

The Kentucky Drug Recognition Expert Program

Application Information



What is a DRE?

The Drug Evaluation and Classification Program is a traffic safety program that focuses on the detection, apprehension, and adjudication of drug-impaired drivers. A Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) is a law enforcement officer that is highly trained to recognize impairment of drivers under the influence of drugs other than or in addition to alcohol.

DRE School Training Overview

The DRE program is a federally funded program through the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety. The training and the expenses associated with the DRE Program will be paid for completely and there will be no cost to the agency/department. The only cost to the agency is for the candidate's hourly wages during the training.

Phase I: Drug Recognition Expert Pre-School (16 Hours)

Candidates are selected to attend a 2-day intensive course designed to evaluate their ability to become a highly trained professional in drug impaired-driving detection. The candidate will be required to demonstrate SFST proficiency with strict compliance and pass a written exam with an 80% or better before continuing to Phase II.

Phase II: Drug Recognition Expert DRE School (56 Hours)

Candidates will receive detailed instruction in the techniques of drug influence evaluation examinations as well as in physiology, the effect of drugs, and legal considerations. Upon completion of this phase of training, the candidate must pass a written exam with an 80% or better before proceeding to phase III.

Phase III: Drug Recognition Expert Field Certification (40-60 Hours)

During phase III (field certifications) the candidate must conduct twelve (12) evaluations. Each candidate, whether serving as an evaluator, observer, or recorder, shall independently identify the category(s) of drugs affecting the subject to a DRE Instructor. The candidate must maintain a 75% toxicological confirmation rate and complete a comprehensive final knowledge examination.

How It Works

The two weeks of classroom training will be at no cost to the candidate for lodging and class materials. Candidates initially must pay for meals but will be reimbursed at the end of the 2 weeks classroom training at the state per-diem rate (\$36.00 per day) unless the agency chooses to provide funds for meals ahead of time. Lodging will be covered at the time and paid for by DRE Program grant funds. (Phase I and II)

The third week of training will be out of state (Florida). Lodging, airfare, and class materials will be covered at the time and paid for by DRE Program grant funds. Again, candidates initially must pay for meals, baggage and airport parking fees but will be reimburse at the end of the field certification week at the state rate of per-diem (\$44.00 per day). Airport parking and baggage fees will also be reimbursed at 100% of their cost.

The DRE Program can reimburse the agency directly for meals but will need to contact the DRE State Coordinator to arrange payment to go directly to the agency. The reimbursement arrangements are contracted between the candidate and the Kentucky Association of Chiefs. Reimbursement payment is received within 30 days after Phase I and II and returning from field certifications (Phase III). As a reminder the only cost to the agency is for the candidate's hourly wages during the training.

Common Questions:

Do I need to bring any equipment?

You will need a laptop with Microsoft Word for field certification (phase III) to type the narrative reports. You will be given all the other DRE equipment at no cost.

Is this a Kentucky State Police or Department of Criminal Justice Training Program?

No, this program is administrated by the IACP/NHTSA and has members from many different departments across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. **DRE School is approved training through Kentucky Law Enforcement Council for 72 hours.**

How do I apply?

Complete the Drug Recognition Expert School Selection Application. (see below)

Upcoming DRE School Training Dates:

March 16 – 26, 2026	Frankfort, KY	April 6 - 12, 2026	Field Certifications (Florida)
October 12 - 22, 2026	Frankfort, KY	November 3 - 9, 2026	Field Certifications (Florida)

Requirements to apply.

Kentucky will require the DRE applicants to meet all the following requirements:

1. Be a paid law enforcement officer, at least part time.
2. Certified as a peace officer, State Trooper or Deputy as defined by Kentucky Revised Statute.
3. Have a minimum of two (2) years of law enforcement experience. Those not having 2 years of law enforcement experience may be considered for DRE Training on a case-by-case basis.
4. Be in "good standing" with their agency.
5. Not currently on probationary status (new hire) with their agency.
6. Assigned to patrol and/or traffic enforcement duties. Those not assigned to patrol or traffic duties may be considered for DRE training on a case-by-case basis.
7. Successfully completed the IACP/NHTSA approved Standard Field Sobriety Testing Training (SFST).
8. Successfully completed the IACP/NHTSA approved ARIDE Training.
9. Must have experience and knowledge of Kentucky's DUI laws and arrest procedures.
10. Must submit two (2) adjudicated DUI reports; (When submitting reports only the narrative is needed, please redact all SSN information).
11. Must submit the approval of their Commanding Officer or designee.
12. Must submit a recommendation letter from the local County Attorney or assistant.

** This training is federally funded and provided for the benefit of public sector law enforcement, prosecutors, and toxicologists. Therefore, individuals who could benefit from their private part-time work with the training are ineligible e.g., a private practice defense attorney is ineligible. **

Additional questions contact DRE State Coordinator Rob Warfel at robert.warfel@ky.gov
502-330-6216



Drug Recognition Expert School Selection Application 2025-2026

PERSONAL INFORMATION

LAST NAME:	<input type="text"/>		FIRST NAME:	<input type="text"/>	
AGENCY	<input type="text"/>				
AGENCY ADDRESS:	<input type="text"/>				
CITY:	<input type="text"/>		COUNTY	<input type="text"/>	
STATE:	<input type="text"/>	ZIP CODE:	<input type="text"/>		
EMAIL:	<input type="text"/>				
WORK PHONE	<input type="text"/>		CELL PHONE:	<input type="text"/>	
LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE	<input type="text"/>		HIRE DATE	<input type="text"/>	

INFORMATION

CURRENT ASSIGNMENT	<input type="text"/>		
EDUCATION:	<input type="text"/>		
EMT Y/N	<input type="text"/>		
KLEC INSTRUCTOR Y/N	<input type="text"/>	IF YES ID #	<input type="text"/>
DUI ARRESTS IN LAST 12 MONTHS	<input type="text"/>		
PROSECUTOR RECOMMENDATION EMAIL	<input type="text"/>		

ARIDE TRAINING DATE

LOCATION

COURT TESTIMONY
EXPERIENCE

DRE OFFICER
REFERENCE

RELATED
EXPERIENCE AND
SPECIAL SKILLS

WHAT DRE SCHOOL
DO YOU WANT TO
ATTEND

AGENCY HEAD/
DESIGNEE NAME AND
RANK

EMAIL

APPROVAL FROM
AGENCY HEAD/
DESIGNEE

APPROVED

I solemnly affirm that the information contained in this application is true and accurate. I will comply fully with all requirements set forth for certification as a Drug Recognition Expert.

APPLICANT NAME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I AFFIRM

*****Submit completed application and attachments to robert.warfel@ky.gov