



Kentucky Bar Association: What We Do for You



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Presented by:
The Kentucky Bar Association
Continuing Legal Education Commission

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PROGRAM INTRODUCTION: WHY AM I HERE, ANYWAY?

For most of the history of the legal profession in the United States, once a lawyer was admitted to practice, no further professional education or re-qualification was required. Over the last 40 years, however, there has been a growing recognition that this standard for lawyer competence, if ever valid, is not now. Lawyers must remain current in the law, stay abreast of new developments in the delivery of legal services, and maintain a keen sensitivity to professional responsibility issues to remain qualified to serve the public.

In order to facilitate the maintenance and improvement of lawyer competence in Kentucky, a mandatory minimum continuing legal education requirement was established in the mid-1980s. In Kentucky, lawyers must earn 12 hours of CLE each year, two of which must be in the area of lawyer professional responsibility and ethics.

The next step was the recognition that newly admitted lawyers seem to enter the profession with some significant gaps in their understanding of how law is practiced. This concern was highlighted in an American Bar Association study known as the McKay Report. One of the report's major conclusions was that new lawyers often have inadequate practice skills and an incomplete understanding of professional values. The report described fundamental lawyering skills as:

1. Problem Solving
2. Legal Analysis and Reasoning
3. Legal Research
4. Factual Investigation
5. Communication
6. Counseling
7. Negotiation
8. Litigation and ADR Procedures
9. Organization & Management of Legal Work
10. Recognizing & Resolving Ethical Dilemmas

The fundamental values of the profession were determined to be:

1. Provision of Competent Representation
2. Striving to Promote Justice, Fairness, and Morality
3. Striving to Improve the Profession
4. Professional Self-Development

To help new lawyers get off to the best possible start, the Kentucky Supreme Court mandated that all lawyers within the first year of practice attend the KBA's New Lawyer Program. This program is designed to address some, but not all, of the areas identified by the McKay Report . . . to assist in filling the small, but critical, gap between law school education and the acquisition of meaningful practice experience. The program emphasizes your new role as "an officer of the court," the relationships involved in fulfilling that role, and contains information to help you in "getting started."

I. THE KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION

A. Kentucky Bar Association

Pursuant to [SCR 3.025](#), the mission and purpose of the Kentucky Bar Association (KBA) is to maintain a proper discipline of the members of the bar in accordance with these Rules and with the principles of the legal profession as a public calling, to initiate and supervise, with the approval of the Court, appropriate means to insure a continuing high standard of professional competence on the part of the members of the Bar, and to bear a substantial and continuing responsibility for promoting the efficiency and improvement of the judicial system.

B. Board of Governors

[SCR 3.070](#) provides that the Board of Governors is the governing body of the KBA and the agent of the Court for the purpose of administering and enforcing the Rules of the Court governing the practice of law. Membership of the Board consists of attorneys including the KBA president, president-elect, vice president, immediate past president, the Young Lawyers Division chair, and two attorneys elected from the membership of the Association in each Supreme Court District. In addition, there are four lay members that serve on the Board of Governors for consideration of disciplinary cases.

The president is the chief executive officer of the KBA and serves a one-year term beginning on July 1. The president-elect automatically becomes president at the end of the current president's term.

The president-elect and vice president are chosen by a vote of the Bar membership should there be more than one candidate for the respective positions. Any member of the Bar can petition to run for statewide office. Nominating petitions for president-elect and vice president must be filed prior to November 15 of each year. Election ballots are sent to the membership only if there is more than one nominee for either or both of the positions.

A Bar governor elected from a Supreme Court District serves a two-year term and is eligible to be elected for three successive two-year terms without a break in service. The Bar governor terms are staggered such that one of the two governors from each District will be up for election each year. A candidate for Bar governor must be a member of the Bar in good standing and reside in the Supreme Court (Appellate) District in which she or he seeks election. Petitions to run for Bar governor from an appellate district must be filed in the office of the KBA Executive Director during the month of October. If only one person files for a position, she/he is declared elected after the filing deadline. Ballots are emailed to members in the Supreme Court

¹ Updated June 2026.

District where more than one attorney has filed for Bar governor. Vacancies in a Bar governor position are filled for the remainder of the term by appointment by the president subject to a written confirmation of a majority of the Board of Governors.

The Board meets at least six times a year in sessions that generally are a day and a half in length. During the discipline session of each meeting, 17 members of the Board participate in deliberations on charges of professional misconduct brought against members of the Bar and make recommendations to the Supreme Court on guilt and punishment or innocence of charged members. In addition to the 17 Board members who hear discipline cases, four non-lawyers appointed by the Chief Justice also participate as Board members for disciplinary matters only. During meetings the Board may also hear task force, committee, and section reports, make Bar policy decisions, issue formal ethics opinions and unauthorized practice of law opinions, consider appeals from CLE Commission rulings, consider budget matters, and review other matters involving Bar operations.

Each year the Board has the responsibility of recommending an annual operating budget to the Court. The proposed budget must be submitted to the Court at least four months prior to the start of the fiscal year. As a mandatory Bar, the major source of funds for Bar operations is dues from members. The Court sets the dues structure based upon recommendations from the Board. The current annual dues structure is as follows:

Member admitted five years or more	\$310
Member admitted less than five years	\$220
Member of the judiciary	\$150
Senior Retired Inactive (Age 70 – Non-practice)	\$ 0
Honorary Member (Age 75 or 50 years in practice)	\$ 0

- C. [SCR 3.130](#) – Kentucky Rules of Professional Conduct

II. GOVERNANCE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN KENTUCKY

- A. [Section 116](#) of the [Kentucky Constitution](#)

The Supreme Court shall have the power to prescribe rules governing its appellate jurisdiction, rules for the appointment of commissioners and other Court personnel, and rules of practice and procedure for the Court of Justice. The Supreme Court shall, by rule, govern admission to the Bar and the discipline of members of the Bar.

- B. [Ex Parte Auditor of Public Accounts, 609 S.W.2d 682 \(Ky. 1980\)](#)

The Auditor of Public Accounts made direct application to the Supreme Court to determine whether he was legally entitled or required to audit the books and accounts of the state bar association. The Supreme Court held that where funds of the state bar association and the Board of Bar Examiners were not collected pursuant to any statute and were not appropriated by the legislative body, and where both the association and the Board of Bar Examiners existed solely by virtue of rules of the

Supreme Court, expressly and exclusively authorized by State Constitution, and were accountable to that court only, there was no constitutional authority by which they could be made accountable to either one of the other two branches of government. Held [KRS 21A.130](#), [21A.140](#), [21A.150](#) and [21A.160](#) void because they purport to erect powers and limitations that no longer fall within the legislative province. This is the definitive case on the relationship of the Kentucky Bar Association as an "arm and agency" of the Supreme Court of Kentucky.

III. KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION SERVICES

A. Decisis®

The KBA offers [Decisis®](#) as a complementary legal research member benefit. Decisis® shares the same parent company as LexisNexis® and offers an expansive library which includes both state and federal cases, statutes, court rules, and more. Decisis® provides KBA members with an easy-to-use interface, a reliable citator, and seven-day-a-week live customer support.

Federal Search Library Contains

- U.S. Supreme Court Cases
- U.S. Bankruptcy Cases
- U.S. Court of Appeals Cases
- U.S. District Court Cases
- U.S. Tax Court Division Opinions
- U.S. Tax Court Memorandum Decisions
- U.S. Tax Court Summary Opinions
- Court of Appeals for Armed Forces
- Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation Cases
- U.S. Board of Tax Appeals Cases
- U.S. Commerce Court Cases
- U.S. Court Military Commission Review
- U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
- U.S. Court of Customs & Patent Appeals Cases
- U.S. Court of Federal Claims, Claims Court & Court of Claims Cases
- U.S. Court of International Trade Cases
- U.S. Customs Court Cases
- U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court
- U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review
- Constitution of the United States
- United States Code Service Titles 1 through 54
- USCS Public Laws
- Federal Rules
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- Federal Register
- Benefits Review Board Service Longshore Reporter

- Board of Alien Labor Certification Appeals Decisions
- Department of Energy Board of Contract Appeals Decisions
- Department of Labor Administrative Review Board Decisions
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions Public Sector Decisions (EEOC)
- Federal Communications Commission Decisions
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Decisions
- Hatch Act Advisory Opinions
- Immigration Non-Precedent Decisions: BIA, AAO/AAU
- Immigration Precedent Decisions: BIA, AAO/AAU
- IRS Cumulative Bulletin and Internal Revenue Bulletin
- IRS Private Letter Rulings
- Office of Chief Admin. Hearing Officer Immigration Review Decisions
- Internal Revenue Service Rulings
- Federal Communications Commission
- Energy Regulation Commission
- Federal Sentencing Guidelines
- National Labor Relations Board
- NTSB Decisions
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Decisions
- Trademark Decisions

Kentucky Search Library Contains

- KY Court of Appeals Cases
- KY Supreme Court Cases
- KY Unpublished Cases
- KY Constitution
- KY Revised Statutes
- KY Administrative Regulations
- Attorney General Opinions
- Ethics Opinions
- Workers' Compensation Decisions
- Rules of Evidence
- Rules of Criminal Procedure
- Rules of Civil Procedure
- Family Court Rules of Procedure and Practice
- Juvenile Court Rules of Procedure and Practice
- Rules of the Supreme Court
- Administrative Procedures of the Court of Justice
- Model Mediation Rules
- Special Rules for Self-Consent Abortion by a Minor
- Bylaws of the KY Bar Association
- KY Bar Association Code of Professional Courtesy
- Rules of Procedure for the Trial of Misdemeanors before U.S. Magistrates
- Joint Local Rules for U.S. District Courts of Eastern and Western Districts of KY

- Rules of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of KY
- Rules of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern and Western District of KY
- Local Court Rules
- Kentucky Circuit Courts:
 - Bell County
 - Boone County
 - Bourbon County
 - Boyd County
 - Campbell County
 - Clark County
 - Daviess County
 - Fayette County
 - Floyd County
 - Franklin County
 - Hardin County
 - Hopkins County
 - Jefferson County
 - Kenton County
 - Magoffin County
 - Marshall County
 - McCracken County
 - Pulaski County
 - Scott County
 - Shelby County
 - Warren County
 - Woodford County

All state search libraries are also available and contain at minimum:

- State Case Law
- State Constitution
- State Statutes
- Administrative Code
- Court Rules

State libraries may contain additional content as well, which varies by state.

While the typical annual fee for [Decisis®](#) is \$1,740 annually, the KBA is proud to offer complimentary access to Decisis® as an exclusive benefit. As you become more familiar with Decisis®, we encourage you to check out the KBA website to learn more.

B. Member Benefits

The Kentucky Bar Association works to obtain special savings and benefits on a variety of products and services for its members. Visit the [KBA's member benefits webpage](#) for special savings and benefits from a growing list of products and services including:

- Free articles through the [KBA Knowledge Hub](#)
- Student loan refinancing through [SoFi](#)²
- Term life insurance coverage offered through [SelmanCo](#)
- Professional liability coverage through [Lawyers Mutual of Kentucky](#)
- Free trust accounting and billing software by [Smokeball Bill](#)
- Email encryption through [Identillect Technologies](#)
- Website development and design services from [Omnizant](#) and [ESQSites](#)
- Credit card processing through [LawPay](#)
- [Kentucky Bar Association Health Plan](#) through Mercer

Now, thanks to the collaboration between the Kentucky Bar Association and the administration of Mercer, you have the opportunity to provide more affordable health care to your firm. Firms employing at least one owner, and one full-time, W-2 employee are eligible.

This Association Health Plan (AHP) offers Kentucky Bar Association member employers the ability to take greater control over their health care costs while improving the health care solutions for their employees. This exclusive, member-only offering allows you to select from more than 15 medical plan designs, comprehensive dental and vision plans, and group life and disability options.

You can work with your current health insurance broker to obtain coverage through the Kentucky Bar Association Health Plan. For more information visit kybarinsure.com or call (855) 429-8932 to speak with a licensed agent weekdays between 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. CST.

Visit <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Member-Services> to explore all member benefits and discounts. Members should fully evaluate each product or service to determine its suitability for the member's particular purpose. In some instances, the Kentucky Bar Association may receive non-dues royalty revenue from products and services purchased by members; however, the Kentucky Bar Association makes no representations, warranties, endorsements, or recommendations regarding any of the products or services listed.

Check back regularly for updated services by selecting the Member Services link under the For Members tab of the KBA homepage. For more information, contact Marketing & Communications Specialist Ema Haines Blakenship at ehaines@kybar.org.

C. Help with Ethical Dilemmas

Facing a tricky situation in a case? Not sure what to do, and worried you'll be penalized if you choose the wrong course of action? The KBA Ethics Committee is here to help you.

² This is not an endorsement. SoFi is not providing any services related to retirement benefits or benefit plans. Please consider seeking outside financial advice before enrolling.

1. Ethics Hotline and Informal Advisory Ethics Opinions ([SCR 3.530](#)).

Any member of the KBA who is in doubt about the propriety of a professional act may request an informal advisory opinion from a member of the Ethics Hotline Committee assigned to the requestor's Supreme Court District. A list of Ethics Hotline Committee members is available on the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Rules-Ethics-Information/Ethics-Hotline-District-Contacts>.²

The request should be in writing or by telephone followed by a request in writing and clearly, fairly, accurately, and completely state the facts and circumstances relating to the matter. No attorney shall be disciplined for any professional act performed in compliance with the written advisory opinion rendered by the Ethics Hotline Committee member.

2. Formal Ethics Opinions.

The KBA Ethics Committee may occasionally consider requests for formal ethics opinions on subjects of interest and importance to the Bar. The chair of the Ethics Committee shall cause the issuance of a formal advisory ethics opinion, which is reviewed by the Board of Governors of the KBA.

If adopted by the Board of Governors, a formal advisory ethics opinion will be published in the [Kentucky Bench & Bar](#) next issued after adoption.

Any person or entity aggrieved or affected by a formal advisory ethics opinion may request review of the opinion by the Kentucky Supreme Court by filing a motion for review with the Clerk of the Supreme Court, with notice to the KBA Executive Director, within 30 days after publication of the opinion, or a synopsis of it, in the *Bench & Bar*, and payment of the filing fee.

D. Kentucky Law Update

The Kentucky Law Update program was established by the Kentucky Supreme Court over 35 years ago as a service to KBA members. This program series is offered at no charge to attendees who are members of the KBA in good standing. The program is designed to educate and inform the lawyers of Kentucky about changes in the law and rules of practice which impact the daily practice of law, regardless of level of experience.

The Kentucky Law Update is presented each fall in the following locations representing each of the seven Supreme Court Districts: Ashland, Bowling Green, Covington, Lexington, London, Louisville, Owensboro, Paducah, and Pikeville.

² You must be logged into the KBA website in order to access this webpage.

E. Information about Legal Services

Members of the Bar who advertise their legal services should be aware of the broad scope of [SCR 3.130\(7.01-7.60\)](#) and its expansive definition of advertising. Subject to certain listed exceptions, [SCR 3.130\(7.01\)](#) defines "advertise" or "advertisement" as furnishing any information or communication containing a lawyer's name or other identifying information.

A nine-member Attorneys' Advertising Commission (AAC) is empowered to provide advisory opinions about whether advertisements comply with the advertising Rules and Regulations. Commission members are appointed by the KBA president and approved by the Board of Governors for three-year terms.

Attorneys are no longer required to submit all advertisements before distribution. However, under [SCR 3.130\(7.03\)](#), attorneys may request the AAC to issue an advisory opinion about a specific advertisement's compliance. Information about attorney advertising can be found under the Discipline section of the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Office-of-Bar-Counsel>.

Direct contact with potential clients either in person or by live telephone or real-time electronic means is still strictly prohibited in Kentucky under [SCR 3.130\(4.5\)](#), formerly SCR 3.130(7.09), unless an exception applies.

REMINDER – The lawyer advertising rules are part of the [Rules of Professional Conduct](#), and attorneys must ensure advertisements for their legal services comply with the Rules. As such, an attorney may be disciplined for violating the advertising rules in the same manner as violating the other Rules of Professional Conduct. Additionally, advertising correspondence and inquiries from the AAC or the Office of Bar Counsel will be directed to the lawyer and not an advertising agency.

F. [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)

Supreme Court Rules administered by the KBA offer several options and plans to assist and encourage members to resolve disputes between attorneys and their clients. There is no fee required to initiate any of these alternative dispute resolution procedures. Each of the following dispute resolution procedures is voluntary; the Association strongly encourages, but cannot compel, the use of the methods in lieu of judicial action or the disciplinary process.

The public perception of the entire profession will undoubtedly be enhanced if lawyers participate freely and frequently in alternative dispute resolution programs. You should consider mediation or arbitration before judicial action in the following circumstances:

1. Legal fee arbitration.

- a. [SCR 3.810](#) provides that members in good standing with the KBA may submit to binding arbitration any dispute, disagreement, or

controversy between the attorney and a client which concerns the amount of fee due to the attorney for particular legal services rendered. This process is voluntary; both parties must agree to submit the fee dispute to arbitration.

- b. Disputes between attorneys (or law firms) concerning the amount due each for particular legal service rendered may also be submitted to binding arbitration pursuant to [SCR 3.810](#).
- c. The parties to a fee arbitration procedure must certify in writing that a good faith effort has been made by them to resolve the dispute prior to submitting it to arbitration.
- d. Where the dispute is already the subject of a pending lawsuit, the parties must follow the procedures set out in [KRS 417.060](#).
- e. A petition for fee arbitration is reviewed by the KBA Executive Director who shall determine initially whether it presents a dispute under the Rules. If the Executive Director accepts jurisdiction, and the other party agrees to submit the dispute to arbitration, the matter proceeds. If jurisdiction is denied, the decision of the Executive Director is final, and the parties will be advised.
- f. The procedure for arbitration is determined by the amount in controversy between the parties. The "amount in controversy" means the difference between the sum of money an attorney proposes to charge for legal services and the sum the client offers, or is willing to pay, for the services. The amount in controversy must exceed \$2,500.
 - i. Where the amount in controversy is \$10,000 or less, a sole arbitrator, who shall be a practicing attorney, is appointed by the KBA Executive Director to hear and decide the dispute.
 - ii. Where the amount in controversy exceeds \$10,000, a panel of three arbitrators shall be appointed. Two of the panel members shall be practicing attorneys appointed by the KBA Executive Director. The third panel member shall be a lay person appointed by the Chief Judge or presiding judge of the Circuit Court of the county where the attorney/party maintains a principal law office.
- g. The Office of Bar Counsel serves as the record keeper and administrator for fee arbitration proceedings.
- h. Any award rendered shall be enforced pursuant to the provisions of [KRS 417.180](#). With the exception of the award itself, records of the proceedings are not open to the public.

2. Legal negligence arbitration.
 - a. [SCR 3.800](#) provides a procedure to arbitrate claims of legal negligence which do not exceed \$50,000. Arbitration is voluntary; both parties must agree to submit the claim to binding arbitration. If the dispute is already the subject of a pending suit, arbitration is not appropriate unless the parties follow the procedures of [KRS 417.060](#). The parties must certify in writing their good faith prior attempts to settle the dispute.
 - b. The parties (or one of them) may petition for legal negligence arbitration by filing a petition to be reviewed by the KBA Executive Director. If the Executive Director accepts jurisdiction, and the other party agrees to arbitrate, the matter proceeds. If jurisdiction is denied, the decision of the Executive Director is final.
 - c. The procedure for arbitration is determined by the amount in controversy. "Amount in controversy" means the amount of direct loss claimed as a result of the claimed negligence of an attorney. The amount in controversy must exceed \$2,500.
 - i. Where the amount of the claim is \$10,000 or less, a sole arbitrator, who shall be a practicing attorney, will be appointed to hear the dispute.
 - ii. Where the amount of the claim exceeds \$10,000, a panel of three practicing attorneys shall be appointed to hear the claim.
 - d. The Office of Bar Counsel serves as the record keeper and administrator in legal negligence arbitration proceedings.
 - e. The sole arbitrator or panel shall convene and conduct a hearing and hear sworn testimony concerning the claim. Any award rendered can be enforced under the provisions of [KRS 417.180](#). With the exception of the award itself, records of the proceedings are not open to the public.
3. Public services: Clients' Security Fund.
 - a. Per [SCR 3.820](#), the Kentucky Supreme Court has established a Clients' Security Fund for the purpose of providing indemnification to clients who have suffered monetary loss because of the dishonest or fraudulent acts of a member of the KBA.
 - b. The purpose of the fund is "to promote public confidence in the administration of justice and the integrity of the legal profession by reimbursing losses caused by the dishonest conduct of lawyers

admitted and licensed to practice law in the courts of this State occurring in the course or arising out of a lawyer-client relationship between the lawyer and the claimant." The Court has opined that "[e]very lawyer has an obligation to the public to participate in the collective effort of the bar to reimburse persons who have lost money or property as a result of the dishonest conduct of another lawyer." Dishonesty and fraud denote wrongful conduct in the nature of theft, embezzlement, and conversion of money, property, or other things of value.

- c. The fund, established in 1971, has been funded by allocation of a portion of the dues payments of KBA members. The proceeds are invested in interest bearing instruments and are a trust administered by a Board of Trustees, under the supervision of the Kentucky Supreme Court.
 - i. The Court may assess fees or allocate such funds as are from time to time necessary and proper for the payment of claims and the costs of administration of the Fund.
 - ii. A lawyer's failure to pay any fee assessed for the Clients' Security Fund shall be cause for suspension from practice until payment is made.
 - iii. A lawyer whose dishonest conduct results in reimbursement to a claimant shall make restitution to the Fund in the amount of the claim plus interest and costs incurred in processing the claim. A lawyer's failure to make satisfactory arrangements for restitution shall be cause for suspension, disbarment, or denial of any application for reinstatement to the practice of law.
- d. Clients' Security Fund Trustees are appointed for three-year terms by the KBA Board of Governors. The Board of Trustees consists of five members; three are lawyers and two are non-lawyers. The trustees serve without compensation, elect a chair, and meet as often as necessary to consider claims and conduct the business of the fund.
- e. Information concerning the Clients' Security Fund and claim forms may be obtained from the Office of Bar Counsel, which provides administrative support to the trustees and investigates claims.
- f. Eligible claims are described in [SCR 3.820\(10\)](#), and must be filed no later than two years after the claimant knew or should have known of the dishonesty or fraud by the lawyer.
- g. The KBA Board of Governors, with approval of the Supreme Court, may institute caps on claims. The current limits are \$50,000 per claim

and \$150,000 aggregate payment per lawyer. Per Supreme Court Order 2025-31, if the Clients' Security Fund assets are below \$1 million at the end of the fiscal year, the caps on claims above remain in place. If the Fund has more than \$1 million in assets at the end of the fiscal year, the caps are \$75,000 per claim and \$250,000 aggregate per lawyer.

- h. The Trustees may have access to records of pending or closed disciplinary proceedings involving the same attorney or conduct. However, a finding by the trustees that dishonest conduct has occurred which justifies reimbursement does not constitute a finding of dishonesty for purposes of imposing professional discipline.
- i. Payment of a claim, in whole or in part, is a "matter of grace," as no person shall have the legal right to reimbursement from the fund as a claimant, third party beneficiary or otherwise. Claimants may be required to exhaust other remedies prior to reimbursement by the Fund.
- j. The Trustees will not entertain a claim of consequential damages arising from the wrongful act of an attorney; reimbursement is limited to actual pecuniary losses.
- k. Clients' Security Fund proceedings and records are confidential until reimbursement is made. After payment of a claim, however, the trustees may publicize the nature of the claim, the amount of payment, and the name of the lawyer. The identity of claimants is not disclosed absent specific permission. Law enforcement agencies, disciplinary authorities, and other entities may be granted access to relevant information gathered in the proceedings.

G. Unauthorized Practice

1. Advisory opinions.

Under [SCR 3.530\(6\)](#), an attorney who is in doubt about any act or course of conduct by any person or entity which may constitute the unauthorized practice of law may request an advisory opinion from the Unauthorized Practice Committee.

The Unauthorized Practice Committee will issue an informal advisory opinion and may propose an opinion to the Board of Governors for approval as a formal opinion. A formal opinion would be published in the [Bench & Bar](#) similar to an ethics opinion.

Any person or entity aggrieved or affected by a formal advisory opinion may request the Kentucky Supreme Court to review the opinion by filing a motion for review with the Clerk of the Supreme Court, with notice to the KBA

Executive Director, within 30 days after the opinion or a synopsis of it is published in the [Bench & Bar](#).

2. Violations.

The KBA Executive Director is authorized by [SCR 3.460](#) to initiate an investigation into any report of unauthorized practice of law. Any person who engages in the practice of law without a license to do so may ultimately be subject to a finding of contempt by the Kentucky Supreme Court. Reports against a suspended Kentucky attorney or an attorney licensed in another jurisdiction and not in Kentucky should be made to the Office of Bar Counsel.

The unauthorized practice of law is also a misdemeanor criminal offense in violation of [KRS 524.130](#) and can be the subject of a criminal complaint issued by the county attorney of the county where it occurs.

H. Continuing Legal Education [SCR 3.600 to SCR 3.695](#)

The Supreme Court Order establishing mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirements in Kentucky was issued on June 28, 1984. This Order established the CLE Commission as Kentucky's regulatory agency as well as a provider of high-quality CLE programming for Kentucky Bar Association members. The CLE Commission continues to strive for advancement and improvement in CLE programming, while encouraging and promoting the offering of high-quality CLE in Kentucky.

The CLE Commission consists of seven attorneys, one appointed by the Supreme Court from each appellate district of the state, and a Supreme Court Justice who serves as the liaison to the Court. CLE Commission terms are three years in length, and Commission members may serve two consecutive terms. The Commission is responsible, under the direction of the Kentucky Supreme Court and the KBA Board of Governors, for the administration and regulation of the CLE program for members of the KBA.

IV. **COURTNET 2.0**

The Administrative Office of the Courts provides Kentucky attorneys with a service called [CourtNet 2.0](#), which offers real-time, online access to Kentucky civil and criminal cases.

In addition to being intuitive and easy to use, CourtNet 2.0 offers:

- Consolidated, detailed case information
- Active and closed cases
- Citation images
- Visual flags for warrants, summonses, and failure to appear
- Search results grouping for quick reference
- Case cart
- Ability to re-execute last 10 searches

For information on how to subscribe to CourtNet 2.0, visit <https://kcoj.kycourts.net/CourtNet/>.

V. eFILING

Kentucky attorneys may file court documents in any of the Commonwealth's 120 counties without having to make a trip to a courthouse. Electronic filing is now mandatory for selected case types in Kentucky, as outlined at <https://ehelp.kycourts.net/rules-for-efiling/>. Attorneys must complete training and become certified before they are able to file cases electronically in Kentucky. The Administrative Office of the Courts provides [live and on-demand virtual trainings](#) for attorneys to complete the eFiling training and certification.

VI. MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. Boards & Commissions

1. Board of Governors.

Two Bar Governors are elected from each of the seven Supreme Court Districts. A bar governor term is two years and service of three consecutive two-year terms is permitted.

2. CLE Commission.

The CLE Commission consists of seven members, one from each Supreme Court District, and a Supreme Court Justice who serves as the liaison to the Court. The members are appointed for terms of three years and may serve two successive three-year terms. The Supreme Court appoints one of the members of the commission to act as chair. Appointments to the commission are made from a list of three nominees for each vacancy that is submitted by the Board of Governors to the Supreme Court.

3. Judicial Nominating Commissions.

Pursuant to [Section 118](#) of the [Kentucky Constitution](#), two members of the Bar serve on each judicial nominating commission. Bar representatives on the judicial nominating commission are elected for four-year terms by members of the Bar in their respective judicial circuits. There are also two Bar members on the statewide judicial nominating commission that are elected by an email ballot of all members of the Bar.

4. Bar Center Board of Trustees.

Membership of the Bar Center Board of Trustees includes six trustees appointed for terms of three years each. The Supreme Court of Kentucky appoints three of the trustees, and the KBA Board of Governors appoints three trustees.

5. IOLTA Board of Trustees.

Membership of the IOLTA Board of Trustees includes one trustee from each of the seven Supreme Court Districts. IOLTA trustees from the Supreme Court Districts are appointed for three-year terms. The KBA Board of Governors makes the appointment subject to the approval of the Supreme Court.

6. Inquiry Commission.

The Inquiry Commission, consisting of nine members, is appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Six of the nine members of the Inquiry Commission must be lawyers. The role of the Inquiry Commission is to consider all lawyer discipline matters referred to it pursuant to the Supreme Court Rules.

7. Clients' Security Fund.

There are five trustees of the Clients' Security Fund. Three of the trustees must be members of the bar, and two of the trustees are non-lawyers. Trustees are appointed by the Board of Governors for three-year terms, and the Board may limit the number of successive terms that a trustee may serve.

8. Section and Division officers.

Section and Division officers are elected by section and Young Lawyers Division members in attendance at their annual meetings. The KBA By-laws provide that each section and YLD shall have at least a chair, chair-elect, and vice-chair.

9. Attorneys' Advertising Commission.

The nine members of the Attorneys' Advertising Commission are appointed for terms of three years each by the Board of Governors. Members may serve two successive terms.

10. Committee chairs.

Committee chairs are appointed by the President of the Kentucky Bar Association. Membership on committees is also by appointment of the KBA President.

11. Trial commissioners.

Trial commissioners in discipline cases are selected from a trial commission appointed by the Chief Justice subject to the approval of the Supreme Court. Members of the trial commission must possess the qualifications of a circuit judge, including a minimum of eight years of law practice.

B. Committees

Committee appointments are made annually by the President of the KBA. If you are interested in a committee appointment, call John D. Meyers, the Executive Director, at (502) 564-3795 or email at jmeyers@kybar.org.

1. Annual Convention Committees (General & CLE Programming).

The role of the Annual Convention Committee is to assist the KBA staff in planning the events for the KBA Annual Convention. A CLE programming subcommittee is appointed to assist the KBA CLE staff in planning and implementing the continuing legal education programs to be presented during the Convention.

2. Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee screens independent public accounting firms, recommending a firm to serve as the KBA's independent auditors; monitors the selected audit firm and ensures the duties are being carried out properly; reviews with the auditors the KBA's internal controls; and reviews the KBA's internal accounting procedures to make sure they are adequate and the KBA accounting staff are following proper procedures.

3. Child Protection and Domestic Violence Committee.

The role of the Committee on Child Protection and Domestic Violence is to review the various legal aspects surrounding juvenile issues. Work of the committee has included publication of a handbook on children's rights.

4. Communications and Publications Committee.

The role of the Communications & Publications Committee is to oversee the publication of the *Bench & Bar*. The committee accepts and reviews legal articles to be published in the *Bench & Bar*. In addition, the committee advises on issues regarding KBA public relations. The chair of the committee also serves as editor of the *Bench & Bar* magazine.

5. Ethics Committee.

The Ethics Committee reviews advisory opinion requests from Bar members on ethical questions based on contemplated attorney conduct. Committee members assist in drafting opinions to be presented to the Board of Governors under the provisions of [SCR 3.530](#). The Board may authorize formal or informal opinions.

6. Ethics Hotline Committee.

The Ethics Hotline Committee consists of at least one member from each Supreme Court District. The role of the hotline members is to render advisory ethics opinions of an emergency nature. By Rule, opinions may be provided only to an attorney based on the contemplated conduct of the requesting attorney.

7. Investment Committee.

The Investment Committee reviews the performance of the investment management company retained to invest KBA surplus funds. The committee may also make recommendations to the Board of Governors on matters involving the surplus fund investment policy.

8. Law Practice Committee.

The role of the KBA Law Practice Committee is to review proposals for endorsement of products and services that may be of assistance to members in their practices. The committee makes recommendations to the Board of Governors on whether a particular product or service should be endorsed by the KBA.

9. Legislative Committee.

The role of the Legislative Committee is to review legislation that may affect the legal profession. The KBA has a Legislative Policy & Procedure that is followed if a determination is made that a particular piece of legislation will be recommended by the Board of Governors or a section of the Bar. As an integrated Bar, the KBA is very restrictive on legislative issues that may be considered for Bar endorsement.

10. Military and Veterans Law Committee.

The Military and Veterans Law Committee provides education for lawyers and judges on programs available for Kentucky veterans.

11. Rules Committee.

The Rules Committee is a committee whose members are members of the Board of Governors. This committee reviews proposals for amendments to the Civil Rules, Criminal Rules, and Supreme Court Rules. Committee members are also involved with the drafting of proposed rule amendments.

12. Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee.

The role of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee is to render advisory opinions on questions of whether a particular activity may constitute the

unauthorized practice of law in Kentucky by someone who is not licensed to practice law in Kentucky. Formal unauthorized practice of law opinions may be issued by the Board of Governors upon recommendation of the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee.

13. Wellbeing Committee.

The purpose of the Wellbeing Committee is to acknowledge that ours is a profession in crisis based primarily on the extensive levels of untreated mental health issues including depression, addiction, and chronic anxiety; and that we are at a crossroads in the profession. We recognize that healthy and resilient lawyers are safer, more competent, and more effective advocates for their clients. This Committee will work for the benefit of the entire Association in promoting wellbeing to the legal community and to foster public confidence in the profession to inspire a professional environment of good mental, physical, and spiritual health.

C. Sections and Divisions

KBA members may join a [section or sections](#) of their choice by paying voluntary annual dues ranging from \$10-\$30 per section.

- [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#)
- [Animal Law](#)
- [Appellate Advocacy](#)
- [Bankruptcy Law](#)
- [Business Law](#)
- [Civil Litigation](#)
- [Construction & Public Contract Law](#)
- [Corporate House Counsel](#)
- [Criminal Law](#)
- [Education Law](#)
- [Elder Law](#)
- [Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Law](#)
- [Equine Law](#)
- [Family Law](#)
- Federal Practice³
- [Health Care Law](#)
- [Immigration & Nationality Law](#)
- [Intellectual Property Law](#)
- [Labor & Employment Law](#)
- [LGBT Law](#)
- [Local Government Law](#)
- [Probate & Trust Law](#)

³ The KBA Federal Practice Section is new and will become active on July 1, 2026. More information will be available about the section on the KBA website at that time.

- [Public Interest Law](#)
- [Real Property Law](#)
- [Small Firm Practice & Management](#)
- [Taxation Law](#)
- [Workers' Compensation Law](#)

Of particular importance for new KBA members is membership in the [Young Lawyers Division](#) (YLD), which specifically addresses the unique needs of "young and less young" newer attorneys. Educational programs, newsletters, social activities, and public service projects are among this Division's busy agenda.

For further information on how to join a section or YLD, call the KBA Accounting & Membership Office at (502) 564-3795. In addition, section information is included on the annual dues statement emailed each July.

D. [Bench & Bar Magazine](#)

[Bench & Bar Magazine](#) is published by the Kentucky Bar Association six times per year. It is designed to keep you informed of new developments in the legal system, and to educate you on existing areas of the law. The magazine also provides an outlet for announcement of state and local bar association news, promotions, law firm information or relocation, or honors. Most articles are authored by Kentucky lawyers; thus, the information is beneficial for your Kentucky law practice. The Communications & Publications Committee welcomes submission of articles and editorial comments from KBA members. The [editorial guidelines](#) are available on the KBA's [Bench & Bar](#) page.

The [Bench & Bar](#) is also available as an online PDF flip-book on the KBA website at <https://digitaledition.pub/wc/kentucky-bar-association/bench-and-bar/>.

E. eNews & CLE Newsletter

Each month, the Kentucky Bar Association distributes eNews, an electronic newsletter providing information about the activities of the Kentucky Bar Association and other information relevant to attorneys practicing in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. eNews can also be accessed on the KBA [website](#).

Most recently, the KBA launched a new monthly CLE newsletter where members can find information on upcoming in-person and virtual CLE programs, dates and times of KBA Section programs, details regarding CLE reporting, and announcements on new and exciting CLE opportunities.

You can also access timely information and photos by "liking" the KBA's [Facebook page](#) or following the KBA on Threads (<https://www.threads.net/@kybarnews>). The KBA is also on Instagram under [@KyBarNews](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).

F. KBA Career Center

The Kentucky Bar Association's Career Center is the premier resource to connect career opportunities with highly qualified legal talent. Whether you're searching for a new hire or searching for a new career, the KBA Career Center provides avenues to help you achieve your goal. To access the KBA Career Center visit <https://jobs.kybar.org/>.

1. Manage your career.
 - a. Search and apply to fresh jobs on the spot with robust filters.
 - b. Upload your anonymous resume, so employers can contact you, but you maintain control of your information and choose to whom you release your information.
 - c. Receive an alert every time a job becomes available that matches your personal profile, skills, interests, and preferred location(s).
 - d. Access career resources and job searching tips and tools.
2. Recruit for open positions.
 - a. Post your jobs, or your institutions' jobs, where legal professionals will find and apply for them.
 - b. Email your jobs directly to job seekers.
 - c. Manage jobs and applicant activity right on our site.
 - d. Search the resume database and contact qualified candidates proactively.

Visit the KBA Career Center today and get started!

VII. MEMBER RESOURCES

A. Malpractice Insurance

[Lawyers Mutual of Kentucky, Inc.](#)
10503 Timberwood Circle, Suite 213
Louisville, Kentucky 40223
(502) 568-6100 or 1-800-800-6101

B. [Lawyer Referral Services](#)

[Central Kentucky](#) (859) 225-8644
[Kentucky Lawyer Referral](#) (502) 583-1801
[Northern Kentucky Bar Association](#) (859) 781-1525

C. Life and Disability Insurance

[SelmanCo](#)

One Integrity Parkway
Cleveland, OH 44143
1-800-928-6421

VIII. REFERENCES

- [SCR 3.025](#) – Kentucky Bar Association
- [SCR 3.040](#) – Dues; Date of Payment and Amount
- [SCR 3.070](#) – The Board; Functions and Membership
- [SCR 3.035](#) – Membership Registration Requirements and Service
- [SCR 3.460](#) – Unauthorized Practices Proceeding
- [SCR 3.530](#) – Ethics Committee and Unauthorized Practice Committee – Advisory Opinions – Informal and Formal
- [SCR 3.600 – 3.695](#) – Continuing Legal Education
- [SCR 3.800](#) – Legal Negligence Arbitration
- [SCR 3.810](#) – Legal Fee Arbitration
- [SCR 4.310](#) – Judicial Ethics Committee and Opinions

I. ADDRESS CHANGES

- A. Pursuant to [SCR 3.035](#), all KBA members must maintain a current official address and current official email address at which he or she may receive communications, as well as a physical address if the mailing address is a Post Office box. An official email address must be unique to the attorney and not used by another KBA member. If you move or change your email address, you must notify the Executive Director of the KBA in writing within 10 days. Address updates can be made on the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Membership-Information-and-Requests/Address-Change>.
- B. A member's official address, official email address, office number, and fax number are public information and may be provided to the public upon request and will be available on the Find a Lawyer feature on the KBA website.
- C. The official address you provide also serves as your address for service of bar complaints under [SCR 3.160\(1\)](#).
- D. Members must include their member identification number on all filings with the Courts of the Commonwealth and in all communications with the KBA.
- E. Every member of the KBA shall be deemed to have appointed the Director as that member's agent for service of any document that is required to be served upon that member by any provision of Supreme Court Rule [2](#) or [3](#), provided that service of a document upon the Director shall constitute constructive service of that document upon the member only upon proof that all of the following requirements have been satisfied:
 - (a) Reasonable efforts have been made to achieve actual service of the document upon the member;
 - (b) Two (2) true copies of the document have been provided to the Director, accompanied by a written request that the Director serve the document upon the member at the member's current Bar Roster address;
 - (c) Within seven (7) days after receipt of such request, the Director mailed one (1) copy of the document to the member at the aforesaid address, posted by certified mail, return receipt requested, restricted delivery-addressee only, in an envelope bearing the return address of the Director and marked on the outside as "OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION – IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED"; and

¹ Updated June 2026.

(d) No less than thirty (30) days after mailing the document pursuant to subparagraph (c), the Director shall enter a Return of Service which attests:

(i) that the Director mailed one of the copies of the document mentioned in subparagraph (b) to the member's Bar Roster address in accordance with the requirements of subparagraph (c);

(ii) that the Director has attached to the Return of Service all communications received in response to the service or attempted service of the document, including any certified mail receipt or other postal notice or return receipt relating to the delivery or attempted delivery of the document and any communication from the member of the [KBA] or other person acting on behalf of such member; and

(iii) that the Director has provided a true copy of the Return of Service, with copies of all attachments, to the person or entity who requested service of the document upon the member of the [KBA].

(3) The [KBA] may reject any communication to the [KBA] which fails to comply with paragraph (1)(c) of [\[SCR 3.035\]](#), provided that a member's failure to include his or her member identification number in a document shall not result in a default in any disciplinary proceeding.

II. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES/CERTIFICATIONS

- A. The KBA's annual membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th. New members' dues for the first year of membership are prorated. Please note that your next annual membership dues will be assessed in July **and must be paid on or before September 1**.

As a courtesy, Annual Dues Notices are emailed to each member on or before the first week of August and payment is due no later than September 1. Online payment of dues by credit/debit card and by ACH is available and required on the KBA website.

- B. Dues not paid on or before **September 1** are assessed an additional late payment fee of \$50. On or before September 15 of each year, the Treasurer shall notify a member in writing of his or her delinquency and late fee.
- C. Active members who fail to certify by **October 1** of each year that they are in compliance with [SCR 3.023](#) will be assessed a late fee of \$50.

- D. On or before October 15th of each year, the Treasurer shall, in writing, certify to the Board the names of all members who remain delinquent. The Board shall cause to be sent to the member a notice of delinquency by certified mail, return receipt requested, at the member's bar roster address. Such notice shall require the member to show cause within 30 days from the date of the mailing why the member's law license should not be suspended for failure to pay dues and the late fee. In addition, such notice shall inform the member that if such dues and late fee(s), as well as costs in the amount of \$50, are not paid within 30 days, or unless good cause is shown within 30 days that a suspension should not occur, the lawyer will be stricken from the membership roster as an active member of the KBA and suspended from the practice of law. At the conclusion of the 30 days, unless the dues, late fee(s) and additional cost payment have been received, or unless good cause has been shown as to why the member should not be suspended, the Board of Governors will vote to suspend any such member from the practice of law. A copy of the suspension notice shall be sent by the Director to the member, the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the Director of Membership, and the Circuit Clerk of the member's official address district for recording and indexing. The suspended member may apply for restoration to membership under the provisions of [SCR 3.504](#). A member may appeal to the Supreme Court of Kentucky from such suspension within 30 days of the date the suspension notice is recorded in the membership records. Such an appeal shall include an affidavit showing good cause why the suspension should be revoked. Members suspended for nonpayment of dues under [SCR 3.050](#) must apply for restoration and pay a fee depending on the duration of the suspension period and all applicable unpaid Bar Association dues, late fees and costs (see [SCR 3.504](#)).

III. CERTIFICATES OF GOOD STANDING

The KBA issues Certificates of Good Standing to members upon request. Members may submit a request through their Member Dashboard by selecting the "Request Certificate of Good Standing" button. The cost for each certificate is \$25, payable online with a credit or debit card. Please allow five to seven business days for processing.

IV. MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Upon admission to the Kentucky Bar Association, you received a Membership Card. This card does not expire. If you need to order a replacement card, you may do so on your Member Dashboard at <https://kybar.org/>. Replacement Membership Cards are \$10 each (plus processing fee), payable online with a credit or debit card.

V. NAME CHANGES

- A. To change your name with the Kentucky Bar Association and the Supreme Court of Kentucky, you must complete a Name Change Form. This form is available on the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/>

[Membership-Information-and-Requests/Name-Change](#). The completed Name Change Form should be submitted to the KBA Membership Department along with supporting documents such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, etc. The motion and certificate of service is then prepared by the KBA and mailed to you for your signature. Upon receipt of the signed motion and certificate of service, the KBA prepares the Order for the Chief Justice's signature and the Registrar's Certificate. These are then submitted, along with the motion, to the Supreme Court for filing. After the Order is signed, you will receive a copy from the Court, and the KBA will mail you a new membership card with your new name.

- B. It is very important that the Court and KBA records reflect the same name that you use in your daily practice of law. The KBA receives membership inquiries from the public on a daily basis, and the KBA staff works diligently to maintain accurate records.

VI. PRO HAC VICE (OUT-OF-STATE) CERTIFICATION REQUESTS

The KBA Membership Department is responsible for working with out-of-state attorneys and their Kentucky co-counsels in issuing Pro Hac Vice Certification receipts. Out-of-state attorneys seeking pro hac vice admission in Kentucky must create a new account on the KBA website, if one does not already exist, and then submit a Pro Hac Vice Certification request through their dashboard by selecting Create a PHV Case. More information, including instructions for creating a new Pro Hac Attorney Account, is available on the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Membership-Information-and-Requests/Pro-Hac-Vice-Certification>.

Attorneys should review [SCR 3.030](#) before submitting the form and allow five to seven business days for processing requests. There is a \$310 fee plus an administrative processing fee of \$9.30 per out-of-state attorney per case, and an annual, per case, renewal fee is due on the one-year anniversary of each out-of-state attorney's original pro hac vice admission until the case is concluded. Kentucky co counsels, should ensure that per case renewal fees are paid or that pro hac vice case information is updated to inactive through their dashboard under the My PHV Cases tab after logging in to the KBA website, or request that the out of state attorney complete these updates. Failure to pay the renewal fee within 30 days of the due date will result in the out-of-state attorney being suspended from appearing in any case in which he/she has been admitted pro hac vice. Upon notification of the failure of payment, members of the KBA serving as co-counsel must immediately notify the court in which the case is pending.

VII. RESTORATION AND REINSTATEMENT

The Supreme Court Rules governing Restoration ([SCR 3.504](#)) and Reinstatement ([SCR 3.503](#)) to the Kentucky Bar Association can be found on the [Kentucky Court Rules website](#). Additional information is available on the KBA website at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Reinstatement-and-Restoration>.

VIII. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ASSOCIATION

The Supreme Court Rule governing withdrawal from the Kentucky Bar Association can be found under [SCR 3.480](#) on the [Kentucky Court Rules website](#).



• 2026 •

Annual Fact Sheet

Fueling Kentucky's Access to Justice

What is the KBF?

The Kentucky Bar Foundation, Inc. (KBF) is the nonprofit, charitable arm of Kentucky's legal community. Its mission is to fuel access to justice and expand legal knowledge throughout the Commonwealth.

Founded in **1958** • **36 Board Members** across Kentucky's seven Supreme Court Districts

2 Staff Members

Susan Hanley Duncan, *Executive Director*
Gwen Smallenburg, *Program Manager*

120 Kentucky **counties** served

www.kybarfoundation.org

Who does the KBF help?

As part of serving its mission, the KBF awards annual grants to law-related organizations and projects throughout the Commonwealth and promotes the good work that Kentucky attorneys do for their communities.

Annual grants of
\$475,000

awarded to 54 nonprofit law-related programs and projects throughout Kentucky in **2026**

Total grants of over
\$6.2 million

awarded to more than 200 law-related programs and projects throughout Kentucky **since 1988**

How can Kentucky attorneys support the KBF?

\$153,692 was raised in **Sustainer** contributions by members of the Kentucky Bar in 2025.
Be a **Sustainer** by contributing \$50 when submitting your annual Bar dues statement.

Honor a colleague as a KBF **Patron** with a one-time contribution.
Or become a **Patron** by contributing \$100, \$150, or \$200 per year for five years.

Join the thousands of Kentucky attorneys and judges who are KBF **Fellows**.
Become a **Life Fellow** by contributing \$1,250.
Become a **Fellow** by contributing \$300 per year for five years, at the end of which you will attain Life Fellow status.

100 Kentucky law firms, attorneys, and friends are members of the KBF's **Partners for Justice Society**.
Become a member of the **Partners for Justice Society** by contributing \$5,000 or more.

The Kentucky Bar Foundation's 2025 Annual Report is now available!
Scan QR code to discover how your support helped expand access to justice and strengthen legal education across Kentucky this year.



Kentucky IOLTA Fund 2025 Fact Sheet



Through the **Kentucky Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Fund**, interest generated by Kentucky lawyers' pooled client trust accounts is combined and then disbursed in the form of grants to assist or establish:

- legal services and pro bono programs
- other law-related programs for the public's benefit that are specially approved by the Kentucky Supreme Court from time to time



Established in **1986** by Kentucky Supreme Court Rule 3.830. Participation became mandatory on January 1, 2010.

www.kybarfoundation.org/iolta

People

11 IOLTA Trustees from across Kentucky

Invaluable annual participation in the IOLTA program by **members of the Kentucky Bar**



3 Staff Members

- ◆ Susan Hanley Duncan, *Executive Director*
- ◆ Gwen Smalenburg, *Program Manager*
- ◆ Eric Cox, *Program Assistant*

Support

Currently **130+** banks participate in Kentucky's IOLTA program.

Interest on IOLTA accounts is paid to the IOLTA Fund either monthly or quarterly.



2025 Grants



\$1,500,000 in total grants from the IOLTA Fund awarded to Kentucky's four regional **legal aid programs**

- AppalReD Legal Aid
- Kentucky Legal Aid
- Legal Aid of the Bluegrass
- Legal Aid Society



\$60,000 in total grants from the IOLTA Fund awarded to Kentucky's three law schools for **student public service fellowships**



Total IOLTA Grants

Over \$24.5 million in **total grants** awarded by the Kentucky IOLTA Fund since 1988



In this section, you are provided with numerous references and online resources to make your research even easier.

Please note that web addresses can change rapidly. If you find a link that does not work, please report that address to Laura Cole at lcole@kybar.org or (502) 564-3795. In addition, web content changes daily, and the Kentucky Bar Association is not responsible for the content found on the websites listed in these materials.

I. ONLINE RESEARCH RESOURCES

A. Kentucky Bar Association Website

The Kentucky Bar Association website at <https://kybar.org/> offers a broad spectrum of legal research materials and practice information and changes daily. Make this your homepage and first stop for free practice information and legal research tools. Chances are that what you're looking for will be available directly on or as a link from the KBA website.

This site gives you information about the KBA and its various departments and resources, as well as numerous research resources and links. You can find information about meeting your annual CLE requirement, the New Lawyer requirement, and much more. You can complete CLE applications and forms, review your CLE transcript and report credits earned on your KBA member dashboard, and find a [calendar of CLE offerings](#) including live programs, teleseminars, webinars, and online video/audio programs. The site provides you with the ability to access online CLE offerings and complete all 12 hours of credits per year directly from the KBA website.

The KBA website also contains [Ethics Opinions](#), [Unauthorized Practice of Law Opinions](#), and more. The [Additional Information and Resources](#) page provides links to practice management information, attorney mental health assistance, ethics & professionalism, and other valuable information. You can also access the [forms library](#) at the Kentucky Court of Justice [website](#) or connect to the KYeCourts [webpage](#).

The KBA website includes a [Find a Lawyer](#) feature that allows you to locate other members of the bar by geographic area or section membership. A link to the online research site [Decisis®](#) is also provided through the KBA website via your member dashboard, as is our [Career Center](#) for job seekers and employers.

New for 2026, the KBA website now offers an [Attorney AI Library](#), a growing collection of tools, guidance, articles, and educational materials designed to help attorneys better understand and responsibly use artificial intelligence in the practice of law. The KBA's [Attorney AI Library](#) was created to support our members as they navigate

these emerging technologies and develop best practices for responsible use. We encourage you to explore the library and continue learning about the benefits and limitations of AI in legal practice.

For the latest in KBA events and other legal news, be sure to visit <https://kybar.org/>.

B. [Great Place to Start \(GPS\) Mentor Program Website](#)

Many of us could benefit from having a mentor to guide, counsel, and encourage us. The KBA Find a Mentor program is designed to connect experienced attorneys with new attorneys who are seeking advice and guidance in balancing the personal and professional demands of the practice of law.

How it works: Qualified mentors sign up and volunteer to participate in the GPS mentor program. New attorneys looking for assistance (mentees) may locate a mentor through the GPS website by the mentor's location or area of practice. The mentee can view detailed information about potential mentors and then initiate first contact. This self-initiated contact may involve a single issue, or entail a more lasting, formal mentor relationship. The limits of the relationship are determined by the preferences of the participants. This service is available to new attorneys admitted to practice in Kentucky for five years or less. For more detailed information, visit <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Member-Services/Mentor-Program-GPS> to see what the program has to offer.

C. Kentucky State Government Websites

The Legislative Research Commission's website at <https://legislature.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx> provides access to the Kentucky Revised Statutes, Kentucky Administrative Regulations, the Kentucky Constitution, and other valuable information. The State Attorney General's website at <http://ag.ky.gov/> includes information about consumer public protection programs as well as Attorney General Opinions. The official website of Kentucky State Government is found at <http://kentucky.gov/>. This website provides access to all state government agencies.

Other valuable state resources include:

Kentucky Secretary of State – <http://sos.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics –

<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx>

Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims –

<https://elc.ky.gov/Workers-Compensation/Pages/default.aspx>

State Law Library – <https://kycourts.gov/Courts/Pages/State-Law-Library.aspx>

D. Federal Government Websites

U.S. Department of Education – <https://www.ed.gov/>

U.S. Code – <https://uscode.house.gov/>

U.S. Sentencing Commission – www.ussc.gov/

Internal Revenue Service – www.irs.gov
U.S. Courts – www.uscourts.gov
U.S. Department of Commerce – www.commerce.gov
Federal Bureau of Investigation – <https://www.fbi.gov/>
Federal Trade Commission – www.ftc.gov
Occupational Safety and Health Administration – www.osha.gov
SEC EDGAR Database – <https://www.sec.gov/search-filings>
U.S. Congress – <https://www.congress.gov/>
U.S. Copyright Office – www.copyright.gov
U.S. Government Publishing Office – <https://www.gpo.gov/>
U.S. Postal Service – www.usps.com
U.S. Supreme Court – www.supremecourt.gov
U.S. White House – www.whitehouse.gov
USA.gov – <http://www.usa.gov/>
Office of the Federal Register – <https://www.federalregister.gov/>
Regulations.gov – <https://www.regulations.gov/#!/home>
e-CFR – <https://ecfr.io/>
Law Library of Congress Research Guides – <https://guides.loc.gov/law-library>
GovInfo – <https://www.govinfo.gov/>
Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) – <https://pacer.uscourts.gov/>

E. Miscellaneous Research & Reference Websites

Westlaw – <https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/product-logins>
(subscription service)
LexisNexis® – www.lexis.com (subscription service)
LexisNexis® Legal Insights – <https://www.lexisnexis.com/community/insights/legal/>
Findlaw Resources for Legal Professionals – <https://lp.findlaw.com/>
LawGuru – www.lawguru.com
Cornell Legal Information Institute – www.law.cornell.edu
American Bar Association – <https://www.americanbar.org/>
Martindale-Hubbell – www.martindale.com
Jurist – <http://www.jurist.org/>
Search Systems Public Records Search – <http://publicrecords.searchsystems.net>
NETR Public Records Online – www.netronline.com
University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law – <https://law.uky.edu/>
University of Louisville Louis D. Brandeis School of Law –
<https://louisville.edu/law/>
Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law –
<http://chaselaw.nku.edu>
Jefferson County Public Law Library – <https://jcplky.org/>
Case Law Access Project (Harvard Law School) – <https://case.law/>
Justia – <https://www.justia.com/>
Law Stack Exchange – <https://law.stackexchange.com/>
PublicLegal by Internet Legal Research Group – <https://www.ilrg.com/>
Local Law Libraries – <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/law/locallawlibraries>
SCOTUSblog – <https://www.scotusblog.com/>
Oyez – <https://www.oyez.org/>
Court Listener – <https://www.courtlistener.com/>
National Conference of State Legislatures – <https://www.ncsl.org/>

Free Legal Resources – Foreign & International –
<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/law/fi-free>

F. Low-Cost Mobile Apps & Databases

KBA Knowledge Hub – <https://kybarhub.org/>
Decisis® (free for KBA members) – <https://kybar.org/Decisis>
Court Objections (mobile app; \$4.99) – [iOS](#)
LawStack (free mobile app) – [iOS](#)
Legal Dictionary (free mobile app) – [iOS](#); [Android](#)
Evernote (free mobile app) – [iOS](#); [Android](#)
Microsoft Onenote (free mobile app) – [iOS](#); [Android](#)
Dictate* (free mobile app) – [iOS](#); [Android](#)
Noteshelf (free mobile app) – [iOS](#); [Android](#)
iAnnotate 4 (mobile app; \$9.99) – [iOS](#)
GoodReader (mobile app; \$5.99) – [iOS](#)

II. GOVERNANCE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN KENTUCKY

A. Supreme Court of Kentucky – [§116](#) of the [Kentucky Constitution](#)

B. KBA Board of Governors – [SCR 3.070](#) and [3.080](#)

1. KBA governing body and agent of the Court for administering and enforcing Rules.
2. Elected by Bar members.

C. KBA Continuing Legal Education Commission – [SCR 3.600-3.695](#)

1. Operates under policy direction of Board and Supreme Court.
2. Members appointed by the Supreme Court.
3. Responsible for administration and regulation of all CLE programs and activities.

D. Inquiry Commission – [SCR 3.140](#)

1. Appointed by Chief Justice with consent of the Court.
2. Considers all lawyer discipline matters and has authority to charge lawyers with professional misconduct.

E. IOLTA Board of Trustees – [SCR 3.830](#)

1. Appointed by Board of Governors subject to Court approval.
2. Oversees Interest on Lawyers Trust Account Program.

- F. Client's Security Fund Trustees – [SCR 3.820](#)
 - 1. Appointed by Board of Governors.
 - 2. Considers claims against lawyers regarding misappropriated funds.
- G. Attorney's Advertising Commission – [SCR 3.130\(7.01-7.50\)](#)
 - 1. Appointed by the KBA President and approved by Board of Governors.
 - 2. Reviews lawyer advertisements.
- H. Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program (KYLAP) – [SCR 3.910](#)
 - 1. Appointed by Board of Governors.
 - 2. Addresses impairment issues within the Kentucky legal community.

III. KENTUCKY BAR ASSOCIATION CODE OF PROFESSIONAL COURTESY

Attorneys are required to strive to make the system of justice work fairly and efficiently. In carrying out that responsibility, attorneys are expected to comply with the letter and spirit of the applicable Code of Professional Responsibility adopted by the Supreme Court of Kentucky.

The following Code of Professional Courtesy is intended as a guideline for lawyers in their dealings with their clients, opposing parties and their counsel, the courts, and the general public. This Code is not intended as a disciplinary code nor is it to be construed as a legal standard of care in providing professional services. Rather, it has an aspirational purpose and is intended to serve as the Kentucky Bar Association's statement of principles and goals for professionalism among lawyers.

- 1. A lawyer should avoid taking action adverse to the interests of a litigant known to be represented without timely notice to opposing counsel unless *ex parte* proceedings are allowed.
- 2. A lawyer should promptly return telephone calls and correspondence from other lawyers.
- 3. A lawyer should respect opposing counsel's schedule by seeking agreement on deposition dates and court appearances (other than routine motions) rather than merely serving notice.
- 4. A lawyer should avoid making ill-considered accusations of unethical conduct toward an opponent.
- 5. A lawyer should not engage in intentionally discourteous behavior.

6. A lawyer should not intentionally embarrass another attorney and should avoid personal criticism of other counsel.
7. A lawyer should not seek sanctions against or disqualification of another attorney unless necessary for the protection of a client and fully justified by the circumstances, not for the mere purpose of obtaining tactical advantage.
8. A lawyer should strive to maintain a courteous tone in correspondence, pleadings, and other written communications.
9. A lawyer should not intentionally mislead or deceive an adversary and should honor promises or commitments made.
10. A lawyer should recognize that the conflicts within a legal matter are professional and not personal and should endeavor to maintain a friendly and professional relationship with other attorneys in the matter. In other words, "leave the matter in the courtroom."
11. A lawyer should express professional courtesy to the Court and has the right to expect professional courtesy from the Court.

IV. SCR 3.130 KENTUCKY RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Rule

- 1.0 Terminology.
- 1.1 Competence.
- 1.2 Scope of Representation and Allocation of Authority between Client and Lawyer.
- 1.3 Diligence.
- 1.4 Communication.
- 1.5 Fees.
- 1.6 Confidentiality of Information.
- 1.7 Conflict of Interest: Current Clients.
- 1.8 Conflict of Interest: Current Clients; Specific Rules.
- 1.9 Duties to Former Clients.
- 1.10 Imputation of Conflicts of Interest: General Rule.
- 1.11 Special Conflicts of Interest for Former and Current Government Officers and Employees.
- 1.12 Judge, Arbitrator, Mediator or Other Third-Party Neutral.
- 1.13 Organization as Client.
- 1.14 Client with Diminished Capacity.
- 1.15 Safekeeping Property.
- 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation.
- 1.17 Sale of Law Practice.
- 1.18 Duties to Prospective Client.
- 1.19 Dissolution of Law Firm.
- 1.20 Sale of Law Practice – Deleted.

Counselor

- 2.1 Advisor.
- 2.2 Intermediary – Deleted.
- 2.3 Evaluation for Use by Third Persons.
- 2.4 Lawyer Serving as Third-Party Neutral.

Advocate

- 3.1 Meritorious Claims and Contentions.
- 3.2 Expediting Litigation.
- 3.3 Candor toward the Tribunal.
- 3.4 Fairness to Opposing Party and Counsel.
- 3.5 Impartiality and Decorum of the Tribunal.
- 3.6 Trial Publicity.
- 3.7 Lawyer as Witness.
- 3.8 Special Responsibilities of a Prosecutor.
- 3.9 Advocate in Nonadjudicative Proceedings.

Transactions with Persons Other than Clients

- 4.1 Truthfulness in Statements to Others.
- 4.2 Communication with Person Represented by Counsel.
- 4.3 Dealing with Unrepresented Person.
- 4.4 Respect for Rights of Third Persons.
- 4.5 Solicitation of Clients.
- 4.6 Waiver and Forfeiture of Fees for Prohibited Solicitation.

Law Firms and Associations

- 5.1 Responsibilities of Partners, Managers and Supervisory Lawyers.
- 5.2 Responsibilities of a Subordinate Lawyer.
- 5.3 Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistants.
- 5.4 Professional Independence of a Lawyer.
- 5.5 Unauthorized Practice of Law; Multijurisdictional Practice of Law.
- 5.6 Restrictions on Right to Practice.
- 5.7 Activities of Suspended Lawyer.
- 5.8 Responsibilities Regarding Law-Related Services.

Public Service

- 6.1 Donated Legal Services.
- 6.2 Accepting Appointments.
- 6.3 Membership in Legal Services Organization.
- 6.4 Law Reform Activities Affecting Client Interests.
- 6.5 Nonprofit and Court-Annexed Limited Legal Services Programs.

[Information about Legal Services](#)

- 7.01 Definitions.
- 7.02 Attorneys’ Advertising Commission.
- 7.03 Advisory Opinions.
- 7.04 Records of the Commission.
- 7.10 Communications Concerning a Lawyer’s Service.
- 7.15 Advertising of Fees.
- 7.20 Advertising.
- 7.40 Communication of Fields of Practice.
- 7.50 Firm Name and Letterheads.
- 7.60 Kentucky Bar Association Disaster Response Plan.
- 7.1 Communications Concerning a Lawyer’s Service – Deleted.
- 7.2 Advertising – Deleted.
- 7.3 Direct Contact with Prospective Clients – Deleted.
- 7.4 Communication of Fields of Practice – Deleted.
- 7.5 Firm Names and Letterheads – Deleted.

[Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession](#)

- 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters.
- 8.2 Judicial and Legal Officials.
- 8.3 Reporting Professional Misconduct.
- 8.4 Misconduct.
- 8.5 Disciplinary Authority; Choice of Law.

V. SUPREME COURT DISTRICTS BY COUNTY

FIRST DISTRICT	SECOND DISTRICT	THIRD DISTRICT	FOURTH DISTRICT	FIFTH DISTRICT	SIXTH DISTRICT	SEVENTH DISTRICT
Ballard	Allen	Adair	Jefferson	Bourbon	Boone	Bath
Caldwell	Barren	Anderson		Clark	Bracken	Boyd
Calloway	Breckinridg	Bell		Fayette	Campbell	Breathitt
Carlisle	e	Boyle		Franklin	Carroll	Carter
Christian	Bullitt	Casey		Jessamine	Gallatin	Clay
Crittenden	Butler	Clinton		Madison	Grant	Elliott
Daviess	Edmonson	Cumberlan		Scott	Henry	Estill
Fulton	Grayson	d		Woodford	Kenton	Fleming
Graves	Hancock	Garrard			Oldham	Floyd
Henderson	Hardin	Green			Owen	Greenup
Hickman	Hart	Harlan			Pendleton	Harrison
Hopkins	Larue	Knox			Shelby	Jackson
Livingston	Meade	Laurel			Trimble	Johnson
Logan	Monroe	Lincoln				Knott
Lyon	Ohio	Marion				Lawrence
Marshall	Simpson	McCreary				Lee
McCracken	Spencer	Mercer				Leslie

FIRST DISTRICT	SECOND DISTRICT	THIRD DISTRICT	FOURTH DISTRICT	FIFTH DISTRICT	SIXTH DISTRICT	SEVENTH DISTRICT
McLean Muhlenberg Simpson Todd Trigg Union Webster	Warren	Metcalfe Nelson Pulaski Rockcastle Russell Taylor Washington Wayne Whitley				Letcher Lewis Magoffin Martin Mason Menifee Montgomery Morgan Nicholas Owsley Perry Pike Powell Robertson Rowan Wolfe

VI. [SCR 3.035](#) MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND SERVICE

(1) Each attorney licensed by the Supreme Court to practice law in this Commonwealth shall:

(a) Maintain with the Director one official Bar Roster address at which he or she may be communicated with by mail and shall upon a change of that address notify the Director within ten (10) days of the new official address.

If the member’s official Bar Roster address is a Post Office address, he or she must also provide an alternate address for service of process.

Failure to maintain a current address which allows for physical service of process with the Director may be prosecuted in the same manner as a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

(b) Maintain with the Director one official email address and shall upon change of that address notify the Director within ten (10) days of the new official email address, except however, that “Senior Retired inactive” members, “Disabled Inactive” members and those “Honorary” members who no longer actively practice law or maintain an office shall not be required to maintain an official email address. An official email address shall be unique to the attorney and not be used by another KBA member.

(c) Include his or her 5 digit¹ member identification number on all filings with the Courts of the Commonwealth and in all communications with the Association.

(2) Every member of the Association shall be deemed to have appointed the Director as that member's agent of service of any document that is required to be served upon that member by any provision of Supreme Court [Rule 2](#) or [3](#), provided that service of a document upon the Director shall constitute constructive service of that document upon the member only upon proof that all of the following requirements have been satisfied:

(a) Reasonable efforts have been made to achieve actual service of the document upon the member;

(b) Two (2) true copies of the document have been provided to the Director, accompanied by a written request that the Director serve the document upon the member at the member's current Bar Roster address;

(c) Within seven (7) days after receipt of such request, the Director mailed one (1) copy of the document to the member at the aforesaid address, posted by certified mail, return receipt requested, restricted delivery-addressee only, in an envelope bearing the return address of the Director and marked on the outside as "OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION—IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED"; and

(d) No less than thirty (30) days after mailing the document pursuant to subparagraph (c), the Director shall enter a Return of Service which attests:

(i) that the Director mailed one of the copies of the document mentioned in subparagraph (b) to the member's Bar Roster address in accordance with the requirements of subparagraph (c);

(ii) that the Director has attached to the Return of Service all communications received in response to the service or attempted service of the document, including any certified mail receipt or other postal notice or return receipt relating to the delivery or attempted delivery of the document and any communication from the member of the Association or other person acting on behalf of such member; and

(iii) that the Director has provided a true copy of the Return of Service, with copies of all attachments, to the person or entity who requested service of the document upon the member of the Association.

(3) The Association may reject any communication to the Association which fails to comply with paragraph (1)(c) of this Rule provided that a member's

¹ KBA member identification numbers may now be 5 or 6 digits.

failure to include his or her member identification number in a document shall not result in a default in any disciplinary proceeding.

VII. ADVISORY ETHICS OPINIONS

A. Written Requests for Assistance

[SCR 3.530](#) Ethics Committee and Unauthorized Practice Committee – advisory opinions – informal and formal

(1) The Ethics Committee and the Unauthorized Practice Committee are authorized to issue informal opinions, and to submit to the Board for its action formal opinions, on questions of ethics or unauthorized practice, as applicable.

(2) Any attorney licensed in Kentucky or admitted under [SCR 3.030\(2\)](#), who is in doubt as to the ethical propriety of any professional act contemplated by that attorney may request an informal opinion. The President shall designate members of the Ethics Committee to respond to such requests. Ordinarily, the request shall be directed to a member of the requestor's Supreme Court district. Such requests shall be in writing or by telephone followed by a request in writing. The committee member to whom the request is directed shall attempt to furnish the requesting attorney with a prompt telephonic answer and written informal letter opinion as to the ethical propriety of the act or course of conduct in question. A copy of any such informal opinion shall be provided to the Director for safekeeping and statistical purposes, and to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, to determine whether the informal opinion has broader application.

(3) Communications between the requesting attorney and the Ethics Committee member shall be confidential, but confidentiality may be waived by the requesting attorney. However, the requesting and giving of advice under this Rule does not create an attorney-client relationship. In order to promote uniformity of advice, redacted copies of informal opinions may be circulated among members of the Ethics Committee, as applicable, provided that such confidentiality is preserved.

(4) If the Ethics Committee determines an ethical issue to be of sufficient importance, the Committee may issue and furnish to the Board of Governors a proposed opinion authorized by such Committee for approval as a formal opinion. Such approval shall require a vote of three-fourths of the voting members present at the meeting of the Board. If the Board is unable to approve of the opinion as written, then the Board may return the matter to the Committee for further review and consideration, or may modify the opinion and approve the opinion as modified by the three-fourths vote, or may

direct the Committee to furnish the requesting attorney, if any, with an informal opinion in the form of a Chair's letter opinion, with a copy to the Director.

(5) Both informal and formal opinions shall be advisory only; however, no attorney shall be disciplined for any professional act performed by that attorney in compliance with an informal opinion furnished by the Ethics Committee member pursuant to such attorney's written request, provided that the written request clearly, fairly, accurately and completely states such attorney's contemplated professional act.

(6) Any attorney licensed in Kentucky or admitted to practice law in another state who is in doubt as to the propriety of any course of conduct or act of any person or entity which may constitute the unauthorized practice of law in Kentucky may make a request in writing, or in emergencies, by telephone, to the Chair of the Unauthorized Practice Committee, or such other members of the Unauthorized Practice Committee as are designated by the Chair, for an advisory opinion thereon. Local bar associations may also request advisory opinions. The Committee member to whom the request is directed shall bring this matter to the attention of the Committee at its next meeting. The Committee may attempt to furnish the requesting attorney with a prompt telephonic answer and written informal letter opinion as to whether the conduct constitutes the unauthorized practice of law. A copy of such informal opinion shall be provided to the Director and the Chair of the Unauthorized Practice Committee.

(7) Any attorney licensed in Kentucky or admitted under [SCR 3.030\(2\)](#) who is in doubt as to the ethical propriety of any professional act contemplated by that attorney with respect to the unauthorized practice of law shall be referred to the Ethics Committee district member for an informal opinion as set forth in (2) and (3). Communications about such an inquiry between the requesting attorney and the unauthorized practice committee member, and between the committee members of the two committees, shall be confidential, but confidentiality may be waived by the requesting attorney.

(8) The requesting and giving of advice by the Unauthorized Practice Committee under this Rule does not create an attorney/client relationship.

(9) If the Unauthorized Practice Committee determines an issue regarding the unauthorized practice of law to be of sufficient importance, the Committee may issue and furnish to the Board of Governors a proposed opinion authorized by such Committee for

approval as a formal opinion. Such approval shall require a vote of three-fourths of the voting members present at the meeting of the Board. If the Board is unable to approve the opinion as written, then the Board may return the matter to the Committee for further review and consideration, or may modify the opinion and approve the opinion as modified by the three-fourths vote, or may direct the Committee to furnish the requesting attorney, if any, with an informal opinion in the form of a Chair's letter opinion, with a copy to the Director.

(10) Ethics Committee and Unauthorized Practice Committee members shall be immune from suit for advice given in the performance of duties under this Rule. Ethics Committee and Unauthorized Practice Committee members shall be immune from process and shall not otherwise be compelled to testify or give an opinion in connection with any advice given in the performance of duties under this rule.

(11) All formal opinions of the Board arising from either Committee shall be published in full or in synopsis form, as determined by the Director, in the edition of the KENTUCKY BENCH & BAR next issued after the adoption of the opinion.

(12) Any person or entity aggrieved or affected by a formal opinion of the Board may file with the clerk within thirty (30) days after the end of the month of publication of the KENTUCKY BENCH & BAR in which the full opinion or a synopsis thereof is published, a copy of the opinion, and, upon motion and reasonable notice in writing to the Director, obtain a review of the Board's opinion by the Court. The Court's action thereon shall be final and the Clerk shall furnish copies of the formal order to the original petitioner, if any, the movant and the Director. The movant shall file a brief in support of the review, and the Director may file a response brief thirty days thereafter.

(13) The filing fee for docketing a motion under paragraph (7) of this [Rule 3.530](#) shall be as provided by Civil Rule 76.42(1) for original actions in the Supreme Court.

Credits

HISTORY: Amended by Order 2022-11, eff. 4-1-22; prior amendments eff. 3-1-20 (Order 2020-03), 1-1-18 (Order 2017-18), eff. 1-1-07 (Order 2006-09), 1-1-97 (Order 96-1), 11-1-95, 11-15-91, 12-31-80, 1-1-78, 12-4-74, 7-2-71

B. Emergency Requests for Assistance

In November 1991, the Kentucky Bar Association inaugurated an official "Ethics Hotline." An unofficial "Hotline" had been operating for some time under [Kentucky](#)

[Supreme Court Rule 3.530](#), but requests for telephone opinions began to overwhelm the system. Lawyers assumed that telephone opinions could be obtained on a 24-hour basis, not just for the defensive purposes set forth in [Rule 3.530](#), but also for "expert opinions" and other purposes. Such expectations put a severe strain on the volunteer Ethics Committee. The "Ethics Hotline" provides telephone opinions in emergencies. However, opinions are only provided to a requesting lawyer regarding the lawyer's own contemplated (future) conduct. Opinions are not furnished to clients, the media, or other non-lawyer sources. The opinions continue to be non-binding, except that they provide a defense to discipline in the event that the lawyer follows the advice given. The opinions are not provided for the purposes of resolving disputes in litigation, or as "expert testimony" in civil, criminal, or disciplinary cases. Each hotline volunteer has discretion to refuse to give an opinion in any particular case, especially if it is not an emergency. A volunteer may require that a written statement of the question or facts giving rise to or assumed in any question be submitted before or after the giving of an emergency opinion.

Readers are directed to opinions [KBA E-297](#) (1984) (jurisdiction of the Committee) and [KBA E-348](#) (1991) (misuse of Committee opinions), as well as to the amended "Hotline Rules" at [SCR 3.530\(1\) and \(2\)](#). A link to the list of "Hotline Volunteers" is included in this handbook. The requestor should call the "Hotline Volunteer" for the requestor's Supreme Court District.

Written requests for Advisory Opinions may still be forwarded to the Chair under [SCR 3.530](#).

Please note that requests for Advisory Opinions dealing with Justices, Judges, and Trial Commissioners ([SCR 4.310](#)) should go to the Ethics Committee of the Kentucky Judiciary and not the Kentucky Bar Association Ethics Committee.

C. Hotline Volunteers by Supreme Court District

A current listing of the Ethics Hotline volunteers for each Supreme Court District is located at <https://kybar.org/For-Members/Rules-Ethics-Information/Ethics-Hotline-District-Contacts>.²

D. Researching Ethics Questions

1. T. Eberle, R. Underwood, T. Chase, K. Metzmeier, and T. Taylor (eds.), *Kentucky Legal Ethics Deskbook* (UK/CLE, 6th ed. 2021) – collects all opinions of the KBA Ethics, Unauthorized Practice, and Judicial Ethics Committees.
2. G. Hazard, W. Hodes, and P. Jarvis, *The Law of Lawyering* (Wolters Kluwer Law & Business, 4th ed. 2020) – two volumes dealing with the ABA Model Rules.

² You must be logged into the KBA website in order to view this webpage.

3. *ABA/Bloomberg Lawyers' Manual on Professional Conduct* (ABA and Bloomberg Law) – electronic format with text, current news, and collection of ethics opinions.
4. C. Wolfram, *Modern Legal Ethics* (West 1986) – hornbook.
5. R. Mallen, *Legal Malpractice* (Thomson West 2026 ed.).
6. R. Underwood and W. Fortune, *Trial Ethics* (Aspen Publishers 1995).
7. R. Underwood, "Part-Time Prosecutors and Conflicts of Interest: A Survey and Some Proposals," 81 *Ky. L.J.* 1-104 (1992-1993) – ethics and prosecutors.
8. C. Geyh, J. Alfini, and J. Sample, *Judicial Conduct and Ethics* (Matthew Bender 6th ed. 2020).

VIII. SUMMARY OF KENTUCKY STATE COURTS

Reprinted from the [Kentucky Court of Justice](#) website.

Last updated: June 2026

This information is provided only as a service and is subject to change. Attorneys who rely exclusively upon information within this publication do so at their own risk. For more information regarding the Kentucky Court of Justice please visit their website at <https://kycourts.gov/Pages/index.aspx>.

SUPREME COURT

CHIEF JUSTICE

[Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert](#) (3rd District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite D103, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-4162

Pulaski County Court of Justice, 50 Public Square, Suite 3500, Somerset, KY 42501,
(606) 451-4311

JUSTICES

[Deputy Chief Justice Robert B. Conley](#) (7th District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite D100, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-4169

Boyd County Judicial Center, 2805 Louisa Street, Suite 317, Catlettsburg, KY 41129
(606) 739-2390

[Justice Christopher Shea Nickell](#) (1st District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite C102, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-4163

3235 Olivet Church Road, Suite F, Paducah, KY 42001, (270) 575-7030

[Justice Kelly Thompson](#) (2nd District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite D101, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-6753

[Justice Angela McCormick Bisig](#) (4th District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite C103, Frankfort, Ky 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-4157

Jefferson County Judicial Center, 700 West Jefferson Street, Suite 1000, Louisville, KY 40202,
(502) 595-3199

[Justice Pamela R. Goodwine](#) (5th District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite C104, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-0994

Robert F. Stephens Circuit Courthouse, 120 North Limestone Street, Lexington, KY 40507,
(859) 246-4111

[Justice Michelle M. Keller](#) (6th District)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite B102, Frankfort, KY 40601 (temporary), (502) 564-4165

Kenton County Justice Center, 230 Madison Avenue, Suite 821, Covington, KY 41011, (859)
291-9966

CLERK/COURT ADMINISTRATOR/GENERAL COUNSEL

[Katie Bing](#), Supreme Court Clerk

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite A104, Frankfort, KY 40601-3415 (temporary), (502) 564-5444

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS DIRECTOR

[Zach Ramsey](#)

1001 Vandalay Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601, (502) 573-2350

COURT OF APPEALS

Court Clerk: [Kate Morgan](#)

669 Chamberlin Avenue, Suite B

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

(502) 573-7920 ext. 52001

CIRCUIT COURTS

[Circuit Court](#) is the court of general jurisdiction and can hear all types of cases unless the General Assembly has given exclusive jurisdiction of particular kinds of cases to another court to handle, such as District Court.

Circuit Court hears civil matters involving more than \$5,000, capital offenses and felonies, divorces, adoptions, termination of parental rights, real property title disputes and contested probate matters. Circuit Court has the power to issue injunctions and writs of

mandamus and prohibition to compel or prohibit acts, and to hear appeals from the District Court and administrative agencies. Circuit judges serve eight-year terms.

Family Court

Family Court is a division of Circuit Court. In counties that have a Family Court, the court has primary jurisdiction in cases involving families and children. Family Court hears cases involving dissolution of marriage; spousal support and equitable distribution; child support and visitation; paternity; adoption; domestic violence; dependency, neglect and abuse; termination of parental rights; and runaways and truancy. Appeals from Family Court are made to the Court of Appeals. Family Court judges serve eight-year terms.

DISTRICT COURTS

[District Court](#) is the court of limited jurisdiction and handles juvenile matters, city and county ordinances, misdemeanors, violations, traffic offenses, probate of wills, arraignments, felony probable cause hearings, small claims involving \$2,500 or less, civil cases involving \$5,000 or less, voluntary and involuntary mental commitments, and cases relating to domestic violence and abuse. Appeals from District Court are made to the local Circuit Court. District judges serve four-year terms.

BUSINESS COURT

Kentucky's first Business Court Docket pilot project has been operating in Jefferson County since January 1, 2020. Then Circuit Judge Angela McCormick Bisig, who now sits on the Supreme Court of Kentucky, and Circuit Judge Charles L. Cunningham served as the inaugural Business Court Docket judges. The Business Court Docket provides specialized attention for complex commercial cases, improves court efficiency for all litigants, and creates a more attractive forum for doing business. Kentucky is one of approximately 24 states that have adopted a Business Court model.

The Business Court Docket is an early success of the Supreme Court of Kentucky's civil justice reform initiative, which was launched in 2018 to address concerns about the cost, delay, and complexity of civil litigation. The Civil Justice Reform Commission is chaired by Justice Angela McCormick Bisig, who serves the 4th Supreme Court District.