

Kentucky Birth and Death Records

Birth Records:

Counties: *varies by county
1852 – 1862
1874 – 1878
1892 – 1910

Cities:
Covington 1896 – 1910
Lexington None
Louisville 1898 – 1910
Newport 1905 – 1911

Office of Vital Statistics
1911 – Present
Delayed Births (1850 – 1911)
Contact: (502) 564-4212

Death Records:

Counties: *varies by county
1852 – 1862
1874 – 1878
1891 – 1910
1911 – 1965

Cities:
Covington 1881 – 1915
Lexington 1894 – 1910
Louisville 1866 – 1910
Newport 1884 – 1928

Office of Vital Statistics
1966 – Present
Contact: (502) 564-4212

Background

No birth or death records were created by the state prior to 1852. The first legislation requiring the registration of births, marriages, and deaths was passed in 1852. Registration of vital events was assigned to the Auditor's Office whose tax assessors were to record reports of those events submitted to them by clergy, midwives, or surgeons who had been in attendance, as well as information gathered from each head of the household. Compliance with the law was minimal, and often proved incomplete or inaccurate in the details reported. The law was repealed in 1862 and was not revisited until 1874. Records were kept intermittently through 1878, and a few counties kept scattered records between 1891 – 1910. The Office of Vital Statistics was created in 1911 along with the modern collection of vital records by the state.

Access

Records are primarily lists of events, or registries of births or deaths of a given county. They are not "certificates" as we would think of them in a modern sense. Lists are arranged by County. No

statewide index exists for records prior to 1911. They are kept on microfilm and available for use in the KDLA Research Room. For remote access, or to place an order for records from this collection refer to our website at kdla.ky.gov.

Other Sources

Consider any of the following institutions for more information when researching Birth and Death Records in Kentucky.

- **Kentucky Historical Society:** resources include printed biographies and family histories, access to unique genealogical materials including Bible records, surname collections, and cemetery and church records. *Contact: (502) 564-1792*
- **Regional Historical and Genealogical Groups:** valuable organizations for their familiarity with local history. Can find collections or records of local families, churches, or other institutions that can facilitate discovery of genealogical information.
- **Local Library:** often include a reference or special collection of local history or interest. Knowledgeable staff can direct research inquiries or lead to discoveries in local newspapers or records preserved as part of their collections.
- **Office of Vital Statistics:** Founded in 1911, the Office of Vital Statistics maintains records of birth and death in Kentucky from 1911 to present. They also have some records that predate 1911 in the form of delayed births. *Contact: (502) 564-4212*