

A Who's Who of Kenton County Elected Officials

Before you head to the polls on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, we thought you should have some information about current officeholders, and what the duties of the office are!

Counties, such as Kenton, serve as the primary level of local government, with authority derived from the Kentucky Constitution and laws enacted by the Kentucky General Assembly. All Kentuckians live in a county. As an extension of state government, counties provide essential services to residents such as building and maintaining infrastructure, law enforcement, public safety, elections, judicial functions, recordkeeping and more.

The **County Fiscal Court** carries out legislative and executive functions for Kentucky county governments. Despite 'court' being in the name, a fiscal court is not a judicial body and does not hear criminal or civil cases.

The fiscal court is responsible for financial and administrative oversight of county government, ensuring taxpayer funding is effectively allocated, county infrastructure is maintained, and services are delivered citizens.

Major county functions:

- Counties own and maintain roughly 40,000 road miles in Kentucky, accounting for half of all road miles in the state.
- Counties own and maintain 5,051 bridges, which is 35% of all bridges in Kentucky.
- Counties keep their communities safe by allocating funding for dispatch centers, public safety personnel, emergency management and jails.
- Counties provide resources for parks, recreation, senior citizen centers and other quality-of-life facilities and programs.
- Counties foster economic development through infrastructure investment, workforce development and business attraction/retention.

Duties of Kenton County elected officials:



County Judge/Executives (KRIS KNOCHELMANN) have a 4-year term and leads the fiscal court and is the county's chief executive. The judge/executive develops the county budget, oversees the implementation of county policies and represents county interests at the state and federal levels.



Commissioners (JON DRAUD, JOE NIENABER, BETH SEWELL) have a 4-year term and are the elected representatives serving on the county fiscal court. They approve the county budget, pass ordinances and regulations and adopt resolutions regarding county government operations. Fourteen counties have commissioners (Kenton being 1 of the 14), which are elected from the county at large, via 3 districts.



County Clerks (GABRIELLE "GABE" SUMME) have a 4-year term and are responsible for a variety of services and record-keeping duties related to elections, property records, vehicles and more. This office:

- Oversees elections for local, statewide and federal races. They manage voter rolls, coordinate the operation of polling places and ensure that elections are accurate and secure.
- Is the official custodian of deeds, mortgages and land records.
- Issues marriage licenses.
- Manages registration, issues license plates and processes title transfers for motor vehicles and boats.



Sheriffs (CHARLES "CHUCK" KORZENBORN, retired 12.31.25, JUDE HEHMAN appointed until 12.31.26) have a 4-year term and they and their deputies are trained law enforcement officers with a variety of public safety and administrative responsibilities. This office:

- Investigates criminal activity, enforce traffic laws, responds to emergencies and calls for service, and has arrest powers. Provides security at county judicial centers, serves court summonses and other legal documents, and transports inmates from jail to the courthouse for court proceedings.
- Sends property tax bills and collects payments.
- Serves on county board of elections and assists with Election Day operations.



Jailers (MARC FIELDS) have a 4-year term and manage the county jail and are responsible for the custody, care and transportation of inmates. This office:

- Oversees the custody of all individuals who are arrested in the county.
- Ensures inmates are appropriately housed, supervised and have access to medical care.
- Transports inmates to and from court and other facilities.
- Manages inmate rehabilitation and work programs.



Coroners (AMBER CONSTANTINO) have a 4-year term and are responsible for investigating deaths that occur in their county. This office:

- Responds to the scene of fatal incidents such as accidents, vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides and natural disasters.
- Determines the cause and manner of death.
- Identifies the deceased and notifies their next of kin.
- Issues death certificates.



County Attorneys (STACY TAPKE) have a 4-year term and represent the county government in legal matters, serving as both counsel and prosecutor over certain types of cases. This office:

- Prosecutes misdemeanor offenses and traffic-related offenses.
- Presents evidence in felony cases during the preliminary hearing to determine if the case should be sent to a grand jury.
- Represents the Commonwealth of Kentucky in juvenile proceedings, such as cases involving delinquency or neglect.
- Provides legal guidance to fiscal courts, represent the government in civil cases against the county, and review contracts, ordinances and other legal documents.
- Administers the child support enforcement program.



Commonwealth's Attorneys (ROB SANDERS) have a 6-year term and represent the Commonwealth of Kentucky in prosecuting felony cases for a judicial circuit. This office:

- Prosecutes felony criminal cases such as murder, assault, robbery and other serious offenses.
- Presents evidence to a grand jury.
- Works with law enforcement to gather evidence, consult witnesses and prepare cases for trial.
- Supports and seeks justice for crime victims.



Circuit Court Clerks (JOHN MIDDLETON) have a 6-year term and manage court records and provide administrative oversight of District Court, Circuit Court and Family Court in their county. This office:

- Maintains all court records for District Court, Circuit Court and Family Court including criminal and civil cases, traffic violations, divorce decrees and wills.
- Collects court-related fees and fines.
- Oversees the selection and management of jury pools for trials.



Property Valuation Administrators (DARLENE PLUMMER) have a 4-year term and assess the fair market value of all property in the county, which directly affects property tax revenues use to fund local governments, schools and public services. This office:

- Determines the fair market value of all real estate and tangible personal property such as homes, businesses, land, equipment and vehicles.
- Maintains property records including ownership information, sales history and property characteristics.
- Processes property tax exemptions such as the homestead exemption for seniors and people who are disabled.

Magistrates (MARY LOU BLOUNT, STEPHEN J. HOFFMAN, KATHERINE SHUMATE) have a 4-year term. In counties with a county commissioner form of fiscal court, magistrates' few remaining duties include the solemnization of marriages and the acceptance of applications for notaries public. Justices of the peace or magistrates may perform marriages if so authorized by the county judge/executive or the governor.

Constables (MICHAEL MOFFITT, PAUL WOODARD, DON CATCHEN) have a 4-year term and are peace officers and may execute summonses, subpoenas, attachments, notices, rules, and orders of the court in all criminal, penal, and civil cases and may serve warrants where specifically authorized by statute.

County Surveyors (JAMES SHUMATE) have a 4-year term. The primary duty of the surveyor is making land surveys and determining boundary lines and corners, when ordered to do so by the courts or upon the request of individual landowners.

OTHER POSITIONS ON A BALLOT THAT ARE ELECTED:

Justice of the Supreme Court, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Circuit & District Judge

Soil & Water Conservation District

School Boards

Mayors & City Commissioners/Council members

More specific & detailed information may be found online at:

<https://legislature.ky.gov/LRC/Publications/Informational%20Bulletins/ib114.pdf>