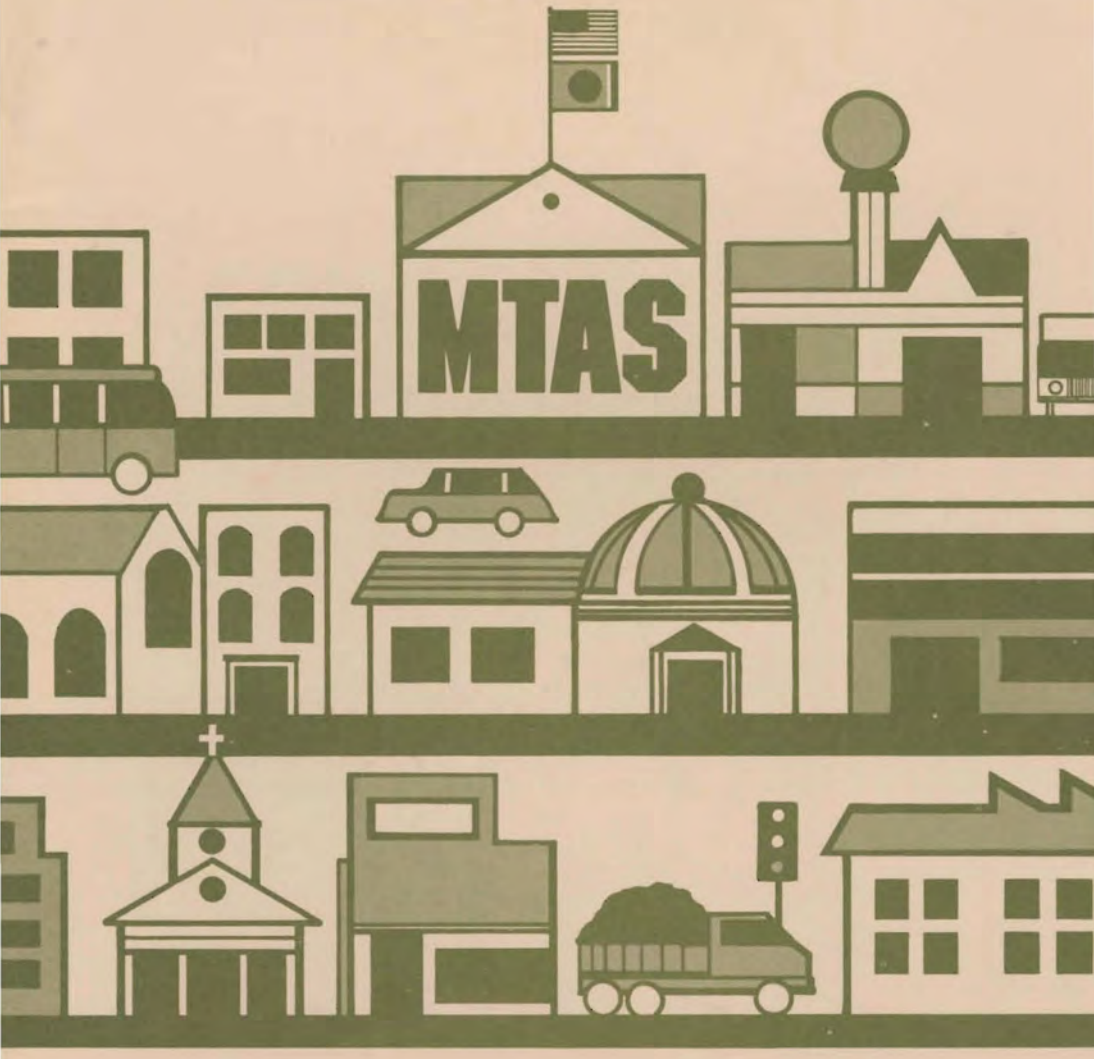
MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

Helping Municipal Officials Build A Better Tennessee

Municipal Technical Advisory Service • The University of Tennessee
in cooperation with The Tennessee Municipal League

The University of Tennessee E14-1050-00-007-83



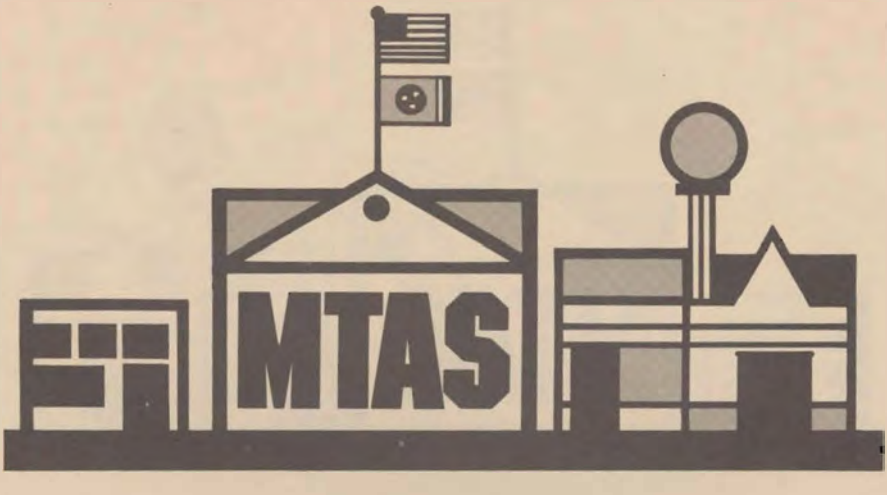
MTAS consultants offer assistance in:

- **General Management**
- **Finance and Accounting**
- **Engineering and Public Works**
- **Municipal Law**
- **Ordinance Codification**
- **Public Safety Administration**
- **Public Information**
- **Personnel Administration**
- **Intergovernmental Affairs**

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service
A statewide agency of The University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service, operated in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League.

MTAS Headquarters:

The University of Tennessee
891 20th Street
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-4400
Telephone 615/974-5301



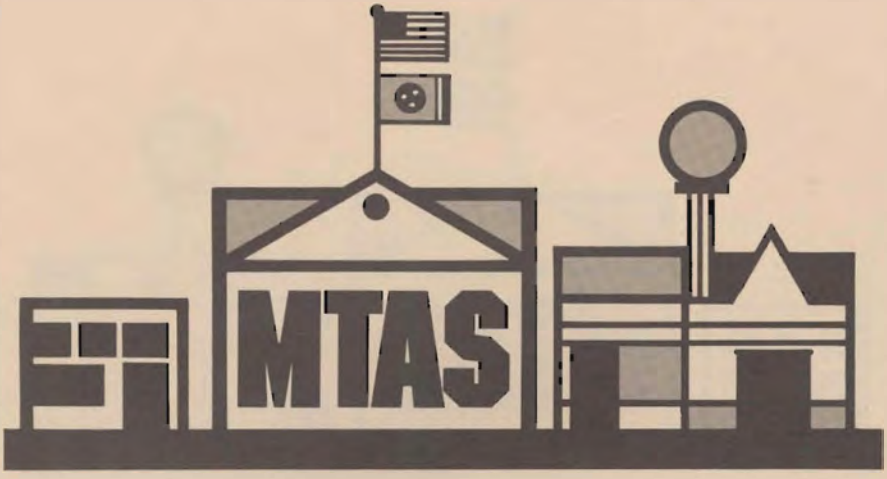
WHAT MTAS IS

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) was created by the 1949 General Assembly at the request of Tennessee cities and towns. Working in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League, MTAS provides practical, individualized solutions to technical problems in municipal government and administration.

The MTAS mission is to aid city officials in establishing goals, objectives, and policies; weighing alternative courses of action; allocating resources effectively to meet the needs of all citizens; evaluating programs for achieving objectives; improving governmental systems and operations; and devising methods for obtaining effective public participation in policy decisions.

All MTAS consultants have prior experience in local government, either in management or in other specialized fields. The extensive accumulated experience of staff provides a rich store of know-how for addressing a wide range of municipal concerns.

An agency of The University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service, MTAS works closely with the Tennessee Municipal League. Thus, the agency has resources and a base of cooperation enjoyed by few, if any, similar technical assistance organizations. The close relationship between TML and MTAS assures the agency of a continuing awareness of and dedication to the vital concerns and needs of municipal governments. Staff members also draw frequently on the expertise of a large, well-respected university faculty at campuses throughout the state.



HOW MTAS WORKS

MTAS consultants are in day-to-day contact with city officials. Suggestions, ideas, and information provided during field visits or phone conversations are important parts of the total MTAS effort to aid city officials. Emphasis is given to assisting central executive personnel—mayors, managers, governing bodies—and, through them, departmental personnel.

Some consultants are specialists in the fields of engineering and public works, finance and accounting, municipal law, ordinance codification, public information, and intergovernmental relations. Each is prepared to give expert, specialized assistance, depending upon client need(s).

A valuable resource for all consultants in their work with cities is the MTAS library. It contains the largest, most comprehensive collection of publications and material on municipal operations in Tennessee.



JUST ASK!

MTAS services are available, usually at no charge, to incorporated cities and towns in Tennessee. Any city official may initiate a request as long as the mayor or city manager is kept informed by the person asking for assistance.

MTAS regional offices are located throughout the state, as close as possible to the municipalities they serve.



GENERAL MANAGEMENT

PURPOSES: Assist city officials in finding practical solutions to day-to-day and long-range problems; apply modern techniques of municipal management, individualized, when possible, to each situation; help strengthen municipal management capability and capacity; work to improve community facilities; and help officials extend effective, efficient public services to all citizens.

TYPICAL SERVICES:

Municipal Organization

Determining feasibility and procedures for incorporations or annexations / Drafting charters and amendments / Preparing internal organization and management studies / Compiling administrative rules and regulations / Strengthening intergovernmental relationships / Improving coordination of emergency services / Determining ways to improve ISO ratings / Helping prepare plan of services for annexed areas / Analyzing cooperative city-county administration of specific services / Analyzing existing governmental structure and recommending changes / Providing information on metropolitan forms of government.

Risk Management

Evaluating existing insurance coverages / Suggesting ways to effect economies / Evaluating factors affecting coverage / Assessing liability / Identifying safety hazards and suggesting improvements in operations.

Personnel Administration

Establishing merit systems or civil service / Assisting with employee recruitment, selection, and orientation procedures / Evaluating salaries and fringe benefits / Improving personnel record forms / Analyzing rules, policies, and practices / Assisting in improving employer-employee relations.

Municipal Utilities
Preparing comparative rate and operating cost data / Evaluating feasibility of joint building for electric and other municipal government systems / Improving utility customer billing and collection / Improving operating relationships with general government / Determining feasibility of municipal takeover of systems operated by other agencies / Assisting in planning and establishing new systems.

Economic/Community Development
Determining municipal government's role in formulating development strategies / Involving community leadership.

Intergovernmental Affairs
Helping to develop TML policy positions / Interpreting state and federal legislation / Preparing summaries of legislative acts affecting municipalities / Acting as liaison with state and federal agencies / Providing information on state and federal programs.





ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS

PURPOSE: Provide city officials with information, technical assistance, and public works operational know-how. MTAS help in this field is designed to supplement services of private consultants and/or city engineers.

TYPICAL SERVICES

General

Preparing preliminary studies to define scope of a problem and services needed from a consulting engineer/Analyzing engineering plans, reports, and specifications for municipal construction projects/Evaluating public works department operations/Reviewing subdivision development plans/Advising on use of contract services.

Refuse Collection and Disposal

Assisting in designing and implementing all phases of manual, semi-automated, and automated systems, including equipment selection and route mapping/Assisting in landfill site selection/Providing information on state regulations/Developing landfill operating procedures.

Wastewater Collection and Disposal

Preparing studies and recommendations for correcting infiltration problems /Preparing testing and inspection procedures/Developing recommendations on types and uses of facilities, equipment, and manpower.

Waterworks

Analyzing departmental organization and procedures/Developing line extension policies/Providing information on rate structures/Developing meter testing, repairing and replacement programs.



Streets
Helping plan street improvement programs/Evaluating and reviewing specifications, surface treatment procedures, and material selection/Improving maintenance procedures and equipment/Developing feasibility of curbs and gutters/Helping develop street maps, records, and street name and traffic signs/Preparing intersection and parking studies/Analyzing drainage problems.

Code Enforcement
Assisting with code selection/Analyzing staffing, and procedures for inspections/Developing permit forms/Improving processing of violations/Helping establish board of appeals.

Equipment Management
Preparing or reviewing specifications/Evaluating bids/Preparing fleet maintenance studies/Evaluating layout of garage and storage facilities.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

PURPOSE: Assist city officials in effective management and utilization of available fiscal resources and help develop additional revenue sources.



TYPICAL SERVICES

General
Analyzing fiscal policies and procedures and internal control procedures / Assisting in designing, preparing, and presenting financial reports / Providing information on federal and state financial aid / Developing fixed asset and depreciation records / Preparing studies on computer applications and assisting with procurement procedures / Developing procedures for investment of idle funds.

Budgeting
Assisting with preparation and administration / Developing use of budgets as management tools / Estimating revenues and expenditures / Helping prepare budget forms and records / Integrating annual and capital budgets / Assisting with utility budgeting.

Accounting
Analyzing requirements / Establishing accounting systems / Helping install computerized accounting and payroll systems / Improving stores and equipment records / Assisting with special fund accounting, records, and reports.

Tax Records and Procedures
Developing tax billing and collection procedures / Standardizing tax billing forms / Preparing business and other special tax records / Securing comparative rate data / Assisting in determining correct tax equivalent payments.

Debt Administration
Assisting in preparing records and reports / Analyzing financial condition of municipality / Helping install procedures to improve credit rating.

Purchasing
Helping implement centralized system / Developing users' specifications / Improving inventory controls and purchasing records / Establishing bidding and procurement procedures, including surplus purchases and sales.



MUNICIPAL LAW

PURPOSE: Provide assistance on legal matters to municipal officials, especially city attorneys, and assist city officials in the preparation of ordinances, codes, and charters. MTAS consultants do not represent cities in litigation or otherwise act as practicing attorneys.

TYPICAL SERVICES

Legal Opinions

Providing legal opinions on the authority and procedure to perform municipal functions/Assessing liabilities of the municipality in specific areas/Advising city officials on the powers and limitations of municipal governments.

Charters

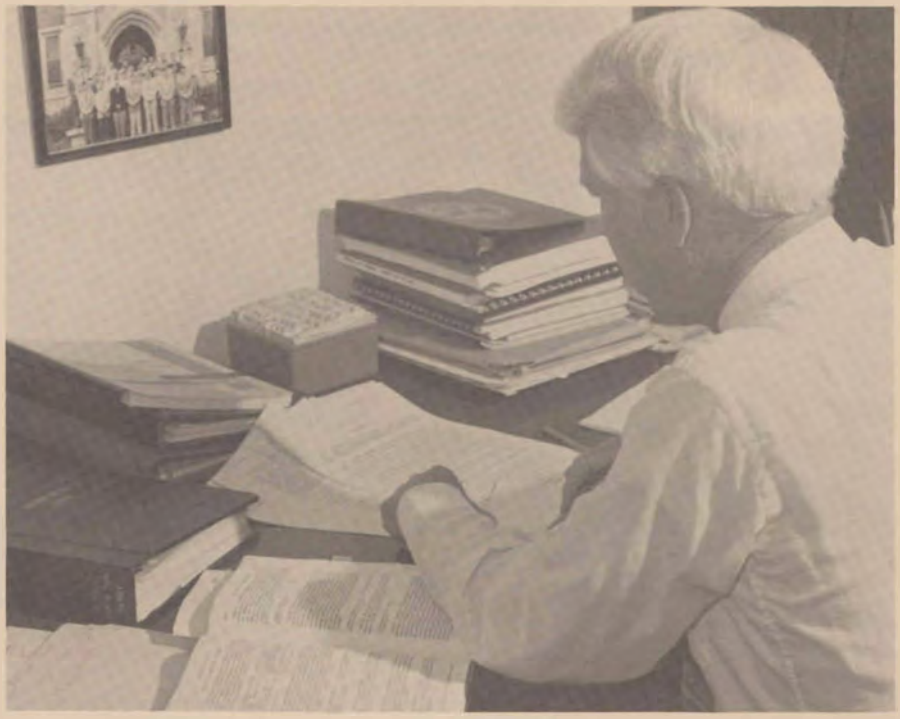
Assisting in preparation of new or revised charter or amendments to charter /Providing copies of existing charter/Interpreting charter provisions.

Ordinances

Providing sample ordinances from other cities (the MTAS library includes a large collection of such ordinances on most aspects of municipal government)/Preparing and/or reviewing ordinances.

Code of Ordinances

Preparing code of ordinances from existing ordinances, eliminating obsolete, conflicting, and ambiguous provisions and including integration of private acts into single, up-to-date charter/Updating MTAS-prepared codes annually.
(No charge for codification; city pays reproduction, binding, and delivery costs.)



PUBLIC INFORMATION

PURPOSE: Assist city officials in improving public understanding of municipal services and programs and in securing greater citizen participation in all phases of local government.



TYPICAL SERVICES

General

Analyzing existing information activities/Developing ongoing communications programs/Planning and implementing request-for-services system/Helping involve students in city government operations/Planning and implementing information campaigns for local sales tax increases and other referendums/Increasing understanding of city's position in annexation procedures/Planning for crisis communication.

Citizen Participation

Developing methods for encouraging and utilizing citizen input/Making advisory committees more effective/Planning programs for long-range goal-setting/Increasing citizen understanding of and participation in budget process/Helping to conduct and analyze citizen opinion surveys.

Citizen Information

Preparing annual progress reports and citizen handbooks/Developing citizen newsletters or other regular communication channels/Improving media relations skills.

Employee Information

Establishing internal communications programs/Assisting with employee newsletter and/or fringe benefit reports/Preparing employee handbooks/Developing effective communication through supervisors/Improving communication during negotiation process.

OTHER SERVICES

PURPOSE: Provide information to city officials on specific subjects; serve as a clearinghouse for model materials and data in all phases of city administration and operation; help promote professionalism of city personnel; and make a full range of technical services available and accessible to city officials.

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

MTAS Library

Serving as resource center to support research, reports, and technical assistance provided to cities by MTAS consultants / Maintaining comprehensive, current collection of materials on all phases of municipal government / Acting as clearinghouse for contact with other information sources at state and national levels / Assisting in organization of in-house municipal libraries.



Publications

Bid Data on Current Municipal Public Works
Directory of Municipal Officials
Forms of Municipal Government in Tennessee
Ideas for a Better City
Local Government Risk Management Handbook
Local Government Public Works Standards
Local Sales Tax Handbook
Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey
Sample Code of Ordinances
Summary of Public Acts
Technical Bulletins and Reports
Tennessee Municipal Handbook
Contributions to *Tennessee Town & City*

Professional Development
Providing staff support for TML and affiliated organizations, including the Tennessee Municipal Finance Officers Association, Tennessee City Management Association, Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association, Tennessee Municipal Attorneys Association, Women in Government, and the Tennessee Innovation Group/Providing consulting services and other assistance during annual TML conference.

Training Opportunities
Cooperating with the Center for Government Training in assessing training needs/Promoting use of training programs/Conducting workshops and seminars in cooperation with CGT.





WE ARE ALWAYS AT YOUR SERVICE

For assistance or further information,
contact one of the MTAS/IPS regional offices below:

KNOXVILLE (Headquarters)
891 Twentieth Street
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-4400
Phone: 615/974-5301

COOKEVILLE
124 South Madison
Cookeville, TN 38501
Phone: 615/528-5518

JACKSON
212 North Highland
Suite 2119
P.O. Box 2784
Jackson, TN 38301
Phone: 901/423-3710

MARTIN
181 Clement Hall
P.O. Box 100
The University of Tennessee
Martin, TN 38238
Phone: 901/587-7055

NASHVILLE
226 Capitol Boulevard
Suite 505
Nashville, TN 37219
Phone: 615/256-8141

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Municipal Technical Advisory Service
The University of Tennessee
891 20th St.
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916-9989

We would like to have technical assistance or information on the following:

_____

_____

_____

_____

City of _____ By _____

Date _____ Title _____

MTAS
The University of Tennessee
891 20th Street
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