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Technical Bulletins: City Recorder Certification Update (2008)

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CITY RECORDER CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Margaret Norris, Municipal Management Consultant

September 2008

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE 

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

In cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League



City Recorder Certification Update

by Margaret Norris
Municipal Management Consultant

September 2008

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The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) was created in 1949 by the state legislature to enhance the quality of government in Tennessee municipalities. An agency of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service, MTAS works in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League and affiliated organizations to assist municipal officials.

By sharing information, responding to client requests, and anticipating the ever-changing municipal government environment, MTAS promotes better local government and helps cities develop and sustain effective management and leadership.

MTAS offers assistance in areas such as accounting and finance, administration and personnel, fire, public works, law, ordinance codification, and water and wastewater

management. MTAS houses a comprehensive library and publishes scores of documents annually.

MTAS provides one copy of our publications free of charge to each Tennessee municipality, county and department of state and federal government. There is a \$10 charge for additional copies of "City Recorder Certification Update."

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City Recorder Certification Update

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 be found in Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 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;
- Any clerk or recorder who is a certified public accountant with a current certificate issued by the state board of accountancy in Tennessee; and

- Any appointed city manager or administrator who possesses a Master of Arts 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 BECOME CERTIFIED?

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

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RETAIN 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 Associate of Science degree.
- Receive 50 hours toward initial certification if you have a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. (You can receive the 50 hours credit only one time, even if you hold more than one degree.)



- Attend the Certified Municipal Clerk Institute that is coordinated by the Tennessee Association of Municipal Clerks and Recorders (TAMCAR). The institute lasts two and one-half days and will give you 17.5 credit hours. Institutes are offered each spring and fall, and institute scholarships are available when local funding limitations or policies might otherwise prevent participation.
- Attend the Academy for Advanced Education that is coordinated by TAMCAR. The academy is offered each fall in conjunction with the Institute, and academy 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 Municipal Administration Program training classes offered by the University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) and receive four hours credit per half-day class. A different course is offered each month except June and December 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 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 continuing education credits, you should contact the Division of Business Services for an application. Request form number SS-4507, appropriately titled "Municipal Clerk & Recorders Certification and Continuing Education Credit Application." The application is also available at: <http://www.tennessee.gov/sos/forms/ss-4507.pdf> You can reach the division at:

312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
6th Floor, Snodgrass Tower
Nashville, TN 37243-1102
Phone: (615) 741-2286
Fax: (615) 741-7310
E-mail: business.services@state.tn.us



For more information contact your MTAS municipal management consultant or:

International Institute of Municipal Clerks

8331 Utica Avenue, Suite 200
Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730
Phone: (800) 251-1639 toll free;
(909) 944-4162 local
Fax: (909) 944-8545
E-mail: hq@iimc.com
Web site: <http://www.iimc.com>

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**Tennessee Municipal League
Risk Management Pool**

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

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