

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 **eight (8) 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 eight (8) 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 provisions of subsection (3) of this section relating to*
27 *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 the provisions of KRS 72.450 and has reason to
4 believe that the spouse, if any, or next of kin of the decedent resides in the
5 coroner's 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 shall not be required to follow the provisions of subsection (3) of this
9 section when the coroner is acting under the provisions of KRS 72.450, but has
10 reason to believe that the spouse, if any, or next of kin of the decedent resides
11 outside of the coroner's jurisdiction. In that event, the coroner shall only be
12 required to contact the coroner or other official responsible for providing
13 notification in that jurisdiction regarding the 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) Notify, through non-emergency means, an entity capable of providing
17 emergency medical assistance that a notification is planned to take place,
18 provide the location where the notification is planned to take place, and
19 request that the entity remain on standby during the pendency of the
20 notification;

21 (b) Arrange for another member of the coroner's office, or, if no other member
22 is available, a law enforcement officer, member of the clergy, professional
23 grief counselor, or other respected member of the community, to assist, in
24 person, in providing the notification;

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

26 (d) Assist the recipient of the death notification in contacting family or friends,
27 and, in the event that the recipient is alone, remain with the recipient of the

1 notification for as long as practicable or until a friend, family member, or
2 other person is able to arrive and attend to the recipient;

3 (e) Provide information to the recipient of the notification regarding the
4 handling of the decedent's remains, contact information for the coroner's
5 office, and information regarding organizations that provide grief
6 counseling; and

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

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

10 ➔Section 5. A coroner or deputy coroner serving on January 1, 2023, may
11 continue being compensated under the provisions of Section 1 of this Act if he or she
12 completes the course described in subsection (4)(b) of Section 1 of this Act by January 1,
13 2026. No deputy coroner shall have his or her employment status changed for failure to
14 complete the course described in subsection (4)(b) of Section 1 of this Act prior to
15 January 1, 2026.

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