

# County Officials Certificate Training Program

*The COCTP is sponsored  
by the University  
of Tennessee  
County Technical  
Assistance Service  
in cooperation with  
the Tennessee County  
Services Association  
and the County  
Officials Association  
of Tennessee*

THE UNIVERSITY of  
**TENNESSEE**   
COUNTY TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE SERVICE





## ■ WHAT IS COCTP?

The County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP) is a comprehensive training program administered by the University of Tennessee (UT) County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS).

The COCTP program is designed to provide specialized, office-specific, technical, administrative, managerial and leadership training to elected officials and their employees in order to help them run their office more effectively. It also offers a comprehensive knowledge of the inner workings of county government. CTAS believes that a broader understanding of the mechanics of county government will afford COCTP graduates a better understanding of the county as an entity, and in return, help them serve their constituency better. In short, graduates of the COCTP will obtain a thorough knowledge of county government and be designated with the title of **Certified Public Administrator**.

## ■ WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM BENEFITS?

Earning a COCTP certificate will prove invaluable to you professionally and personally. No other program in the nation provides the following to its county employees:

- ✓ A salary supplement for full time elected officials (includes clerk and masters)
- ✓ A comprehensive program with courses custom designed for the county government employee
- ✓ An occasion to truly network with leaders in government and innovative colleagues
- ✓ A nurturing environment where your individual learning style is taken into account
- ✓ An opportunity to increase your earning potential
- ✓ A chance to learn and use the latest approaches in county government management
- ✓ An option to significantly impact county government

## ■ WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS?

In order to complete the requirements of the COCTP, you will be required to earn 80 credit hours from three categories of training: Category A (40 hours), Category B (20 hours), and Capstone (20 hours).

### CATEGORY A

Job-specific and technical training courses are included in this category, as is the study of the Tennessee County Government Handbook. These courses aid county government officials in performing their jobs and efficiently administering county services. Efficient county government administration requires a thorough knowledge of the types of county services to be delivered, highly developed financial skills, a keen awareness of the legal environment in which county officials work, and proficiency in information technology.



Participants must earn **40 credits** in this category in order to fulfill the county specific component. Of the wide array of courses listed below, **only one course is required** – *the Tennessee County Government Handbook*. The remainder of the courses required to complete this category are selected at your discretion based on your particular need or desire.

Accumulating the 40 credit hours and successfully passing the *Tennessee County Government Handbook* test denotes successful completion of this category.

Category A classes are delivered in one of three ways: classroom, online and correspondence courses. Courses include, but are not limited to, the following:

### (1) Classroom Delivery

- Capital Budgeting
- County Operating Budget Workshop
- County Debt Management
- County Legislative Body in Action
- County Purchasing
- Dynamics of Planning
- Finance for County Officials
- Hiring and Firing
- Legal Issues (office specific)
- Open Records Law
- Records Management
- Risk Management
- Wage and Hour Laws
- Workplace Discrimination and Harassment

These courses are offered in East, Middle and West Tennessee.

### (2) Online via the Internet

- Americans with Disabilities Act (1 hour)
- Bankruptcy Laws for County Trustees (1 hour)
- Basic Principle of Economic Development (2 hours)
- Collection of Property Taxes (2 hours)
- County Budget Workshop (2 hours)
- County Clerks: Election to Office (1 hour)
- County Clerks: Powers and Duties (1 hour)
- County Legislative Body in Action (2 hours)
- County Purchasing (2 hours)
- County Trustees: Election to Office (1 hour)
- County Trustees: Powers and Duties (1 hour)
- Ethics, Ouster and Liability (2 hours)
- Fair Labor Standards Act (2 hours)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (2 hours)
- Finance for County Officials (1 hour)
- Hiring and Firing (1 hour)
- How to Form a Metro Government (1 hour)
- Law 101 (1 hour)
- Managing a Highway Department (1 hour)
- Records Management: Legal Issues (1 hour)
- Records Management: Record Keeping (1 hour)
- Risk Management (1 hour)
- Tennessee Beer Laws (1 hour)
- Tennessee Environmental Regulations (1 hour)
- Tennessee Marriage Laws (1 hour)
- Workplace Discrimination (1 hour)
- You Ask (1 hour)

Online classes can be accessed by going to the CTAS Web site ([www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)) and selecting the “Training” link from the left side of the page. The hours in parentheses refer to the number of credit hours awarded for completion of each course.



### (3) Correspondence Courses

Correspondence courses consist of CTAS publications and an open book exam. You must receive a 70 percent or greater on the exam to receive credit for these courses.

- *Tennessee County Government Handbook* (8 hours)
- *County Property Tax Manual* (4 hours)
- *Tennessee Fire Handbook* (2 hours)
- *Sheriffs Manual* (4 hours)
- *Legal Aspects of Personnel Management* (6 hours)

## CATEGORY B

Leadership and management training are included in this category. These courses aid county government officials in managing their staff better and serving the public. Effective county public administrators lead change, lead people, build coalitions and are results driven. You must earn **20 credits** in this category in order to fulfill the leadership and management component. Again, courses selected under this category are at your discretion, based on your need and/or desire. Classes include, but are not limited to, the following:

### (1) Classroom Delivery

- Ethics in Government
- Crisis Communications
- Customer Service
- Essentials of Leadership
- Conflict Management
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Giving Employee Feedback
- Understanding Workstyles

These courses are offered in East, Middle and West Tennessee.  
You will receive 4 hours of credit for the successful completion of each of these courses.

### (2) Online via the Internet

- Listening Basics (2 hours)
- The Basics of Delegation (2 hours)
- Difficult People in the Workplace (3 hours)
- Dynamics of Leadership (3 hours)
- Effective Meetings (1 hour)
- Effectively Communicating in Teams (3 hours)
- Energizing and Empowering Employees
- Making Decisions Ethically (3 hours)
- Leadership and Change (3 hours)
- Managing Change (1 hour)
- Optimizing E-mail at Work (2 hours)
- Overcoming the Challenges of Change (2 hours)
- Overcoming Organizational Negativity (2 hours)
- Delegation: The Personal Approach (2 hours)
- Role of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Manager (1 hour)
- Choosing the Best Applicant (2 hours)
- Sexual Harassment Awareness for Employees (2 hours)
- The Reasons Why Diversity Matters (2 hours)

Online classes can be accessed by going to the CTAS Web site ([www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)) and selecting the "Training" link from the left side of the page. The hours in parentheses refer to the number of credit hours awarded for completion of each course.



## ■ COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The comprehensive examination tests your understanding of the characteristics of efficient county government and issues relating to delivery of county services, legal environment, and county finances. The examination questions are taken directly from the Tennessee County Government Handbook. The exam is fifty questions and is closed book. You will be notified by CTAS and scheduled for this exam when you have earned the 40 hours of Category A and 20 hours of Category B. Successful completion is a score of 70 or above.

## ■ CAPSTONE

This category requires the participation in a three-day forum known as Capstone. After passing the comprehensive exam, you will be invited by CTAS to attend the Capstone. There is a \$300 fee for attending the Capstone. This is an intensive and highly personalized event that focuses on how to work together with other county officials from across the state. The purpose of the capstone event is to provide you the opportunity to demonstrate the administrative, leadership and management skills gained through the COCTP. As such, this event serves as a synthesis by providing you the opportunity to share and apply your knowledge and skills developed in Categories A and B in simulated, but practical exercises and problem solving challenges. Again, in order to participate in this forum, participants must successfully fulfill the requirements for Categories A and B, pass the comprehensive examination and pay the capstone fee of \$300. You will receive 20 credit hours for attending the capstone event. At the conclusion of the three-day forum, you will be designated by the University of Tennessee as a **Certified Public Administrator**.

## ■ PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**Category A** requires you to successfully complete training in a combination of job-specific, technical courses, and, additionally, demonstrate a working knowledge of the information contained in the *Tennessee County Government Handbook* (a CTAS publication).

**Category B** requires the successful completion of training in the areas of management and leadership that will help you more effectively lead and manage your respective office.

**Capstone** is a three-day training event. The designation of **Certified Public Administrator** is awarded after completion of this event.

**Comprehensive Exam** — In order to attend the Capstone event, you must successfully pass a comprehensive, closed-book exam on the *Tennessee County Government Handbook*.

ITEM	PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	MY STATUS
Category A Credits	32 credits	
<i>Tennessee County Government Handbook</i>	8 credits	
<b>Total Number of Category A Credits</b>	40 credits	
<b>Total Number of Category B Credits</b>	20 credits	
<b>Comprehensive Exam</b>	Score of 70 or above	
<b>Capstone Fee</b>	Payment of \$300	

## ■ RE-CERTIFICATION

The final component of COCTP is certification renewal. In order to retain the designation of **Certified Public Administrator**, you are required to complete 16 hours of continuing education each fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). There is a \$300 re-certification fee at the beginning of each statewide county elections cycle. The fee is valid for four years. There are several ways you can earn the required 16 hours:

- Attend a CTAS re-certification conference (these are held each year in Jackson, Knoxville and Nashville and you will receive a letter of invitation)
- Attend classroom training provided by CTAS throughout the year
- Take training through other sources including national, state, local, and professional associations
- Take training offered at your county association meetings
- Take training offered by the state of Tennessee entities
- Take training sessions offered by private sector organizations
- Take on-line training
- Take CTAS correspondence courses.

In order to receive re-certification credit, you must either complete a CTAS registration form provided at the meeting OR submit a Request for Re-certification Credit form to CTAS. This form may be found and printed by going to the CTAS web page ([www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)), selecting the "Training" link from the main menu on the left of the page, and then selecting "Print COCTP Recertification Form" from the options listed. Follow the instructions on the form and send it to CTAS. You will receive credit based on the time spent in training. You may submit a form for each training session you attend until you have earned the required 16 hours.



## ■ WHAT IS THE FEE STRUCTURE?

There are three different fees and all are used to help defray the costs of developing the course material, delivering the classes, maintaining your training history and other administrative costs associated with the COCTP.

### **\$300 Enrollment Fee**

This is a one-time fee assessment paid by county officials to enroll in the COCTP.

### **\$300 Capstone Fee**

This is a one-time fee assessed when you become eligible to attend the Capstone event of the COCTP. You will receive a letter from CTAS notifying you of your eligibility and you may pay the fee at this time.

### **\$300 Re-Certification Fee**

This fee is assessed to all officials who obtain the **Certified Public Administrator** designation. It is valid for four years and coincides with the statewide county elections. The assessment begins September 1st following the county elections.

## ■ COCTP QUICK FACTS

### ***Who can participate in the COCTP?***

The COCTP was designed for elected county office holders. However, any county employee may attend COCTP training programs.

### ***Do I have to pay a fee to attend COCTP classes?***

No, a fee is not required of any county employee to attend COCTP classes. However, if you desire to earn the designation of **Certified Public Administrator**, some fees apply.

### ***How do I get a copy of my transcript?***

The most effective method is to view and/or download your transcript from the CTAS Web site: [www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu). Select the "Training" link from the main menu on the left side of the page and then select the "View Transcript" link from the options listed.

### ***When does re-certification begin and end?***

You must re-certify (take 16 hours of training) every fiscal year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.



***Can I get re-certification credit from training I receive from sources other than CTAS?***

Yes. Re-certification credit may be earned by taking other training programs or initiatives. If you believe you attended something that may count as re-certification credit, go to the CTAS Web site at [www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu), select the “Training” link from the main menu on the left and then select the “Print COCTP Recertification Form” option. Complete the information and fax it to CTAS at (615) 532-3659. Your request is approved unless you receive a letter from CTAS notifying you otherwise.

***When am I eligible to go to the Capstone Event?***

Participation in the Capstone is by invitation only. This invitation will be extended to you once you have met the following conditions:

- (1) Successfully completed 40 hours of Category A courses
- (2) Successfully completed 20 hours of Category B courses
- (3) Successfully completed the COCTP Exit Exam
- (4) Paid the Capstone Fee

***When and where are the Capstone Events held?***

Capstones are usually scheduled for the months of April, May and June. If there are enough officials eligible, a Capstone may be held in September. Almost all of the Capstones are held at Montgomery Bell State Park.

***How do I register to attend COCTP classes?***

You may register for classes by logging on to the CTAS web site at [www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu). Select the “Training” link from the menu on the left and you can register for classroom, on-line and/or correspondence classes.

***Do I have to complete all Category A courses before I complete Category B or vice-versa?***

No. You may take Category A and B courses in any order.

***I cannot leave my office to attend classes. How can I participate in the COCTP?***

The COCTP has three methods of delivery: classroom training, on-line training and correspondence courses. You can earn the 40 hours needed in Category A and the 20 hours needed in Category B on-line or by correspondence. Both of these options can be done at your leisure and pace. On-line training is training you take via your computer. Correspondence is training you take by reading CTAS manuals and taking open book tests. To register for this type of training, please go to the CTAS Web page at [www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu), click on “Training” from the menu on the left and you can register for either or both of these options.



### ***Can CTAS deliver classes to my county?***

Sometimes. If there is a demand or critical need, CTAS can deliver classes on specific topics. Please contact your CTAS field consultant for specific needs and/or arrangements.

### ***What happens to my certification if I fail to re-certify?***

(1) Officials who do not re-certify during a fiscal year cycle (July 1 to June 30) will be given a 90-day grace period. During this grace period, officials must earn the hours they lacked. Officials will then be reinstated as **Certified Public Administrators**.

(2) Officials who do not comply with the “grace period” will be required to: successfully complete (score 70 or above) the 100 question Tennessee County Government Handbook exam (open book), (2) earn the hours they lack for the prior re-certification cycle(s), and (3) earn the required 16 hours for the current re-certification cycle by June 30.

### ***What happens to my certification if I leave my elected office or government service?***

Officials who leave office will be put into an “inactive status.” If they return to office, they will be required to: (1) pay the re-certification fee, (2) successfully complete (score 70 or above) the 50 question COCTP Exit Exam (closed book) and (3) earn the 16 hours for the current re-certification cycle by June 30.

Officials will then be reinstated as **Certified Public Administrators**.

### ***Is there any type of waiver for re-certification purposes?***

Yes. There are medical and military waivers. When health circumstances prevent an official from re-certifying, a medical waiver may be granted. The same applies to active service in the military. Officials must contact CTAS prior to June 30 to request such a waiver.

### ***Does COCTP credit count toward a college degree?***

No. Courses taken through COCTP will not count toward a degree at the University of Tennessee. Check with your local college to determine whether or not certificate credit counts toward one of its degree seeking programs.

### ***Can I receive COCTP credit for academic courses or training I have taken elsewhere?***

No. College courses or training outside of COCTP will not be accepted. However, these credits do apply for re-certification credits.

### ***Can I earn CEU credit for COCTP course work?***

Yes. All courses offered in the COCTP curriculum are approved for CEU credit, unless specifically noted.



***If I receive a “wait-listed” registration confirmation for a class I want to attend, what should I do?***

If your registration confirmation letter indicates your status as “wait listed” for a course, then we reached seating capacity for that course at that particular location. Should space become available for that class CTAS will contact you. With the exception of certain courses offered at various conferences, most COCTP courses are offered at two or more sites across the state. Feel free to register for the same course that you were wait listed for at another location.

***If I have a conflict with a program date in my region, can I attend an open enrollment class outside of my region?***

Yes. You are not limited to attending open enrollment classes in your region.

***I took classes years ago but have been inactive in COCTP; does the previous credit I received still count toward certification?***

Yes, if you paid the enrollment fee.

***Do the training courses require you to pass a test to receive credit?***

The category A classroom classes do require you to take a test and receive a score of 70 percent or higher in order to receive the credit hours. The category B classroom courses do not have a testing component.

***When is testing done for the COCTP exit exam?***

Testing for the COCTP exit exam is scheduled when enough customers are eligible. Customers will receive a letter from CTAS and a time and place will be set that is convenience.





## COCTP ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please select a six-digit identification number to be used throughout your enrollment in the COCTP. Select a number that you will remember because you will be asked to identify yourself with this number at each COCTP event you attend. Only numbers can be used. Do not use letters, symbols, etc.)*

### METHOD OF PAYMENT

A \$300 enrollment fee is required for all county officials who wish to obtain the designation of Certified Public Administrator (CPA) in the County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP). This is a one-time fee and is used to maintain the participant's training history and for course materials.

#### BE SURE YOU HAVE NOT PAID THE ENROLLMENT FEE PREVIOUSLY.

- Check enclosed *(make payable to the University of Tennessee)*
- Purchase order number *(attach purchase order)* \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this completed registration form and your payment to

The University of Tennessee  
 County Technical Assistance Service  
 Attention: COCTP  
 226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 400  
 Nashville, Tennessee 37219

If paying by purchase order, you may fax your registration form to (615) 532-3699.

For Title VI compliance, we ask for voluntary disclosure of the following information:

Gender –  Male  Female    Race –  Caucasian  African American  Other *(please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_

The University of Tennessee will seek to accommodate all persons with disabilities. If you require auxiliary aids, special services, or other accommodations, please check here. Someone from our office will contact you.







THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE   
COUNTY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICE

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The University of Tennessee does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status in provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. This policy extends to both employment by and admission to the university.

The university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Inquiries and charges of violation concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) or any of the other above referenced policies should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone (865) 974-2498 (V/TTY available) or 974-2440. Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the UTK Office of Human Resources, 600 Henley Street, Knoxville, TN 37996-4125.