



County Technical Assistance Service
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

COUNTY OFFICIALS CERTIFICATE TRAINING PROGRAM



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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.

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).

COCTP 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 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; and
- An option to significantly impact county government.



What are the program requirements?

In order to complete the requirements of COCTP, you must complete the following:

- 4 of the 10 core classes (see Program Tracking Chart on page 10);
- 40 credits of electives;
- A passing score of 70 percent or higher earned on the county government overview;
- A passing score of 70 percent or higher earned on the exit exam; and
- Attendance at the three-day the Capstone event.

Core Classes

Core classes are each four-hour classroom sessions. These job-specific and technical training 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 complete 4 of the 10 Core classes.

Core classes* include:

- Audit
- Capital Budgeting
- Debt Management
- Ethics
- Financial Issues
- Legal Issues – for each Elected Office
- Operating Budget
- Personnel
- Purchasing
- Risk Management

*These courses are offered in multiple locations across the state.

COCTP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Elective Classes

Elective courses aid county officials in better managing their staff and serving the public. Effective county administrators manage change, lead people, build coalitions, and are results driven. Therefore, many management and leadership courses are offered as electives. You can also take additional core classes as elective credits. You must earn 40 credits in this category in order to fulfill the elective component. Again, courses selected under this category are at your discretion, based on your need and/or desire.

These courses are offered in a classroom setting and online. All online classes are one credit.

Tennessee County Government Overview

This is an online class using e-Li to complete a 100-question test. This class provides a broad understanding of county government in Tennessee. You must obtain a score of 70 percent or higher to receive credit for this course.

Exit Exam

The exit exam tests your understanding of the characteristics of efficient county government and issues relating to delivery of county services, legal environment, and county finances. After all class

requirements are met, participants will be required to pass a 50-question closed book exam with a score of 70 percent. The questions for the exit exam are directly related to information covered in the Tennessee County Government Overview using e-Li.

Capstone Event

After passing the Exit Exam, participants will be invited to attend the three-day Capstone event. There is a fee of \$300 required to attend this event. This is an intensive and highly personalized event that focuses on working 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 participation in COCTP. To attend the Capstone event, participants must successfully complete the core and elective classes and pass the Tennessee County Government Overview and exit exam with a score of 70 percent or higher. At the conclusion of the 3-day event, you will be designated by the University of Tennessee as a Certified Public Administrator.

NOTE: The three-day schedule for the Capstone event is typically noon to evening on Day 1, all day on Day 2, and morning to noon on Day 3. Attendance at all sessions on all days is MANDATORY.



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 – June 30). There is a \$100.00 per year recertification fee due by September 1st of every year. The fee is valid for one year. There are several ways you can earn the required 16 hours:

- Attend a CTAS Recertification Conference (these are held each year in Jackson, Knoxville and Middle Tennessee and you will receive an 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 sessions offered by private sector organizations.
- Take online training.

Rollover Hours

Rollover hours are designed to allow COCTP participants to use the extra hours earned in the previous fiscal year to supplement hours earned in the current fiscal year. If you have earned more than the 16 required hours in the previous year, the additional hours can be rolled into the current fiscal year up to eight hours. Rollover hours can be reported using the form found on the CTAS Training webpage.

COCTP PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Fee Structure

\$300 Enrollment Fee

A one-time fee paid to enroll in the COCTP. There is an enrollment invoice on the CTAS Training webpage you may use to pay the enrollment fee.

\$300 Capstone Fee

A one-time fee paid to attend the Capstone event of the COCTP. You will receive a letter from CTAS notifying you of your eligibility which will include an invoice for the event.

\$100 Recertification Fee

A fee assessed on a yearly basis to all officials and employees who obtain the Certified Public Administrator designation. It is valid for one year and must be paid by September 1st of each year.

COCTP Quick Facts

Who can participate in COCTP?

COCTP was designed for elected and appointed 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 official or employee to attend COCTP classes. However, if you desire to pursue the designation of Certified Public Administrator, some fees apply. Fees are due within six months of your first completed class.

How do I get a copy of my transcript?

The most effective method to view and/or print your transcript is from the CTAS website: www.ctas.tennessee.edu select Training from the menu across the top of the page, then sign into the Solution Point Training Center, and then select View Transcript.

If you have not received a username and password, select Register in the Solution Point Training Center and you will receive an email containing your username and password in 7 to 10 business days.

If you have forgotten your username or password, please give us a call at (615) 532-3555 and ask for a training representative.

When does recertification begin and end?

Once you become a Certified Public Administrator,

you must recertify by taking 16 hours of training every fiscal year, beginning July 1st and then ending June 30th.

Can I get recertification credit from training I receive from sources other than CTAS?

Yes. Recertification credit may be earned by taking other training programs or initiatives. If you believe you have attended something that may count as recertification credit, go to the CTAS website at www.ctas.tennessee.edu, select Training from the main menu across the page and then select Recertification Form. Complete the information and fax it to CTAS at (615) 523-2033 to receive credit.

When am I eligible to go to the Capstone event?

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

1. Paid enrollment fee (\$300) within six months of completing first class;
2. Completed 4 of 10 core classes;
3. Completed 40 credits of elective classes;
4. Completed the County Government Overview with a score of 70 percent or higher;
5. Passed the COCTP exit exam with a score of 70 percent or higher; and
6. Paid the Capstone fee of \$300.

When and where are the Capstone events held?

Capstones are usually scheduled in the months of April and May. Capstone events are typically held in Middle Tennessee, but this is subject to change. The exact dates and location will be included in your invitation to the Capstone event.

How do I register to attend COCTP classes?

You may register for classes by logging into the Solution Point Training Center on the CTAS website at www.ctas.tennessee.edu and select Training from the menu across the page. In Solution Point, select Register for a Class at the top of the page. You will be able to view all available classroom and online classes.

Do I have to complete all core classes before I complete elective classes or vice versa?

No, you may take core or elective classes in any order.

What happens to my certification if I fail to recertify?

Participants are required to:

1. Successfully complete the County Government Overview course;
2. Earn the hours they lack for the prior recertification cycle(s); and
3. Earn the required 16 hours for the current recertification cycle by June 30.

What happens to my recertification 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 recertification fee, (2) successfully complete the 50-question closed-book COCTP Exit Exam with a score of 70 percent or higher, and (3) earn the 16 hours for the current recertification cycle by June 30th. Officials will then be reinstated as Certified Public Administrators.

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 credits count toward one of its degree-seeking programs.

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

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

Can I earn CEU credits for COCTP course work?

Yes, all courses offered in 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 indicates that your status is wait-listed for a course, then we have reached the seating capacity for that course at that particular location. Should space become available for that class, CTAS will contact you via phone call or email. 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 at another location.

COCTP QUICK FACTS

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 core classes do require you to take a test and receive a score of 70 percent or higher in order to receive credit. If you fail the post test given at the end of the course on that day, you will not receive credit, but have the option to retest at a later date. Please contact training for those options.

When is testing done for the COCTP Exit Exam?

Testing for the COCTP exit exam is scheduled each year after January 1. Customers will receive a letter from CTAS informing them of the exam dates and locations.

PROGRAM TRACKING CHART

CATEGORY	REQUIREMENT	STATUS
CORE CLASSES	<p>4 of 10 core classes must be complete Core Classes Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Capital Budgeting • Ethics • Financial Issues • Legal Issues - for each Elected Office • Operating Budget • Personnel • Purchasing • Risk Management <p style="text-align: right;">* All classroom sessions</p>	
ELECTIVE CLASSES	<p>40 credits must be completed in this category</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom or online 	
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW	Online course about county government operations using e-Li	
EXIT EXAM	50 questions with a score of 70 percent or above	
CAPSTONE EVENT	Attendance at the three-day program	





COCTP ENROLLMENT FORM

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

County: _____

Email Address: _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

A \$300.00 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.

- 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) 253-2033.

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 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.

