POPS requires that applicants:
• be U.S. citizens
• be at least 21 years old

What is POPS?
Enacted 10 years ago, the Peace Officer Professional Standards Act created a set of guidelines all law enforcement officers must achieve in an effort to enhance professionalism and standardization among Kentucky’s ranks. The results of a recent state-wide survey demonstrate the strengths of POPS and map the future of Kentucky law enforcement.

Gov. Steve Beshear
"Thanks to the Peace Officer Professional Standards Act, we are assured that the officers working in our hometowns meet the highest standards of training and professionalism."

Former Gov. Paul Patton who championed POPS in 1998
"The implementation of the Peace Officer Professional Standards increased the professionalism of the job, put more demands on officers, and therefore the compensation of POPS-certified officers should increase."

Photos by Elizabeth Thomas
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The POPS law* requires that applicants:

- be U.S. citizens
- be at least 21 years old
- have obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent
- possess a valid driver’s license
- submit fingerprints for a criminal background check
- not be convicted of a felony offense
- not be prohibited by federal or state law from possessing a firearm
- have read the Code of Ethics
- not have received a dishonorable discharge or general discharge under other than honorable conditions
- not have had certification as a peace officer permanently revoked in another state
- have a background investigation
- be interviewed by their potential employing agency’s executive or designee
- take a written suitability screener
- pass a drug-screen test
- take a polygraph examination.

The entry standards* also include five physical fitness measures requiring applicants to:
- bench press 64 percent of their body weight
- complete 18 sit-ups within one minute
- finish a 300-meter run in 65 seconds
- perform 20 push-ups
- run 1.5 miles within 17 minutes and 12 seconds

*as of Oct. 2, 2009

Although prior to 1998 some agencies had higher qualification standards, the only state-wide requirements to become a law enforcement officer were a valid driver’s license, a minimum age of 21 years and a criminal record free of felony convictions.
It has been described as "the single biggest accomplishment" of Kentucky law enforcement, "the most successful program ever," second to none and as an initiative raising Kentucky law enforcement training to the "top 5 percent in the country."

To Kentucky's officers certified by the Peace Officer Professional Standards Act, known simply as POPS, the standards are a bar to meet - and often to exceed. To Kentucky's citizens, the standards are a quiet assurance of safety and professionalism among law enforcement, regardless of the color of uniform.

"The POPS Act not only established a much-needed set of standards for new recruits passing through the 18-week Department of Criminal Justice Training basic-training academy, but also led to higher standards of training for the more than 8,000 certified officers who return each year to the academy for the required 40 hours of advanced in-service training," said Daviess County Sheriff Keith Cain, chairman of the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council.

"Law enforcement agencies of every size throughout the commonwealth are assured that their officers, through POPS and D.O.C.J.T., are trained to a uniform level of excellence that would be unachievable without the implementation of POPS," added Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary J. Michael Brown.

Now, 10 years after the initiation of POPS, a survey of Kentucky law enforcement underscores the credibility of the standards and guides the way for the next steps in the improvement of Kentucky law enforcement services.

Results from the survey vividly demonstrate the positive influence of POPS, as seen by both law enforcement executives and line staff. In fact, 92 percent of executives and 80 percent of officers feel recruitment has strongly been enhanced by POPS.

Indeed, results from a randomly-selected, representative sample of Kentucky officers, managers and community leaders vividly demonstrates that these professionals overwhelmingly equate POPS with improvements in recruitment, initial screening, discipline, suitability and basic qualifications of officers. The survey also opens the door to what law enforcement officials see as their next major goal: development of additional, in-depth leadership training.

CREATING A BENCHMARK

Ten years ago, Kentucky legislators implemented the POPS Act, which established a set of 17 pre-employment standards by which all law enforcement candidates would be measured. (See page 20). Those standards included measures ranging from physical agility and education requirements to background investigations and drug testing.

POPS was to be directed by the 20-person KLEC - appointed by the governor. Before POPS was enacted, the only qualifications required from those wishing to become police officers were a valid driver's license, a minimum age of 21 years, honorable discharge and a criminal record free of felony convictions.

"Overall, the POPS standards have done more to professionalize policing during the past 10 years than perhaps anything we had done in the prior 50 years," said Kentucky State Police Commissioner Rodney Brewer.

The standards and enhanced training are governed by KLEC, which includes individuals who represent various levels of law enforcement as well as the civilian community. (See page 43).

Former Gov. Paul Patton, who ushered POPS through the Kentucky legislature sees it as one of his major contributions to the people of Kentucky.

"Before POPS, any sheriff or city police department could put a badge on somebody, strap a gun to their waist, call them a police officer and give them arrest power," he said. "That is an awesome power and an awesome responsibility. And it was being distributed in many jurisdictions without any real effective state-wide requirements."

"Prior to POPS, there were a lot of good people who had been in policing a lot of years without..."
formal training," said former Bowling Green Police Chief Bill Watrip. "What I think you were able to see in personnel after POPS was that they all met at least minimum professional standards and an intensive training regimen."

Some agencies previously had established local standards, but others who also desired a higher level of professionalism for their officers either could not afford the examinations or manpower that went into them or wanted parameters more solidly based than their own self-created standards.

For instance, "For physical agility, we didn't have a set of standards that could not be challenged," said Van Ingram, former Maysville Police chief and now acting director of the Office of Drug Control Policy. "We didn't want to make something up off the top of our heads. You wanted something that had been researched. A hiring process in those days consisted only of a written test and an interview or two."

"Not only was it not fair to the community, it wasn't fair to that [sheriff's] office and it wasn't fair to those officers," Cain said.

The process to enact legislation creating the standards for all Kentucky law enforcement began in 1996 under the governance of a 68-member committee, representing all professional associations, state police, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Administrative Office of the Courts, county and commonwealth attorneys' associations, district and county judges, legislators, chiefs and sheriffs, all coordinated by the Department of Criminal Justice Training's executive staff.

"I believed then, and even more so now, that enacting POPS was the right direction for Kentucky to take," said Kentucky Speaker of the House Greg Stumbo. "What was a great array of police and sheriffs' departments across the state has become even better."

At the time, former Justice and Public Safety Secretary Dan Cherry was concerned about the liability stemming from a lack of consistently applied standards across the commonwealth, he said. When he was presented with the idea to adopt uniform standards, he said it appeared to be a win-win situation for everybody.

"Not that it was easy," Cherry said. "Not that there were not some bumps in the road. But I knew in my heart it was the right thing to do for every citizen of Kentucky. This was a painful adjustment because it required a lot of change for a lot of people, but it was absolutely the right thing to do."

"All the positive actions taken by law enforcement over the past decade have come about because law enforcement, as a group, became galvanized in their support of the POPS legislation," said DCTJ Commissioner John Bizzack. "That progress allowed law enforcement to overcome inertia and stimulate positive action by the collective group."

Almost immediately after the standards were enacted, people within and associated with the law enforcement profession began to see signs of uniformity among the ranks.

"Law enforcement was on the rise anyway with the Department of Criminal Justice Training programs - they certainly were setting the bar pretty high - this just brought in all the other agencies," said former Georgetown Police Chief Craig Birdwhistle. "It was mandated that they meet minimum requirements to be law enforcement officers and this was a tool that we could use to get that done."

Hiring became easier, said Robin Cooper, a former Paintsville mayor.

"There are an awful lot of people out there who would like to be in law enforcement," he said. "You get to wear a uniform and badge, carry a gun and drive a big, fast car with lights on it."

"So when we put the standards in the pre-testing, then there became a threshold they had to meet," he continued. "If it is your buddy's kid who comes to say, 'Hey Mayor, I'd like to be a police officer,' before you can hire those people they have to meet that standard."

The physical agility of officers on the road also began to increase.

"Being a police officer requires so much physical ability at times; chasing the bad guys, fighting with them and sometimes just the stamina to work the overtime when needed," said Christian County
Commonwealth’s Attorney Lynn Pryor, whose husband also serves as a Bowling Green police officer. “Physical fitness standards have really made a difference. But all the other standards combined make better officers all the way around.”

The standards were simple, easy to follow, well-written and well-maintained, several within the law enforcement community have emphasized. Soon Kentucky was being looked at nationally as a yardstick for professionalism.

“When I go around the country to lecture to various law enforcement organizations, Kentucky often is cited as a model for overall statewide standards,” said Tracey Corey, Kentucky’s chief medical examiner.

But more than anything, Kentucky’s ranks were becoming uniform, something that ODCP’s Ingram said puts Kentucky “head and shoulders above a lot of other states.”

“Literally, an officer from Bowling Green is receiving the same training as an officer from Pikeville Police Department,” added Brewer. “Even though you have different types of environments in which people are policing, in different parts of the commonwealth, tactics don’t change. Good sound processes and the way you deal with people don’t change. Good investigative practices don’t change. “We’re getting to a good, standardization of practice… To maintain those standards that we are expected to uphold, we needed to make sure it was uniformly applied to everyone in the commonwealth, whether they have a brown uniform, a gray one or a blue one. That doesn’t matter. What matters is, do they meet those minimum qualifications and are they continuing to meet those qualifications through their annually required 40 hours of in-service training?”

Identifying the standards helped to define the expectations most law enforcement agencies already held for their personnel, said George Moore, a former commonwealth’s attorney representing Bath, Menifee, Montgomery and Rowan counties. He also formerly served as president of the Kentucky Commonwealth’s Attorney Association.

The Quality of POPS

As recruits began to pour into DOCJT for basic training, professional uniformity was emerging in all areas of the state, according to former Springfield Police Chief Larry Tousignant.

“The fundamental way we looked at training changed,” said Alexandria Police Chief Mike Ward, who also serves as the Kentucky Chiefs of Police Association president. “There is just no comparison to what it was before. You get a recruit out of the academy now and they are much better trained than I was.”

There was a much greater emphasis on better training – exactly as the original 68-member committee intended, added former Laurel County Sheriff Gene Hollon.

“The difference is vast,” said Monticello Chief Ralph Minard. “It makes our officers safer.”

As the training developed, officers became more confident in themselves and in each other.

“I think there has been tremendous change in the level of training of police officers and the confidence that police agencies have in calling each other for back-up,” said Kentucky Supreme Court Justice David Williams. “I think it has been one of the most successful programs ever.”

That confidence among comrades was a dramatic change for law enforcement, Paintsville’s Cooper explained.

“To have some confidence in the training and the ability of the person you are having to serve shoulder to shoulder with – it just put everybody on the same level. That, I think, was one of the strongest elements and one of the strongest benefits of [POPS].”

And the officers weren’t the only ones taking notice. In courtrooms, at crime scenes and on the streets, the boldness of new professionalism shone through.

“I’ve seen tremendous changes in the investigative efforts by police officers,” said Fayette County Attorney Larry Roberts. “It is not perfect, but it has been a huge change for the better – following up on leads, not just closing a case when the scene was cleaned … the training that has gone on to help police officers testify has been very good.”

Having served as a prosecutor since the 1970s, Ralph Miniard, former Laurel County sheriff, said, “It makes our officers safer.”

Sheriff Gene Hollon. “There was a much greater emphasis on better training – exactly as the original 68-member committee intended, added former Laurel County Sheriff Gene Hollon.

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Having served as a prosecutor since the 1970s,.
“I think the Peace Officer Professional Standards had a major impact in the level of competence that the people of Kentucky have in their state. It is not perfect, but it has been a huge change for the better.”

Former Governor Paul Patton

“I believe there is a very positive attitude toward standards for law enforcement.”

Christian County Commonwealth’s Attorney Lynn Pray

“I think there is a very positive attitude toward standards for law enforcement.”

Former Clay County Sheriff Jody Jones

“I think it has been one of the most successful programs ever.”

Kentucky Senate President David Williams

“I think it was not for POPS.”

Laurel County Sheriff Gene Hollon

“We are 300 years ahead of where law enforcement would be if it was not for POPS.”

Fayette County Attorney Larry Roberts

“People in Kentucky have risen to the challenge and the level of excellence is comin’ to a time where the FBI is recognizing the standards that are now in place.”

State Police Commissioner Rodney Brewer

“I think it has been one of the most successful programs ever.”

Office of Drug Control Policy Acting Director Van Ingram

“I think I am coming to a time for the state to take a look at [the KLEPF] stipends.”

Auburn Police Chief and KACP President Mike Barchett

“This is one of the greatest strides that has been made in the past 10 years versus any other time period in Kentucky law enforcement history.”

Hardin County Sheriff Earle Gardner

“I have seen an increase in the thoroughness and attention to detail, especially with regards to forensic evidence that detectives bring to their cases.”

Franklin County Sheriff Steve Sparrow

“You’ve got a responsibility to measure up with your department. I actually think it made running a department easier; it made my job easier.”

Laurel County Sheriff Jerry Saunier

“Since POPS has come around, the sheriff’s offices throughout the state of Kentucky have drastically changed to a more professional standard and level.”

Bath County Judge-Executive Carolyn Belcher

“I think there is a very positive attitude toward standards for law enforcement.”

KACP Executive Director Mike Bischoff

“I think the Peace Officer Professional Standards were designed by and for the Kentucky police community. Progress came quickly and results today are widely endorsed by those governed by the standards.”

Kentucky State Police Commissioner Todd Whelan

“You do all these pre-requisites done.”

Graves County Sheriff John Davis

“Police officers are no longer deterred simply because they may come from a rural area, belong to a small agency or receive relatively less in pay.”

Springfield Police Chief Larry Tousignan

“I think a uniform set of standards that apply to almost every police agency in Kentucky just puts us head and shoulders above a lot of states that don’t have that.”

Office of Drug Control Policy Acting Director Van Ingram

“[The KLEPF] stipend is an important part of the benefit of being a police officer and I think that the program needs to continue and we should all be striving to get that for them.”

Former Southern Police Institute Director William Watch

“I think it has been one of the most successful programs ever.”

Office of Drug Control Policy Acting Director Van Ingram

“I think it has been on the 20th Anniversary of POPS

Whitney”

“I must have a uniform set of standards that apply to almost every police agency in Kentucky just puts us head and shoulders above a lot of states that don’t have that.”

Office of Drug Control Policy Acting Director Van Ingram

“I think it is making law enforcement a quality profession and making sure the people who go into this are the type you want, whom you can develop and who are going to provide the future of our profession.”

KACP Executive Director Mike Barchett

“I think the Peace Officer Professional Standards were designed by and for the Kentucky police community. Progress came quickly and results today are widely endorsed by those governed by the standards.”

KACP Executive Director Mike Barchett
Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Deputy Secretary Charles Geveden said he has seen an overall improvement in police work that has led to more crimes being solved because of POPS.

"Our officers are better trained, more competent, more professional and have a better understanding of criminal law and criminal procedures," he said. "This translates to better aid to prosecutors and a safer society."

Whitley and McCreary counties Commonwealth's Attorney Allen Trimble also has noticed a remarkable difference.

"[Officers] have a much better understanding of the law and how it applies to their daily activities as a police officer," he said.

THE QUALITY OF KENTUCKY'S OFFICERS

The law enforcement community is continually expected to deliver an ever-growing level of professional service to the ever-increasing level of expectations of their residents," Tousignant said. "The criminal element is becoming more proficient, the residents are more educated and television offers an unrealistic expectation of a scientific solution to crime in under 60 minutes.

"The officer hired under POPS is more determined to handle those obstacles, as evidenced by the difficulty level of training courses many are requesting and attending," he continued.

Officers hired since the inception of the POPS standards also display better communication skills, practice safer tactics, use the most current technology to do the job, stay updated on legal issues and become more educated, said DOCJT Physical Training and Defensive Tactics Section Instructor Gina Smith.

"I also believe that incumbent officers have improved their professional service to the community as a result of POPS and the Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation Program Fund," Smith continued. "Agencies across the state seem to utilize available resources much better today than ever before."

Most importantly, the public perception of Kentucky law enforcement began to shift.

"I think the Peace Officer Professional Standards had a major impact in the level of respect and confidence that the people of Kentucky have in their police officers," former Gov. Patton said.

"In my opinion, there has been a noticeable, significant and visible increase in the professionalism of the police community, including not only knowing how to detect crime, but also relating to the public - the way you treat the public with respect and you expect to be treated with respect in return. It just makes all the difference in the world," he continued.

THE FUTURE OF KENTUCKY LAW ENFORCEMENT

Creating a set of standards by which all officers uniformly are vetted and trained has given Kentucky's officers mobility to achieve goals they may have for their future. And while that mobility has been of great benefit to the officer, some agency heads have faced issues in retaining their greatest as...
sets. After all, an officer in a three-man, small-town police department has the same training as an officer in a large, metro area.

Their skills are comparable and transferable.

Some also have argued that the physical standards are too demanding on some demographics, that their hiring options have been limited or that the 18-week academy is difficult for some potential recruits with family responsibilities to attend.

“We are putting out some very good officers, don’t get me wrong,” said Graves County Sheriff John Davis. “But it might eliminate some possibly good recruits.”

Davis offered an example of one of his deputies who almost did not make it through the rigorous standards of the basic training academy. However, after multiple tries the officer met the standards and went on to save the life of a local citizen.

“Had he not gone back [to the academy], that person would have died because he [the deputy] couldn’t do 25 push ups,” Davis said.

But most argue that the restrictions that have arisen from the POPS standards are greatly outweighed by the overall betterment to the law enforcement community.

“Has it restricted their ability to hire in terms of numbers and who they want?” asked Sheriff Cain.

“Absolutely. Has it been kind to us in terms of obtaining qualified candidates that need to be wearing a law enforcement officer’s uniform? I would argue it has not.”

Those concerns and others expressed by Kentucky’s law enforcement are being addressed as administrators begin to look toward the future.

“I don’t think we can ever lose sight of the basics, of the small things that we do in law enforcement,” Karlaske said. “We have built a good foundation over the years and we need to keep that in mind. But as we move into the future, we’re met with new challenges and I think we constantly have to be aware of what the challenges are that law enforcement has to rise to and we have to be ready to accept them.”

Glasgow Police Chief Horace Johnson agreed.

“I don’t have a crystal ball, but I can see us modifying and improving along the way, whether it be in small bits or otherwise,” he said.

The results of the 2009 survey bear out those remarks. Ninety-six percent of executives and 85 percent of line officers say that leadership classes provide officers “with significant skill sets that are beneficial to the community served, the officer’s agency and to the officer’s individual development.” (See pie chart, page 31).

“The leadership classes already offered by DOCJT are immensely beneficial to improving the professionalism and effectiveness of our officers and our management personnel,” Cain said. “But to meet the ever-growing demands on Kentucky law enforcement, to improve our efforts, to help our communities and to usher us into the next decade of POPS-enhanced policing, we must emphasize—and make that emphasis available to all Kentucky officers—leadership.”

“[POPS] encouraged us to build a program to raise our qualifications and pay, which brought up professionalism and attracted other police officers from other law enforcement agencies.”
POPS requires that applicants:
not be prohibited by federal or state law from possessing a firearm

he recommendation to move to a training style more in line with adult learning led the Department of Criminal Justice Training to the cutting edge of instruction, allowing law enforcement recruits to take ownership of their education and ultimately their own actions on the street.

Prior to January 1999, the primary style of training was lecture, said DOCJT General Studies Supervisor Scott Saltsman. But, after several DOCJT instructors observed training with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the recommendation was made that the DOCJT academy focus more on a facilitation style of training, including more hands-on and interactive classroom studies.

“This is one of those situations where Kentucky was at the forefront of moving American police training forward,” Saltsman said.

The 2009 survey shows that 92 percent of law enforcement executives and 83 percent of line officers agree that “adult learning models promote problem solving skills that benefit the officer’s home community. And, 80 percent of officers and 90 percent of chiefs and sheriffs believe that “adult learning methods (i.e. facilitation and problem solving) are more appropriate for peace officers in Basic Training and Advanced Individualized Training than tradition training models such as lectures.” The planning phases began for the training transition in the late 1990s, about the same time as the implementation of the Peace Officer Professional Standards and the move from a 10-week basic training academy to a 16-week program, Saltsman said. As the program began to show its successes, a team of DOCJT instructors again worked together in 2000 with the RCMP to develop a modular style of facilitation-based training to enhance what already had begun.

“We began by asking, what are the basic elements that a recruit needs?” Saltsman said. “We thought, learning how to take a theft report, learning how to deal with individuals that are in a confrontation, traffic stops, how to do crimes against property investigations, how to do crimes against persons investigations. We broke it down into large blocks to organize training in a more efficient manner.”

That transition helped to tie all training together in a connected and logical format for trainees, made officers more responsive to the material, initiated more group work and later led to more problem-based learning, Saltsman continued.

“We are not creating robots,” Saltsman continued. “We are creating problem solvers and critical thinkers. And that is really how we resolve issues in our own communities. It’s not about expecting somebody to always give you the answer. Many times when you are out there and you’re the only officer working, you have to decide for yourself how you are going to solve the problem.

“We are not creating robots,” Saltsman continued. “We are creating problem solvers and critical thinkers. And that is really how we resolve issues in our own communities. It’s not about expecting somebody to always give you the answer, but about finding out your resources. We have had a lot of recruits come back and tell us that now they understand how important it is to keep the community involved or make sure we are addressing the right problems.”

Move to Facilitation-style Training Encourages Adult Learning

/ Kelly Foreman, Public Information Officer
Even after a decade of law enforcement adherence to the Peace Officer Professional Standards, there still are nearly 50 percent of law enforcement officers in Kentucky who were grandfathered in and were not required to meet the standards required in the POPS Act of 1998. However, the large leaps made in the professionalism of Kentucky’s law enforcement community as a result of POPS have by no means been hindered by these officers. Instead, many have taken every opportunity to meet and exceed the ever-rising bar of professionalism set by the quality officers who have entered the career field in the past 10 years.

“It’s not that we, as officers prior to the POPS Act, weren’t qualified and professional, but the implementation of standards encouraged us to continue to better ourselves through education and training,” said Daviess County Sheriff Keith Cain. “Today we are successful, first-class leaders of agencies throughout the commonwealth.”

However, there also were officers who wanted to set an example in a different way after POPS was implemented. There were numerous officers across the commonwealth who, though grandfathered in under the new Act, chose to attend the then-16-week basic training academy and receive their POPS certification.

Richmond Police Officer Stephen Parker understood the dangers of having untrained officers on patrol when he served as an auxiliary officer with Prestonsburg in the early 1990s.

“One year after getting on auxiliary with the city, they allowed us to patrol by ourselves,” he said. “We could get in an officer’s car who was off duty and we would answer calls and do the whole kit and caboodle. Knowing what I know now, that is just not a good idea.”

Parker chose to come through DOCJT’s 16-week academy in 2003, shortly after he officially joined the Prestonsburg Police Department.

Leadership Moves to the Forefront

In 2003 the Department of Criminal Justice Training created the Kentucky Leadership Institute to provide opportunities for a lifetime of progression of learning, growing and advancement. The KLI creates a hierarchy of courses specifically designed for each step in a peace officer’s law enforcement career to assist in developing the leadership and supervisory skills necessary to be an effective leader.

Included in this hierarchy are APS, CJED, Situational Leadership and the School of Strategic Leadership.

Since their respective implementations, nearly 1,300 individuals have graduated from these courses and approximately 1,025 or 80 percent of them are officers who were grandfathered in under the POPS Act.

“These numbers show that the experienced officers in the field before POPS are motivated to set an example in educational discipline, training advancement and proven leadership strategies,” said DOCJT Commissioner John Bizzack. “Their continued leadership training allows them to effectively lead the new generation of high-quality officers entering the law enforcement field.”

“Officers across the commonwealth are seeking out the best training and tools necessary to provide the best-quality service to their communities,” Cain concluded. “Professional, quality service should be the bottom-line goal of each officer in Kentucky, regardless of whether his or her tenure of service to the community began before or after the POPS Act.”

Abbie Darst, Program Coordinator
Kentucky has not been immune to the economic downturns seen across the nation in recent years. But neither have Kentucky’s officers and their families.

“There are just some things that cannot be, or should not be, affected by financial hard times and one is emergency services,” said Darrell Pickett, a retired police officer turned mayor of Glasgow. “The lives of too many people depend on first responders. Police officers carry big responsibilities on their shoulders with the decisions they make. We need the most educated, well-trained person with a desire to serve wearing a badge.”

The Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation and Program Fund, also known as KLEFPF, was launched in 1972 by the Kentucky General Assembly as a restricted fund with the goals of upgrading compensation for the state’s law enforcement officers and implementing new education and training standards.

Since its inception, KLEFPF has been funded by a 1.5 percent fee on all casualty insurance premiums for at-risk property such as automobiles, homes or businesses. The rate never has changed, although the demand for the fund’s revenue has increased by more than 29 times its original budget.

KLEFPF provides an annual $3,100 stipend representing proficiency pay to 8,133 POPS-certified Kentucky officers — an amount that has not changed in eight years, despite the rising cost of living. In essence, officers earn the proficiency pay by attending a minimum of a week-long career development class annually to upgrade their knowledge and skills in specific areas of policing and maintain their Kentucky police license.

“Over the past 20 years, more than $91 million has been diverted from KLEFPF to the General Fund,” DOCJT Commissioner John Bizzack said. “Law allows the legislature and the administration to use these kinds of funds to balance the budget. However, some of those funds should be left to serve the original intent of the legislation, raising proficiency pay to officers who have successfully gone through the academy and completed their 40 hours of annual training bringing into KLEFPF a group of officers who are required by law to do all the training that other officers do, but are completely left out of mon...”
have not had certification as a peace officer permanently revoked in another state

etary rewards and upgrade DOCJT training capabilities.

'A real disconnect'

"Law enforcement has become a job that is not just carrying a gun and wearing a badge," explained Robin Cooper, former Paintsville mayor and Kentucky Law Enforcement Foundation chairman. "It is so much more with all the resources, to provide them with the standards, to provide them with the knowledge and the training - it is absolutely essential for their well being and safety," said Daviess County Sheriff Keith Cain. "I think we need to bear in mind what that [LEPPF] funding is for: it is proficiency pay for those standards.

The call to law enforcement is unique, and those willing to serve daily face trials most Kentucky citizens would like to pretend do not exist in their own communities. Yet despite these challenges, these officers work sometimes for little more than minimum wage.

"It takes an awful lot of money to hire somebody, pay their salary, send them to the academy, get them equipped and get them on the road ready to be a police officer," said DOCJT Deputy Commissioner Herb Bowling. "And [the officers] get out there and find out that they can't survive financially. I think once they get into it, most of them really would like to stay. But if it comes down to being a police officer or feeding your family, you are going to feed your family."

In light of these responsibilities, former Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Dan Cherry said he sees a disconnect between what citizens expect from law enforcement and how they are compensated.

"I think about it like a citizen - there are all these competing needs," he said.

"But if you don't feel safe in your community, nothing else matters. We owe this law enforcement community allot for giving us that peace of mind, for ourselves and for our children who are growing up in that environment."

KLEPPF also serves as a means to retain our most highly-trained and professional officers who would seek employment in other states, which offer much higher salaries.

"How do I retain the officers that I have without having to throw something out on the road?" asked Daviess County Sheriff Keith Cain. "Are we going to pay them, but the state is supporting them in their endeavors and their jobs to protect the people of the commonwealth?" asked Georgetown Police Chief Greg Reeves.

Same job, no incentive

Law enforcement personnel across the state hope to see an increase in the annual $3,100 stipend. Commissioner Bob Foster of the Attorney General's Office said, "We owe it to the officers to provide them with the standards, to provide them with the resources, to provide them with the knowledge and the training - it is absolutely essential for their well being and safety."

"We are public servants, and the community - the public - deserves to get the same qualified service regardless of what agency responds."

"We have not had certification as a peace officer permanently revoked in another state, indeed I think people have not had certification as a peace officer permanently revoked in another state."

10th Anniversary of POPS
POPS requires that applicants:

- have a background investigation
- submit fingerprints for a criminal background check

In 1966, legislation was sponsored in the Kentucky General Assembly to create mandatory training for peace officers. It only passed when the training was re-written as voluntary. In 1972, the council implemented legislation requiring an incentive program for officers who attended training: 15 percent of an officer’s salary. In 1982, that stipend was fixed at $2,500. Sporadically, the stipend grew to a standardized $3,100, where it has remained stagnant since 2001.

The duties of KLEC have expanded since its inception. By law, the council prescribes standards for training for all Kentucky law enforcement academies so that peace officers can retain their eligibility to participate in the KLEFPF fund. It also prescribes minimum qualifications for law enforcement instructors, prescribes minimum standards for attendance and expulsion conditions, inspects and evaluates training schools, monitors KLEFPF and administers the POPS pre-employment process for all law enforcement applicants.

Kentucky law states that the governor will appoint 11 of the 20 KLEC members to four-year terms. Those appointed must include one city manager or mayor, three sheriffs, five police chiefs, a U.S. Attorney or his designee, and one citizen. Professional law enforcement organizations fill the other seats on the council, such as Kentucky’s attorney general, the Kentucky State Police commissioner, Southern Police Institute director; one member of the Kentucky Bar Association, the dean of Eastern Kentucky University’s College of Justice & Public Safety; and the presidents of the Fraternal Order of Police, Kentucky Peace Officers’ Association, Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police and Kentucky Sheriffs’ Association.

KLEC STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS

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Melissa Beck, administrative section supervisor
Joe Bozzi
Kathy Aduile
Shaheena Bibbing
Elizabeth Minton

Testing Services Section
Pam Shaw, administrative section supervisor
Rick Bastin
Mike Beck
Gary Davis
Don Nicholson
Jerry Ball

KLEC executive committee
Sheriff Keith Cain – Daviess County, chair
Mayor Randall Pickett – Glasgow, vice-chair
Chief Phil Ward – Lexington, Certification Committee chair

Dean Allen Ault – Eastern Kentucky University, Curriculum Committee chair
Lt. Col. Leslie Gannon – Kentucky State Police, Peace Officers Professional Standards chair

Other Board Members:
Judge-Executive Carolyn Belcher, Bath County
Sheriff Chris Eaton, Barren County
Commissioner Robert Foster, of the Kentucky Bureau of Investigation Office of the Attorney General
Chief Wayne Hall, University of Louisville Department of Public Safety
Law Enforcement Coordinator Gary Howard, for the U.S. Attorneys Office for the Western District of Kentucky
Director Tom Hughes, JD, Ph.D., Southern Police Institute
Commander Alan Martin, Kentucky State Police – Investigative Support Section
Luke Morgan, Lexington attorney
Chief Michael Ormerod, Prestonsburg Police Department
Chief Robert Ratliff, Ashland Police Department
Chief Greg Reeves, Georgetown Police Department
Michael "Spike" Jones, current FOP president, will assume KLEC position in February 2010
Martin Scott, Fraternal Order of Police past president
Sheriff Glenn Sissors, Overberey Police Department
Sheriff Steve Sparrow, Oldham County
Sheriff Charlie Williams, Hardin County

POPS requires that applicants:

- have a background investigation
- submit fingerprints for a criminal background check

created in 1966 by then-Gov. Edward Breathitt, the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council oversees virtually every aspect of POPS training and KLEFPF management for the entire state.

10th Anniversary of POPS
KLEC STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS
Elizabeth Thomas, Public Information Officer

KLEC: POPS Training and KLEFPF Management
In August 2009, a survey was taken of virtually all Kentucky chiefs and sheriffs and a representative sample of law enforcement officers to review the successes and trials of 10 years of Peace Officer Professional Standards. The survey results are shown via graphs throughout this publication.

POPS requires that applicants:
- be interviewed by their potential employing agency’s executive or designee.
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