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10-23-2010

City Recorder Certification Update (2010)

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Recommended Citation
Norris, Margaret, "City Recorder Certification Update (2010)" (2010). *MTAS Publications: Technical Bulletins.*
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THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

In cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League

TECHNICAL bulletin

October 23, 2010

CITY RECORDER CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Margaret Norris, Municipal Management Consultant

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, and the accompanying regulations can be found in the Secretary of State's Rules and Regulations 1360-6-1.

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.

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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 TML and Tennessee Municipal League Risk Management Pool.
- 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 "Application for Certification of Municipal Clerks and Recorders and Continuing Education Credit." The application is also available at www.tennesseee.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) 741-3699
Fax: (615) 741-7310
E-mail: business.services@state.tn.us

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For more information contact your MTAS municipal management consultant or:

International Institute of Municipal Clerks
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Message Center: (800) 251-1639
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Web site: http://www.iimc.com

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5100 Maryland Way
Brentwood, TN 37027
Phone: (800) 624-9698 toll free
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MTAS1516 • E14-1050-000-015-11