

State of Arkansas
94th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2023

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1014

By: Representative Watson

By: Senator K. Hammer

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTY CORONERS; TO ALLOW FOR A COUNTY CORONER TO RECEIVE ONLINE TRAINING; TO EXPAND THE NUMBER OF APPROVED MEDICOLEGAL DEATH INVESTIGATION TRAINING COURSES THAT MEET THE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR CORONERS; TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WITH A FELONY CONVICTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO BE A DEPUTY CORONER; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ALLOW ONLINE TRAINING FOR COUNTY CORONERS; TO PROVIDE FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING COURSES FOR COUNTY CORONERS; AND TO PROVIDE THAT A PERSON WITH A FELONY CONVICTION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO BE A DEPUTY CORONER.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-14-1212(a), concerning coroner medicolegal death investigation training and salary adjustment authorization for certified county coroners, is amended to read as follows:

(a) As used in this section, "certified county coroner" means a county coroner who has obtained a certificate of satisfactory participation and completion of medicolegal death investigation training from the Arkansas



Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training under § 14-15-308 or a certificate in medicolegal death investigation from an agency approved by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 14-15-308 is amended to read as follows:
14-15-308. Training and instruction - Eligibility of deputy coroner.

(a) The Division of Law Enforcement Standards and Training, in coordination with the Department of Health, shall establish a training curriculum for medicolegal death investigators, coroners, and deputy coroners in Arkansas that consists of no less than sixteen (16) hours nor more than forty (40) hours of instruction, including without limitation courses on:

- (1) Medicolegal death investigation leading to certification as a medicolegal death investigator;
- (2) Scene investigation;
- (3) Body recovery;
- (4) Safety;
- (5) Statutes and rules;
- (6) Documentation and reporting;
- (7) Communication and interviewing; and
- (8) Proper completion of a death certificate and assignment of cause of death.

(b) The division shall:

(1) Issue a certificate of satisfactory participation and completion to a coroner, deputy coroner, or medicolegal death investigator who completes ~~the~~ an instructional program required under subsection (a) of this section; and

(2)(A) Administer the funds for the payment and reimbursement for materials, speakers, mileage, lodging, meals, the cost of the certificate, and training equipment that are in addition to compensation allowed under §§ 14-14-1203, 14-14-1204, and 14-14-1206.

(B) The division may receive funding for coroner training through grants-in-aid, donations, and the County Coroners Continuing Education Fund.

(c) The division: ~~shall~~

(1) Shall provide death investigation training:

~~(1)(A)~~ Free of charge to a law enforcement officer, a

state death investigator, and an employee of the State Crime Laboratory; and
~~(2)(B)~~ For a fee under a memorandum of understanding between the division and the Arkansas Coroner's Association to coroners and deputy coroners; and

(2) May provide death investigation training remotely through an online program.

(d)(1)(A) Within one (1) year of beginning employment as a deputy coroner, a person employed as a deputy coroner after January 1, 2021, shall complete: ~~the~~

(i) The training required under this section and obtain a certificate under subdivision (b)(1) of this section; or

(ii) A training course in medicolegal death investigation that meets the educational requirements of the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigations and present a certificate in medicolegal death investigation from an agency approved by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigators.

(B) A deputy coroner under subdivision (d)(1)(A) of this section who does not comply with this subsection shall not continue employment or activity as a deputy coroner, including without limitation signing death certificates or assisting in death investigations.

(2) Within one (1) year of the date of employment of a deputy coroner, the coroner shall provide the county judge with the deputy coroner's:

- (A) Name;
- (B) Address;
- (C) Starting date of employment; and
- (D) Copy of the certificate under subdivision (d)(1)(A) of

this section.

(e) A person is not eligible to be a deputy coroner if the person has pleaded guilty or nolo contendere or has been found guilty of a felony even if the felony conviction has been sealed, expunged, or pardoned.

APPROVED: 2/3/23