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## Technical Bulletins: City Recorder Certification Update

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# MTAS

## Municipal Technical Advisory Service

*In cooperation with the  
Tennessee Municipal League*

# TECHNICAL bulletin

8.20.04

## CITY RECORDER CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Margaret Norris, Municipal Management Consultant

### Overview

In 1994 Chapter 648 of the *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 the *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 the state of Tennessee; and

- Any appointed city manager or administrator who possesses a master's degree in public administration.

Also exempt from the initial 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 Get Certified?

To be 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 the Certification?

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

### How Do I Earn the Credit Hours?

- Receive 25 credit hours toward initial certification if you have an Associate of Arts or Science degree.
- Receive 50 hours toward initial certification if you have a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree. (You may receive the 50 hours credit only one time, even if you hold more than one degree.)

- Attend the Municipal Clerks Institute offered through the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service (UT-MTAS) that is coordinated by the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR). The institute lasts 2.5 days and will give 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 offered through UT-MTAS and coordinated by TAMCAR. The academy is offered each fall in conjunction with the institute, and scholarships are available when local funding limitations or policies might otherwise prevent participation.
- Attend the International Institute of Municipal Clerks annual conference that is held every year in May.
- Attend City University seminars offered by UT-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 Institute for Public Service (IPS) and receive 12 hours credit for the three-day program.
- Attend job-related seminars offered by private organizations. (Credit hours may vary.)
- Complete online self-teaching computer programs as 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 the 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.” Contact the division at  
312 Eighth Avenue North  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Snodgrass Tower  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243  
Phone: (615) 741-3699  
Fax: (615) 741-7310  
E-mail: [services@mail.state.tn.us](mailto:services@mail.state.tn.us)

For more information contact your MTAS municipal management consultant or

**The University of Tennessee****Municipal Technical Advisory Service**

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**International Institute of Municipal Clerks**

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Message Center: toll free (800) 251-1639  
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**8.20.04**  
**CITY RECORDER CERTIFICATION UPDATE**  
**Margaret Norris, Municipal Management Consultant**

**Tennessee Municipal League Risk Management Pool**

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or (615) 371-0049  
Fax: (615) 377-3067  
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**Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR)**

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