

INFORMATION & GUIDELINES
for
CHURCHES SEEKING AFFILIATION
with the
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

“The Kentucky Baptist Convention: Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ”

Developed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention
Committee on Credentials Study Group, April 1999
Louisville, Kentucky

Executive Office
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A personal word to church leaders ...

... from the Office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, KBC

We are pleased you and your congregation have decided to join Kentucky Baptists ON MISSION. Our state convention and fellowship of cooperating churches have discovered firsthand the blessings of serving together, multiplying our resources, and accomplishing with God those things we could never do separately. As you proceed through these guidelines, I pray you shall sense the desire of Kentucky Baptists to know you better and to help you understand what it means to be affiliated with the cooperating Kentucky Baptist churches across the state. Our Committee on Credentials has prepared this packet to get you started. I hope you can soon be a part of us.

Todd Gray, Executive Director-Treasurer

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SHARED PURPOSES AND GOALS
The Kentucky Baptist Convention
and its
Affiliated Cooperating Churches

This body (convention) consists of (1) “Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention ... and sympathetic with its purposes and work” who are “understood by the Convention to be local congregations of scripturally-baptized believers in general agreement with any of the historic Baptist confessions of faith (By way of example, churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior would be deemed not to be in cooperation with the Convention.) And (2) Has been a bona fide contributor through the Cooperative Program during the fiscal year preceding. (Article IV)

This body. . . “shall serve and assist the churches in their sovereign capacity by the providing of resources and the facilitating of cooperation so that both the Body and the churches may fulfill the Great Commission,” Matthew 28:18-20. (Article II)

The convention recognizes that the cooperation is voluntary and the convention “has no jurisdiction over the local churches or district associations and shall exercise no authority over them.” (Article VI)

PURPOSES AND WORK

The Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) is a partnership of Baptist congregations, Baptist associations, and convention staff who cooperate; share resources and energy; and engage in state, national, and international mission, and ministry endeavors as they collectively discern God’s leading.

The convention staff has as its vision statement “The Kentucky Baptist Convention by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ.” The churches provide resources for mission and ministry beyond the local congregation through a funding channel known as the Cooperative Program. Financial contributions to the KBC through the Cooperative Program provide significant support for the following:

- in-state missions and congregational development; *
- a Bible college and a residential school (grades 6-12).
- a state network of children’s and family services.
- a state Baptist online newspaper.
- a women’s mission support organization.
- a Baptist foundation that manages funds invested for Baptist causes, institutions, and Baptist churches.
- two conference centers/camps.
- partnerships with other states and foreign countries.
- support for and participation in national and world-wide missions.

This cooperation assures each church a participation in crucial mission and ministry far beyond what individual churches could do alone.

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

The convention is a strong fellowship and partnership of congregations. A primary focus of the Kentucky Baptist Convention is to enhance the development of these churches toward effective evangelism and discipleship within the members. The convention offices and staff provide resources, training, consultation, coordination of statewide evangelism and mission projects, and ministry opportunities to assist churches in their development as they follow their God-given mission.

The convention is a depository and distributor of funds given by the churches to support kingdom growth beyond the local church. A mission board is elected annually by the church messengers to guide the distribution of these funds.

The details of these services, mission, and ministries are reported in an annual magazine distributed each November during the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AS PARTNER

The affiliation of a Kentucky Baptist church with the Kentucky Baptist Convention is an entirely voluntary arrangement. As noted earlier, the convention “has no jurisdiction over the local church ... and shall exercise no authority over them.”

Affiliated cooperating churches are encouraged to enthusiastically engage in the opportunities to participate with other churches through the convention’s channels in evangelistic and mission endeavors, whether locally, statewide, or globally.

These partnering local churches are encouraged to utilize the resources and support services of the convention staff in ways that nourish and fulfill the needs and goals of the local congregation as they discern God’s leadership.

Affiliated churches are expected to provide financial support to the convention's work with gifts through the KBC Cooperative Program plan and special offerings. Information about the distribution of these funds is available for use in the churches.

Affiliated churches are also expected to report annually to the convention through the Annual Church Profile (ACP) to measure progress and aid in planning and evaluation.

Affiliated KBC churches usually affirm the following principles, commonly known as “Baptist Distinctives.”

1. The essence of the Christian faith is spiritual, personal, and voluntary.
2. The Scriptures are uniquely inspired, authoritative, and the source and guide for doctrine and practice.
3. Salvation is provided by the grace of God and is available to everyone through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.
4. The church is composed of regenerated believers.
5. Believer’s baptism by immersion, not for salvation, but in obedience and example.
6. Religious liberty, for us and everyone else.
7. Freedom (autonomy) of the local church under the Lordship of Christ.
8. Priesthood of the believer; access to God and ministers to each other.
9. Cooperation with other KBC churches for the purpose of sharing the Good News of Jesus with all peoples wherever they may be in the community, the state, the nation, or the world.
10. The separation of church and state best guarantees liberty of conscience for every citizen.
11. Congregational polity that reflects democratic process.

STATUS OF AFFILIATION OF CONGREGATIONS

Each year during the annual meeting of the state convention, a report shall be made by the Committee on Credentials. The report shall identify newly affiliated churches, churches recognized as being At-Large and in Watchcare, which have made commitments to cooperate and affiliate with Kentucky Baptist Convention. These churches shall be endorsed by the state convention through an affirmative vote of the messengers present.

PARTICIPATION

A cooperating church is entitled to certain defined benefits through its cooperation and financial support. These benefits shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Eligible to send messengers to the state convention's annual meeting.
- (b) Eligible for its church members to be elected to serve as a state convention officer and/or to be elected or appointed to serve as a member or director/trustee of a KBC committee, board, agency, or institution.
- (c) Eligible to be a recipient and beneficiary of the ministries, resources, service, assistance programs and endorsements provided by the agencies and institutions of KBC; and
- (d) Eligible to participate in the ministries, missions, and evangelism efforts of Baptists in Kentucky, the United States, and around the world.

COOPERATION

The following criteria shall be demonstrated by any Baptist church seeking to be considered cooperating and affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

- (a) Theological: The church shall have specified within its adopted Statement of Faith and Practice and/or governing documents, a declaration that the basis for its theology, faith, practice, and polity is the Bible, with the *Baptist Faith and Message*, (or any other declaration of faith which parallels the tenets of our historic Baptist faith) as the theological framework.
- (b) Declaration: The church shall, in a regular business session, by an affirmative vote express its intent and commitment to cooperate and be affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Such action shall be recorded in a written communication to be sent to the executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.
- (c) Financial: The church shall annually make financial contributions through the Cooperative Program.
- (d) Statistical/Informational: The church shall provide an annual church statistical profile demonstrating its statewide cooperation and partnership with other Kentucky Baptist churches.

GUIDELINES FOR MESSENGERS

The membership of this body shall consist of messengers from cooperating affiliated Baptist churches as follows:

- (1) Two messengers from each church having 100 members or less, which is in friendly cooperation with this convention; is sympathetic with its purposes and work; and has during the fiscal year preceding been a bona fide contributor to the convention's work.
- (2) One additional messenger for each such church shall be allowed for each additional 250 members, or for each \$250.00 contributed to the Cooperative Program during the fiscal year preceding the annual meeting, but no churches may be allowed more than ten messengers.
- (3) Messengers' cards will be sent, upon request, to individual churches who meet the above requirements, from the state convention office.
- (4) Ballots will be issued to each messenger at the time one registers.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS for CHURCHES and THEIR LEADERS

1. Who and what is the Kentucky Baptist Convention?

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is a voluntary fellowship of more than 600,000 Baptists and their cooperating churches pulling together service and resources to fulfill our Lord's command to "go ye ... and make disciples."

The KBC is a cooperating group of Baptist churches in Kentucky who work together toward common goals in missions and ministry. Each Kentucky Baptist church is self-governing under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The KBC has no jurisdiction over local churches or associations (local groups of Baptist churches) and exercises no authority over them. Churches elect messengers (not delegates) to the annual convention. The messengers determine the course of many programs, ministries and institutions of the convention and its staff as guided by the KBC Constitution and Bylaws.

When the annual meeting is not in session, the KBC Mission Board provides leadership for the Convention and its staff. Board members are members of Kentucky Baptist churches and serve three-year terms as nominated by their respective associations. Some board members serve at-large.

The KBC Constitution, Article II, affirms our purpose:

"The Body shall serve and assist the churches in their sovereign capacity by the providing of resources and the facilitating of cooperation so that both the Body and the churches may fulfill the Great Commission."

2. What is meant by “cooperating church?”

Again, the KBC Constitution provides insight, Article IV: this fellowship includes “cooperating affiliated Baptist churches” who are (1) “in friendly cooperation with this convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work”... and is “understood by the convention to be local congregations of scripturally-baptized believers in general agreement with any of the historic Baptist confessions of faith (By way of example, churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior would be deemed not to be in cooperation with the Convention.) And (2) has been a bona fide contributor through the Cooperative Program during the fiscal year preceding.”

The KBC Credentials Committee looks for evidence of these characteristics in the application materials presented by the candidate church.

3. If a church is an “affiliated cooperating church”, does it lose autonomy?

No. Kentucky Baptist polity affirms the autonomy of the local church, the autonomy of the local association, and the autonomy of this state convention; none has jurisdiction over the others. Cooperation with and participation in the convention’s work is voluntary. Cooperation is based on mutual goals and shared vision for carrying out the Great Commission.

4. What does it cost the church to become affiliated with the KBC?

First, there are no “dues.” Cooperating churches contribute to the mission and work of the convention primarily through the Cooperative Program as they are led by the Holy Spirit after reviewing the many facets of the convention’s ministries and programs. These funds are used according to annual mission’s goals voted on by church messengers to the KBC annual meeting each November.

Second, congregations and their members volunteer to participate in KBC sponsored mission projects, special ministries, training programs, and fellowship events, which strengthen our witness and discipleship.

5. How long does the church have to wait before becoming affiliated with KBC?

That depends on the status of the candidate church. The Credentials Committee looks for evidence the Baptist church is well-organized; is supported by a faithful core of people to sustain it; has defined its purpose and governance; operates through a congregational church polity; has Baptist purposes which are generally compatible with those of the KBC; has developed a basic program of worship, teaching, witness, and stewardship; and has voted to seek KBC affiliation. Candidate churches should be able to show some level of financial support for the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s work.

Churches are urged to establish friendly relations with the local district association of Kentucky Baptists. Some churches maintain dual alignment with other regional or statewide Baptist associations.

Churches that have not been constituted long enough to establish themselves as described above may need a period of development and could be placed under “watchcare” for a period.

In any year, prior to April 30 and/or August 31, in which a church has reflected a strong candidacy, it can be reviewed by the Credentials Committee in May and/or October, be recommended to the November annual convention, and have messengers seated the first day of the convention.

6. May a church participate in programs and ministries of the KBC while it is seeking affiliation?

Yes. Upon the first financial contribution a candidate church makes to KBC missions and ministries, the church is placed on the convention’s mailing list. KBC materials and information will begin coming to the pastor. The congregation may begin participating in fellowship events and training programs. Members of the congregation may attend the KBC annual meeting but may not register as messengers until the church has become affiliated.

7. How many churches are affiliated through the Kentucky Baptist Convention?

Nearly 2,400 churches are affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

8. How many people belong to Kentucky Baptist churches?

More than 600,000 individuals are members of Kentucky Baptist Convention churches.

9. How is the KBC funded?

The CP budget is approved by the Mission Board on the recommendation of the KBC Business and Finance Committee. The KBC is funded through Cooperative Program gifts and additional gifts from churches which may be restricted for use in Kentucky only.

10. What is the Cooperative Program?

The Cooperative Program is a unified giving program used to support Baptist work in Kentucky, across the nation and throughout the world. In Kentucky, local congregations make special gifts or designate a portion of their budget to be forwarded to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The convention uses a portion of the funds for missions and ministries in Kentucky and sends the remaining portion to the Southern Baptist Convention for the purpose of funding missions and ministries in the United States and around the world.

11. What is a messenger?

A messenger is a member approved by his or her church to participate in the decision-making process at the annual meeting. The messenger has the right to vote on resolutions and the election of officers. The messenger speaks for him or herself; messengers do not have the authority to speak on behalf of their church or bind their church to an agreement.

Each cooperating church with fewer than 100 members is entitled to send two messengers to the annual meeting. One additional messenger is allowed for each additional 250 members or

\$250 contributed annually to the Cooperative Program. Churches may send up to 10 messengers.

12. How is a messenger different than a delegate?

Delegates are chosen to represent the beliefs and wishes of a particular body; messengers are approved to represent their own views.

13. What is an association? What is the relationship between associations and the Kentucky Baptist Convention?

An association is a group of churches, usually in a particular geographic region, that cooperate for the purpose of missions. The Kentucky Baptist Convention has no authority over the associations. Rather, associations may choose to support the ministry and use the resources of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

14. How does the Kentucky Baptist Convention relate to the Southern Baptist Convention?

The Kentucky Baptist Convention has chosen to support the ministry and mission of the Southern Baptist Convention by giving a portion of Cooperative Program gifts to the SBC. As with all Baptist entities, the SBC and the KBC are autonomous.

15. How are decisions made in the Kentucky Baptist Convention? How is the KBC governed?

The Kentucky Baptist Convention technically only exists for one day a year—during the annual meeting in November. It is during the annual meeting that messengers from Kentucky Baptist churches determine the direction of the convention over the course of the coming year.

During the annual meeting, messengers also elect the KBC Mission Board and its officers. One board member per 5,000 resident church members is elected from each association in the state, and one additional member is elected from each of the eight regions. Board members serve three-year terms.

Elected officers include the president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary, and assistant secretary. Officers serve one-year terms.

16. What are resolutions? When are they introduced and voted on?

Resolutions are typically statements on a particular issue or affirmations of an individual or group. They express the opinion of the voting messengers of that year but are not binding on any church. The Committee on Resolutions reviews all properly submitted proposals and then presents committee recommended resolutions for adoption at the annual meeting. Kentucky Baptists submit resolutions in writing to the Committee on Resolutions 30 days prior to the annual meeting.

STEPS PRIOR TO SEEKING KBC AFFILIATION

1. Begin developing programs that will strengthen your congregation, such as regular worship, Bible study, witness, discipleship, and stewardship.
2. If the church is new, the following steps can help with administrative organization.
 - Establish board meetings (include at least: pastor, secretary, treasurer)
 - Apply for the church's federal tax identification-employer identification number (EIN) (<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>)
 - Apply to incorporate the church (<https://www.sos.ky.gov/bus/forms/pages/default.aspx>)
 - Create bank account for the church after receiving the EIN & incorporation.
3. Lead the congregation to develop its statement of faith and purpose. Then develop a constitution and bylaws based on biblical principles or another detailed description of how the church will make its decisions and function as a Baptist congregation. From this process you will be able to elect the church leadership. A declaration of the church's faith may be the Baptist Faith and Message or any other declaration which parallels the tenets of our historic Baptist faith.
4. Begin supporting and contributing to state and national missions through the Cooperative Program or through the KBC operating budget. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Mission Board accounting office receives and acknowledges these contributions and distributes funds to all KBC and SBC mission enterprises. First time contributions should be sent to: Kentucky Baptist Convention, Executive Office, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223-4160. Be sure to designate how the church would like the contribution credited. An SBC ID# will be created for the church after the initial gift. Ongoing contributions can be made by mailing to a secure lockbox at PO Box 950295, Louisville, KY 40295-9900 or online at www.kybaptist.org/aboutcp.
5. Establish the church as a viable congregation by being constituted. Another church may sponsor you or a local Baptist association may help you arrange the official constitution of your church. Depending on the development of your congregation, you may want to seek assistance from either the Church Planting Group (502-489-3419/toll free 866-489-3419), or the Regional Consultant Group (502-489-3338).
6. Seek good relations with an association of Kentucky Baptist churches in your area.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE CHURCH'S APPLICATION FOR AFFILIATION WITH THE KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

1. Apply online at www.kybaptist.org/affiliation or use the forms enclosed with this packet of material entitled "Application for Affiliation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention." This information will provide the Committee on Credentials an overview of the life of your congregation.

2. Please furnish all the information requested. Complete names, addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers are very important. Future contact and mailings will depend on the accuracy and completeness of this information.
3. Good relations with a local association of Kentucky Baptist churches, though not required, is strongly encouraged since so much of our cooperative missions and ministries include close coordination with the local associations.
4. Please email or attach the application and copies of any church approved documents which describe your purpose, rules of governance and bylaws, doctrinal statement, organization, participation in missions and ministries, financial condition and stewardship, and any other information that helps the Committee on Credentials become acquainted with your church.
5. Be sure to submit the application and church information by the **April 30 and/or August 31 deadlines**.
6. The following convention offices and staff are available to assist you:

Kentucky Baptist Convention, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223-4160
Phone: 502/245-4101. Direct numbers are listed below.

Executive Office: 502-489-3373/toll free 866-489-3373

Executive Director-Treasurer: Todd Gray 502-489-3369/tollfree 866-489-3369

Associate Executive Director for Convention Operations: Jim Donnell 502-489-3371/tollfree 866-489-3371

Church Consulting & Revitalization: Steve Rice 502-489-3434/tollfree 866-489-3434

Evangelism: Rob Patterson 502-489-3417/tollfree 866-489-3417

Missions Mobilization: Eric Allen 502-489-3402/toll free 866-489-3402

Church Planting: Andrew Eaton 502-680-0567