

State has received nearly \$3B from tobacco settlement since 1998

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Attorney General Russell Coleman announced on Friday that Kentucky has received \$100,378,901.53 for this year’s Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) payment, meaning the state has now collected \$2.8 billion from the nationwide agreement with cigarette manufacturers since 1998.

agseal
“These funds, nearly \$3 billion, are making a real difference for Kentucky farm families and helping our kids live healthier, more fulfilling lives,” said Coleman. “Growing up working in the tobacco patches of Logan County, I deeply respect farmers’ importance for our commonwealth and its future. For over 20 years, the tobacco settlement has helped strengthen our rural communities.”

In 1998, Kentucky was one of 51 states and territories that reached the MSA with major cigarette manufacturers. The historic agreement resolved state lawsuits against the tobacco companies for Medicaid and other health costs related to smoking. In addition to the annual compensation, the MSA seeks to reduce underage smoking and decrease new smokers. Each state determines how the settlement funds are used.

In Kentucky, half of the funds received from the settlement are allocated for agricultural diversification through grants distributed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. The remaining amount is split evenly between the Early Childhood Development Fund and the Kentucky Health Care Improvement Fund. The General Assembly’s Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee oversees all agricultural grant application decisions and monitors expenditures under the other funds.

Under the settlement terms, participating cigarette manufacturers must make a yearly payment to the states based on an annually adjusted rate per number of cigarettes sold each year. Kentucky will continue to receive payments from participating manufacturers each year they sell cigarettes in the United States.

Assistant Attorneys General Michael Plumley and Andrew Eveslage administer the MSA for the Attorney General’s Office, ensuring that cigarette manufacturers perform their responsibilities, and that Kentucky gets its share of funds under the agreement.

Crisis ready: EKU’s Homeland Security Degree puts preparedness first

Submitted by EKU

RICHMOND, Ky. (April 24, 2025) — When catastrophe hits—whether it’s the devastating flooding in Eastern Kentucky, wildfires raging across California, the global pandemic that reshaped the world, or other unforeseen crises—EKU’s Homeland Security graduates are trained and ready to respond, equipped with the skills to manage emergencies and protect communities when it matters most.

As one of the first programs of its kind in the United States, Eastern Kentucky University’s (EKU) Homeland Security program has established itself as a national leader, equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary for careers focused on protecting and securing communities.

“Our academic programs, such as homeland security, reflect an enduring commitment to serving communities throughout Kentucky,” said EKU President David McFaddin. “Not only were we among the first in the United States to recognize a need for this type of program, but the impact of our program has spread throughout the Commonwealth and beyond as our graduates readily respond to unprecedented disasters.”

EKU’s comprehensive homeland security curriculum is built on three foundational pillars: disaster management, intelligence studies and security operations.

“Our main goal is to provide stu-

dents with knowledge of disaster preparedness. Regardless of where students work in the future, emergency planning will be a necessary skill,” said Lucas Barnes, ’15, homeland security lecturer at EKU.

The program’s distinguished faculty bring extensive field experience, ensuring students receive hands-on instruction in disaster preparedness. During previous flooding, students volunteered to assist with damage assessments.

“These students gained real-world experience and many are now actively employed in emergency management,” said Barnes.

Applied learning opportunities in the program include a field trip to the Kentucky Emergency Management center in Frankfort for an emergency exercise with state officials, mock disaster coordination activities, and a class project where students develop StoryMaps to identify potential hazards to communities and recommend mitigation measures.

EKU’s Homeland Security program also places students in internships with law enforcement agencies, emergency management offices, private security firms and intelligence organizations, where students gain practical experience and often secure jobs for after graduation. Barnes said students have interned with Appalachia HIDTA, Nevada National Security Site, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Indiana State Police, the Lexington Division of Emergency Manage-

ment, the Richmond Police Department and the U.S. Marshal Service.

Homeland Security freshman Tristan Kasper came to EKU from North Carolina specifically for EKU’s Homeland Security program and the department’s commitment to prepare students for careers in the field.

“Throughout my time in the program, I have developed phenomenal relationships with my professors and my peers,” Kasper said. “For the first time in my life, I am excited to be in school and learning. I have found my belonging in the world and my passion in life through my professors’ dedication towards and knowledge of homeland security.”

EKU’s Homeland Security program is preparing Kasper for his future goal of working for a federal agency.

“Pursuing this field will allow me to fulfill my desire to safeguard human life and make the world a better, safer place,” he said.

EKU offers a bachelor’s degree in homeland security, as well as a 3+2 pathway, allowing students to complete a bachelor’s in homeland security and a master’s in safety, security and emergency management in as few as five years. Students may minor or receive certificates in disaster management, intelligence studies, security management or financial technology and cybercrime. The homeland security program is offered on campus and online.

Gov. Beshear: Aegis Sortation to expand Louisville Operation with nearly \$16 million investment, creating 80 quality jobs

Submitted by the
Office of Governor Andy Beshear

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 24, 2025) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear highlighted new and exciting momentum within the state’s manufacturing industry as Aegis Sortation, a leading provider of efficient, high-quality sortation solutions, will locate in a new facility and expand its Louisville operation with a nearly \$16 million investment, creating 80 new Kentucky jobs.

“Kentucky’s manufacturing sector continues to grow and create incredible job opportunities for our communities,” said Gov. Beshear. “This expansion project by Aegis Sortation is just the latest example of a Kentucky company continuing to reinvest in the communities they serve. I am excited to see Aegis continue to grow in the Louisville area.”

In order to keep up with

the increased demand for the company’s products and services, Aegis Sortation will acquire a new, larger location in Louisville, which will serve as the new home for the company’s manufacturing operations. This strategic relocation and expansion will allow the company to better serve its customers and increase efficiency. The \$15.9 million investment will add 80 new jobs to the Louisville area, including engineering design, project management and multitiered manufacturing, warehouse and support positions. The project will allow the company to continue to meet the needs of current and future customers.

“We are honored to be part of this growth initiative in Kentucky,” said Tony Young, founder and CEO of Aegis. “Aegis has been fortunate to double in size the past four years while also doubling the size of its workforce each year. The goal is to keep

pace with the intralogistics and parcel shipping industry needs for automation, which has catapulted since e-commerce demands continue to explode. At Aegis, we focus on developing innovative, disruptive solutions that help the major players in this industry accomplish more with less.”

Founded in 2017, Aegis Sortation has steadily built a reputation as a leading provider of efficient, high-quality sortation solutions for businesses across a variety of industries. The company provides solutions for a comprehensive range of material handling needs; from warehouse and distribution to freight and parcel, e-commerce, postal and beyond. Aegis Sortation aims to consistently deliver innovative, reliable and scalable solutions to its customers and partners.

Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg highlighted that the company is adding to Louisville’s strong distribution and logistics sectors: “We’re thrilled Aegis Sortation continues to invest in Louisville. Known as one of the world’s leading logistics epicenters, Louisville has a long and storied history of facilitating global commerce, as demonstrated by Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport being ranked the No. 6 busiest cargo airport in the world and No. 3 in North America.”

Trevor Pawl, chief execu-

tive officer at Louisville Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), noted the company’s innovative practices: “Aegis Sortation is the exact type of logistics company we like to see grow in Louisville. Aegis is driving innovation within the logistics industry through product design and emerging technologies, producing top-of-the-line sortation and automation solutions for Fortune 500 customers and international logistics giants. Our team at LEDA extends our appreciation and congratulations to the entire Aegis Sortation team, and we look forward to remaining a valuable partner as the company continues to grow.”

Aegis Sortation’s investment and job creation build on the best five-year period for economic growth in state history.

Since the beginning of his administration, Gov. Beshear has announced more than 1,100 private-sector new-location and expansion projects totaling over \$35 billion in announced investments, creating more than 60,500 jobs. This is the highest investment figure secured during the tenure of any governor in the commonwealth’s history and \$14 billion more than the next highest total.

The robust job creation has been accompanied by rising wages across the commonwealth. Since 2022, the average incentivized hourly wage has

topped \$26 in three consecutive years for the first time.

Gov. Beshear has announced some of the largest economic development projects in state history, which have solidified Kentucky as the electric vehicle battery production capital of the United States: Ford Motor Co. and SK On’s transformative \$5.8 billion, 5,000-job BlueOval SK Battery Park in Hardin County; AESC’s \$2 billion, 2,000-job gigafactory project in Warren County; Toyota’s \$1.3 billion investment in Scott County; and Shelbyville Battery Manufacturing’s \$712 million investment, creating 1,572 jobs in Shelby County, among others.

The Governor’s administration also secured the largest General Fund budget surplus and Rainy Day Fund. In 2023, Kentucky recorded over 2 million jobs filled for the first time ever and has stayed above that number ever since.

Kentucky also secured rating increases from major credit rating agencies Fitch Ratings, S&P Global Ratings and Moody’s Investors Service.

Site Selection magazine recently ranked Kentucky in the top five nationally and second in the South Central region for economic development projects per capita in its 2024 Governor’s Cup rankings. Last April, Site Selection placed Kentucky second in the South Central region and in the top 10 nationally in its 2024 Prosperity Cup ranking, which recognizes state-level economic development agencies for their success in landing capital investment projects.

Gov. Beshear also announced a new initiative, called New Kentucky Home, to increase

economic investment, attain and attract talent, and increase tourism across the state.

To encourage investment and job growth in the community, the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA) today preliminarily approved a 10-year incentive agreement with the company under the Kentucky Business Investment program. The performance-based agreement can provide up to \$2.2 million in tax incentives based on the company’s investment of \$15.9 million and annual targets of:

Creation and maintenance of 80 Kentucky-resident, full-time jobs across 10 years; and

Paying an average hourly wage of \$61.84, including benefits, across those jobs.

Additionally, KEDFA approved Aegis for up to \$300,000 in tax incentives through the Kentucky Enterprise Initiative Act (KEIA). KEIA allows approved companies to recoup Kentucky sales and use tax on construction costs, building fixtures, equipment used in research and development and electronic processing.

By meeting its annual targets over the agreement term, the company can be eligible to keep a portion of the new tax revenue it generates. The company may claim eligible incentives against its income tax liability and/or wage assessments.

In addition, Aegis Sortation can receive resources from Kentucky’s workforce service providers. Those include no-cost recruitment and job placement services, reduced-cost customized training and job-training incentives.

For more information on Aegis Sortation, visit aegissortation.com.

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