



Auditor of Public Accounts
Mike Harmon

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**Auditor Mike Harmon Releases Data Bulletin of County
Attorney Traffic Safety Programs**

*Report is first Data Bulletin released by Auditor's office, which seeks to inform public about
how public funds are being used by state and local officials*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (August 28, 2018) – Approximately \$3.53 million. That's the estimation made by Auditor Mike Harmon's office of the minimum amount of money generated in Fiscal Year 2017 by Traffic Safety (CATS) Programs conducted by county attorneys across Kentucky for the operation of their offices. That information is part of the first data bulletin conducted and released today by Auditor Harmon's office.

"This is not an audit, but simply a way for my office to provide information that would be of interest to taxpayers, which in this case is money being collected by county attorneys through their local traffic programs," said Auditor Harmon. "This data bulletin is the first my office will be releasing, and we plan to periodically release more of these reports as a new way to keep the public informed on how funds are being used by their government."

As of Fiscal Year 2017, the Auditor's office learned that 92 of Kentucky's 120 county attorneys operate some type of traffic school authorized by the CATS program. County attorneys were given the authority to operate traffic schools through CATS by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2012, with the majority of the total proceeds being designated to pay for operating costs of county attorney offices. The average county attorney fee charged to enroll in local traffic schools is a little over \$95. The lowest county attorney fee is \$0 in Barren County, while the highest amount is \$137 in Trigg County.

According to the Prosecutors Advisory Council (PAC), which compiles information on the CATS program based on data submitted by county attorneys, the ten counties that generated the most total revenue, and the estimated county attorney revenue in parenthesis, from their traffic schools in Fiscal Year 2017 were:

1. Jefferson County-\$814,285 (\$667,660)
2. Campbell County-\$251,440 (\$206,540)
3. Oldham County-\$222,430 (\$179,655)
4. Laurel County-\$209,550 (\$174,625)
5. Boone County-\$204,120 (\$167,670)
6. Hardin County-\$130,620 (\$107,295)
7. Fayette County-\$124,800 (\$105,300)
8. McCracken County-\$118,040 (\$95,340)
9. Kenton County-\$116,760 (\$95,910)
10. Daviess County-\$105,560 (\$87,360)

The \$3.53 million Auditor Harmon's office estimated went to county attorneys equates to around 65 percent of the total estimated \$5.4 million generated by local traffic schools in Fiscal Year 2017. That averages out to around \$38,850 in collected fees to the 92 county attorneys through CATS. Per statute, the other 35 percent goes to the Finance and Administration Cabinet and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for specified purposes.

According to Auditor Harmon's data bulletin, the Finance and Administration Cabinet (FAC) received more than \$1.02 million in Fiscal Year 2017. Those funds, which come from a \$30 fee charged to traffic school participants, were distributed by FAC to county governments, sheriffs, county treasurers, state agencies, the Spinal Cord and Head Injury Trust Fund, the Traumatic Brain Injury Trust Fund, and the Crime Victims Compensation Fund.

The other portion of funds collected, nearly \$844,000, went to AOC to recruit and retain Deputy Circuit Court Clerks throughout the Commonwealth. These funds come from a \$25 fee charged to each person who enrolls in a county attorney run traffic safety diversion program.

"While the Auditor's office has the legal authority to conduct audits of all local officials in the Commonwealth, county attorneys are not required by statute to have annual audits. If the General Assembly wanted to require those audits, our office would need additional funding and staff to perform the work," said Auditor Harmon. "In the absence of annual audits, this data bulletin is a way of sharing information with both the public and policymakers about one aspect of county attorneys' funding."

Auditor Harmon urges Kentuckians if they have information or concerns about their local officials, to contact his office via their TIPS line at 1-800 KY-ALERT, or submit allegations to APA's Digital SAFE-house at auditor.ky.gov.

The entire data bulletin, “An Examination of Certain Data of the County Attorney Traffic Safety Programs,” is available for review on the [auditor’s website](#).

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