



9-1-2002

Technical Bulletins: City Recorder Certification Update

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Recommended Citation

Norris, Margaret, "Technical Bulletins: City Recorder Certification Update" (2002). *MTAS Publications: Technical Bulletins*.

https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_mtastech/73

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CITY RECORDER CERTIFICATION UPDATE

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Overview

In 1994, Chapter 648 of *Public Acts of 1994* added a law that required municipal clerks and recorders to become certified by completing 100 hours of education. The legislation also required that the certification be maintained by obtaining 18 hours of continuing education every three years. This law can now be found in *Tennessee Code Annotated* 6-54-120.

Who Must Comply?

Any municipality with a population of 1,500 or greater (according to the 1990 or any subsequent federal census) that employs an officer or employee responsible for the duties of a municipal clerk or recorder—taking and preserving minutes, serving as custodian of records, providing and certifying copies, etc.—must have at least one certified person. Of course, a municipality may have more than one certified clerk or recorder. All such employees who were serving when the law went into effect had until July 1, 1998 to become certified. Any clerk or recorder hired after the law went into effect must become certified within four years.

Are There Any Exceptions?

The exceptions are:

- Any clerk or recorder in a municipality of less than 1,500 population;
- Any municipal clerk or recorder who is licensed (and required to maintain the license) to practice law in Tennessee;
- Any appointed city manager or administrator who possesses a Master of Arts degree in public administration.

Also exempt from the initial certification requirement is any person who has served as both a city judge and city recorder for at least 25 years. Notwithstanding these exceptions, any city or town may, by ordinance, require the clerk or recorder to obtain certification, even if it is exempted under the population requirements (fewer than 1,500 residents).

What Does It Take To Become Certified?

To become certified, a person must either obtain a certificate from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) or must complete a minimum of 100 credit hours of applicable education.

What Does It Take To Retain Certification?

Those who are already certified must attend at least 18 hours of continuing education courses every three years.

How Do I Earn The Credit Hours?

- You can receive 25 credit hours toward initial certification if you have an Associate of Arts or Science degree.
- You can receive 50 credit hours toward initial certification if you have a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree. (You may receive the 50 credit hours only one time, even if you hold more than one degree.)
- Attend the Municipal Clerks Institute at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) that is coordinated by the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR). The institute lasts two and one-half days and gives you 17.5 credit hours. Institutes are offered each spring and fall, and scholarships are available when local funding limitations or policies might otherwise prevent participation.
- Attend the Academy for Advanced Education at MTSU that is coordinated by TAMCAR. The Academy is offered each fall in conjunction with the Institute; scholarships are available when local funding limitations or policies might otherwise prevent participation.
- Attend the International Institute of Municipal Clerks annual conference held every year in May.
- Attend City University seminars offered by the University of Tennessee's MTAS, and receive four hours credit per half-day class. A different course is offered each month in locations across the state.
- Attend seminars conducted by the Tennessee Municipal League Risk Management Pool. These courses are typically offered regionally and last four hours.
- Attend the Local Government Leadership Program offered by the University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service (IPS), and receive 12 hours credit for the three-day seminar.
- Attend job related-seminars offered by private organizations. (Credit hours may vary.)
- Complete online self-teaching computer programs approved by the secretary of state. (Credit hours may vary.)

How Do I Apply For Credit Hours?

Whether you are applying for the initial certificate or continuing education credits, you should contact the Division of Business Services for an application. Request form number SS-4507, appropriately titled "Application for Certification of Municipal Clerks and Recorders and Continuing Education Credit." You can reach the division at:
312 Eighth Avenue North
6th Floor, Snodgrass Tower
Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: (615) 741-3699
Fax: (615) 741-7310
E-mail: services@mail.state.tn.us.

For more information, contact your MTAS Municipal Management Consultant or one of the following:

International Institute of Municipal Clerks

8331 Utica Avenue, Suite 200
Rancho Cucamonga, California 91730
Phone: (909) 944-4162
Fax: (909) 944-8545
Message center: (800) 251-1639
E-mail: hq@iimc.com
Web site: www.iimc.com

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Tennessee Municipal League Risk Management Pool

Mr. Michael Fann, Director of Loss Control
5100 Maryland Way
Brentwood, TN 37027
Phone: (800) 624-9698 toll free, (615) 371-0049
Fax: (615) 377-3067
E-mail: MemberServices@tmlrmp.org
Web site: www.tmlrmp.org

Tennessee Association Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR)

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Ms. Judy Simerson, Incoming TAMCAR
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Middle Tennessee State University Municipal Clerk Institute & Academy for Advanced Education

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Web site: www.mtsu.edu/~learn

If You Need More Help

Call the **MTAS Answer Line** to receive quick answers to short questions: **(888) 667-6827** (MTAS).
Or, visit our Web site at **www.mtas.utk.edu**.

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is a statewide agency of The University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service. MTAS operates in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League to provide technical assistance services to officials of Tennessee's incorporated municipalities. Assistance is offered in areas such as accounting, administration, finance, public works, ordinance codification, and wastewater management.

MTAS *Technical Bulletins* are information briefs that provide a timely review of topics of interest to Tennessee municipal officials. *Bulletins* are free to Tennessee local, state, and federal government officials and are available to others for \$2 each.

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