county, or the legislative body of a consolidated local
22 government, charter county government, urban-county government, or unified local
23 government may compensate coroners and deputy coroners an additional amount of
24 up to three hundred dollars (\$300) per month as an expense allowance.

25 (4) (a) The initial course of continuing education required under subsection (1)(b) of
26 this section shall consist of a forty (40) hour basic training course prescribed
27 by the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet. Annually thereafter the coroner shall

1 attend and successfully complete at least eighteen (18) hours of approved
2 training in order to be compensated in accordance with subsection (1)(b) of
3 this section.

4 **(b) Within three (3) years of initially assuming office, in order to be**
5 **compensated in accordance with subsections (1)(b) and (2) of this section, a**
6 **coroner or deputy coroner shall attend and complete a course of at least**
7 **four (4) hours provided by the Department of Criminal Justice Training**
8 **that shall include instruction on the grieving process and best practices for**
9 **providing a notice of death to a spouse or next of kin and may include**
10 **instruction on other similar topics. A coroner or deputy coroner that has**
11 **completed the course shall not be required to retake the course.**

12 (5) If a deputy coroner assumes the office of coroner after receiving the training
13 stipulated in this section, the deputy coroner shall be compensated in accordance
14 with the compensation schedule set forth in subsection (1)(b) of this section.

15 (6) The number of deputy coroners in a county shall not exceed one (1) for each
16 twenty-five thousand (25,000) inhabitants, or fraction thereof, according to the most
17 recent federal census, but every coroner may, subject to the approval of the
18 legislative body of the county, consolidated local government, charter county
19 government, urban-county government, or unified local government, appoint
20 additional deputy coroners, regardless of population.

21 ➔Section 2. KRS 72.415 is amended to read as follows:

22 (1) For the purpose of enforcing the provisions of KRS 72.410 to 72.470, coroners and
23 deputy coroners shall have the full power and authority of peace officers in this
24 state, including the power of arrest and the authority to bear arms, and shall have the
25 power and authority to:

26 (a) Administer oaths;

27 (b) Enter upon public or private premises for the purpose of making

- 1 investigations;
- 2 (c) Seize evidence;
- 3 (d) Interrogate persons;
- 4 (e) Require the production of medical records, books, papers, documents, or other
- 5 evidence;
- 6 (f) Impound vehicles involved in vehicular deaths;
- 7 (g) Employ special investigators and photographers; and
- 8 (h) Expend funds for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of KRS 72.410 to
- 9 72.470.

10 The fiscal court or urban-county government shall pay all reasonable expenses

11 incurred by the coroner and his deputy in carrying out his responsibilities under the

12 provisions of KRS 72.410 to 72.470.

- 13 (2) (a) 1. No person shall be eligible to hold the office of deputy coroner unless he
- 14 holds a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Every deputy
- 15 coroner, other than a licensed physician, shall be required as a condition
- 16 of office to take during every calendar year he or she is in office the
- 17 training course of at least eighteen (18) hours provided by the
- 18 Department of Criminal Justice Training or other courses approved by
- 19 the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet after having completed the basic
- 20 training course the first year of employment. The training course shall
- 21 include material developed by the cabinet and approved by the Cabinet
- 22 for Health and Family Services on the human immunodeficiency virus
- 23 infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. The material shall
- 24 include information on known modes of transmission and methods of
- 25 controlling and preventing these diseases with an emphasis on
- 26 appropriate behavior and attitude change.

27 2. Within three (3) years of initially assuming office, every deputy

1 *coroner shall be required as a condition of office to take a course of at*
2 *least four (4) hours provided by the Department of Criminal Justice*
3 *Training that shall include instruction on the grieving process and*
4 *best practices for providing a notice of death to a spouse or next of kin*
5 *and may include instruction on other similar topics, as set out in*
6 *subsection (4)(b) of Section 1 of this Act. A deputy coroner that has*
7 *completed the course shall not be required to retake the course.*

- 8 (b) 1. Any deputy coroner subject to the training requirements of paragraph (a)
9 of this subsection who fails to complete the mandated training shall be
10 ineligible to perform the duties of deputy coroner, and may be
11 terminated by the coroner. The coroner shall make written notification of
12 the deputy coroner's ineligibility to perform his or her duties to the
13 deputy coroner and to the fiscal court or the legislative body of the
14 consolidated local government, charter county government, urban-
15 county government, or unified local government.
- 16 2. The deputy coroner shall regain his or her eligibility upon successful
17 recompletion of the initial basic training course referenced in KRS
18 64.185(4), which shall be evidenced by written certification provided by
19 the Department of Criminal Justice Training to the coroner. Upon
20 receipt of the certification, the coroner shall make written notification of
21 the reinstatement of eligibility to the deputy coroner and to the fiscal
22 court or the legislative body of the consolidated local government,
23 charter county government, urban-county government, or unified local
24 government.
- 25 3. The compensation of a deputy coroner who becomes ineligible to
26 perform his or her duties under subparagraph 1. of this paragraph shall
27 be modified as follows:

- 1 a. From the coroner's written notification of ineligibility until the
2 deputy coroner begins the basic training course mandated by
3 subparagraph 2. of this paragraph, the deputy coroner shall receive
4 no compensation;
- 5 b. From the first day that the deputy coroner begins the basic training
6 course mandated by subparagraph 2. of this paragraph until written
7 notification of course outcome is received by the coroner, the
8 deputy coroner shall be compensated at his or her previously
9 established rate of compensation;
- 10 c. If the deputy coroner fails the basic training course mandated by
11 subparagraph 2. of this paragraph, the deputy coroner shall receive
12 no compensation from the date of receipt of notification of failure
13 from Department of Criminal Justice Training to the coroner until
14 the deputy coroner begins anew the basic training course mandated
15 by subparagraph 2. of this paragraph, at which time the deputy
16 coroner shall be compensated at his or her previously established
17 rate of compensation; and
- 18 d. If the deputy coroner successfully completes the basic training
19 course mandated by subparagraph 2. of this paragraph as
20 evidenced by written certification provided by the Department of
21 Criminal Justice Training to the coroner, the deputy coroner shall
22 receive compensation as is normally determined for deputy
23 coroners pursuant to statute.

24 ➔SECTION 3. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 72 IS CREATED TO
25 READ AS FOLLOWS:

26 *(1) A coroner shall follow the requirements of subsection (3) of this section relating*
27 *to notification of a spouse, if any, or next of kin, when the coroner has reason to*

1 believe that the spouse, if any, or next of kin has not yet been notified of the
2 decedent's death, and:

3 (a) A coroner is acting under KRS 72.450 and has reason to believe that the
4 spouse, if any, or next of kin of the decedent resides in the coroner's
5 jurisdiction; or

6 (b) A coroner has received notification from another official that a spouse, if
7 any, or next of kin of a decedent resides in the coroner's jurisdiction.

8 (2) A coroner is not required to follow subsection (3) of this section when the coroner
9 is acting under KRS 72.450, but has reason to believe that the spouse, if any, or
10 next of kin of the decedent resides outside of the coroner's jurisdiction. In that
11 event, the coroner shall only be required to contact the coroner or other official
12 responsible for providing notification in that jurisdiction regarding the
13 decedent's death.

14 (3) When providing notification to the spouse, if any, or next of kin of a decedent
15 regarding the decedent's death, the coroner shall:

16 (a) Prior to the notification:

17 1. Contact, through nonemergency means and without disclosing any
18 information identifying the decedent or spouse, if any, or next of kin
19 of the decedent, an entity capable of providing emergency medical
20 assistance;

21 2. Inform the entity that a notification is planned to take place; and

22 3. Confirm that the entity is capable of providing a prompt emergency
23 response.

24 Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit a coroner from
25 disclosing any information identifying the decedent or spouse, if any, or
26 next of kin of a decedent to an entity capable of providing emergency
27 assistance in the case of an emergency;

1 (b) Arrange for another member of the coroner's office or, if another member
2 is not available, a law enforcement officer, member of the clergy,
3 professional grief counselor, or other respected member of the community
4 to assist, in person, in providing the notification;

5 (c) Provide the notification orally, in person, and in a respectful manner;

6 (d) Assist the recipient of the notification in contacting family or friends, and,
7 in the event that the recipient is alone, remain with the recipient of the
8 notification for as long as practicable or until a friend, family member, or
9 other person is able to arrive and attend to the recipient;

10 (e) Provide information to the recipient of the notification regarding the
11 handling of the decedent's remains, contact information for the coroner's
12 office, and information regarding organizations that provide grief
13 counseling; and

14 (f) Conduct a follow-up communication with the recipient of the notification
15 within forty-eight (48) hours of providing the notification.

16 ➔Section 4. Sections 1 and 2 of this Act take effect January 1, 2023.

17 ➔Section 5. A coroner or deputy coroner serving on January 1, 2023, may
18 continue being compensated under Section 1 of this Act if he or she completes the course
19 described in subsection (4)(b) of Section 1 of this Act by January 1, 2026. No deputy
20 coroner shall have his or her employment status changed for failure to complete the
21 course described in subsection (4)(b) of Section 1 of this Act prior to January 1, 2026.

22 ➔Section 6. This Act may be cited as Nathan's Law.