

Dr. Noelle Hunter is the executive director of Kentucky Office of Highway Safety in June 2016—the first African-American to serve in that role.

Prior to joining the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Hunter was the Director of College Readiness and an instructor of Developmental Reading at Morehead State University. During her decade in higher education, Hunter served as a professor of state and local government, American political institutions, international relations, critical reading, and English composition at Morehead State, Maysville Community & Technical College, West Virginia University, and West Virginia Wesleyan University.

In 2014, Hunter testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on the problem of international parental child abduction. Hunter successfully recovered her daughter from abduction to Mali that same year with support and resources from her home community of Morehead, her native state of Alabama, and from Congress, the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Justice. Hunter co-founded iStand Parent Network Inc. to empower parents to return their children from abduction and currently serves as president of the board of directors.

In 2003, Hunter served as the James E. Webb Fellow for the Smithsonian Institution Office of Policy and Analysis and worked in constituent services for the former Sen. Jay Rockefeller, of West Virginia. Prior to federal service, Hunter was the Walter Rollins Scholar for the West Virginia Legislature Committee on Health and Human Services and committee staff for the subcommittees on Homeland Security and Bioterrorism; and Workforce, Innovation and the New Economy—responsible for identifying threats and contingency plans to protect West Virginia's critical infrastructure.

Hunter worked as a media relations executive for Public Communications, Inc. in Chicago and coordinated learning opportunities for underserved, urban youth from 1995-2000. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism in 1994 and a Masters of Public Administration in 2009 from Ohio University. She earned her Ph.D. in Political Science from West Virginia University in 2007.

Hunter has lived in Kentucky for 12 years and has three daughters, Rachel, Rysa and Muna.