

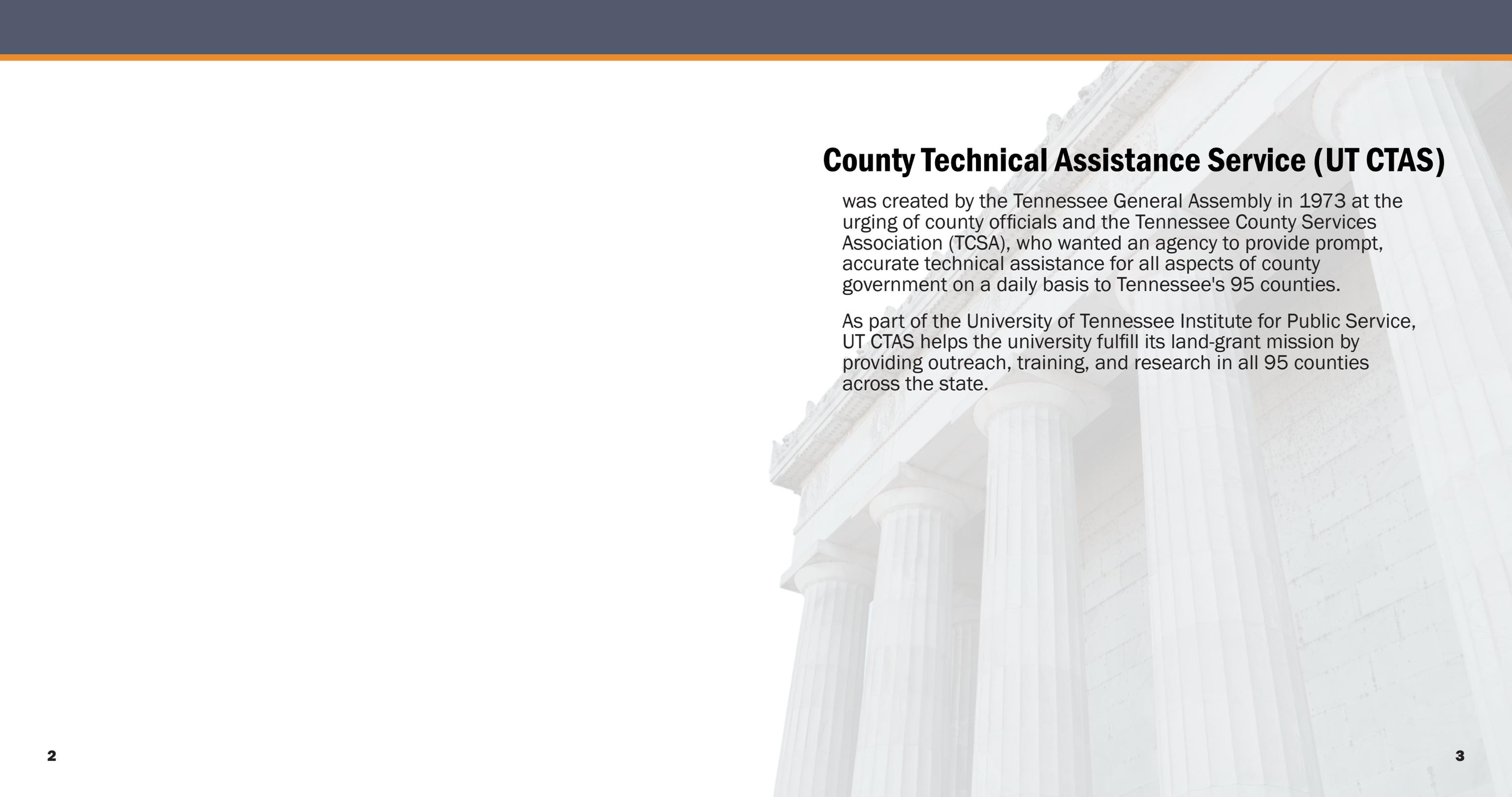


County Technical  
Assistance Service

INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

**2022**

*Staff Directory*

The background of the page features a faded, low-angle photograph of a grand classical building with several tall, fluted columns and a pedimented roofline. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid clearly.

## **County Technical Assistance Service (UT CTAS)**

was created by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1973 at the urging of county officials and the Tennessee County Services Association (TCSA), who wanted an agency to provide prompt, accurate technical assistance for all aspects of county government on a daily basis to Tennessee's 95 counties.

As part of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service, UT CTAS helps the university fulfill its land-grant mission by providing outreach, training, and research in all 95 counties across the state.

## Who We Are

T.C.A. § 49-9-402, the authorizing legislation that established UT CTAS as part of the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service (IPS), directs UT CTAS to:

*“...provide studies and research in county government, publications, educational conferences and attendance at the conferences, and to furnish technical, consultative, and field services to counties of the state in problems relating to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, improvements and public works, and in any and all matters relating to county government.”*

UT CTAS is staffed by a group of talented professionals with expertise in a variety of diverse subjects. Each county is a part of a region served directly by a single county government consultant who acts as the initial contact with the agency. County government consultants leverage the skills and knowledge of other specialists within UT CTAS to address specific needs and problems of the county.



## What We Offer

### Financial Services

UT CTAS offers assistance in every aspect of county government finance — budgeting, purchasing, investing, debt management, insurance and risk management.

### Legal Services

UT CTAS attorneys author many publications, draft and review legislative proposals, monitor General Assembly action, and compile the private acts of each county. Our attorneys also respond to questions and issue written legal opinions.

### Information Technology

UT CTAS information technology and regional field consultants assess information technology needs and help troubleshoot when counties encounter technical issues.

### Highway Services

UT CTAS helps highway departments prepare certifications of county road revenues, develop and maintain computerized road lists, analyze project costing and inventory management, and develop bid specifications for equipment.

### Public Safety Services

Officials across Tennessee turn to the UT CTAS criminal justice, jail management, emergency management and fire safety consultants for assistance in law enforcement, jail operations, facility and staffing needs evaluations, and employee and volunteer training.

### Environmental Services

UT CTAS environmental consultants provide information on recycling, solid waste collection, and landfill management. This work has become more important as counties cope with an increased number of state and federal regulations.

### Assessment Assistance

UT CTAS assists assessors of property and the property assessment community. Key areas of support include: reappraisal review and guidance; budget assistance; training opportunities; certified tax rate; calculating a penny value; onsite assistance and guidance for day-to-day operations; appeal advice; and city cost sharing calculations.

### Research & Analysis

UT CTAS provides statistical research and analysis of county revenues and expenditures, debt capabilities, state shared taxes, state appropriations, school funding and BEP, and other related financial matters pertaining to the operation of county governments.

### CTAS Electronic Library (e-Li)

The UT CTAS electronic library (e-Li) contains all the information formerly found in the UT CTAS county publications. The information is organized by topic and is easily searchable making it a great way to find answers to questions about Tennessee county government.

### Training Services

UT CTAS offers several training opportunities for county officials and their employees. Our programs cover a wide variety of topics related to county government, administrative operations, and technical skills.

### County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP)

COCTP is a comprehensive training program administered by UT CTAS. It is designed to provide specialized, technical, and managerial training to elected officials and their employees to help them run their office more effectively. It also offers a comprehensive review of county government. Graduates of COCTP earn the Certified Public Administrator designation.

### Certified County Finance Officer Program (CCFO)

The Comptroller of the Treasury and UT CTAS have developed the CCFO program that will provide Tennessee's county financial officers an opportunity to learn about accounting and financial reporting principles, understand how county governments are structured in Tennessee, and enhance their skills in order to carry out their responsibilities for the fiscal affairs of their county or department. UT CTAS administers the educational program and testing required to achieve the CCFO designation. The Comptroller's Office has been designated as the certification authority for this program.

### Commissioner Training

Tennessee law requires newly elected or appointed county commissioners to complete orientation training provided by UT CTAS within 120 days of being elected or appointed. Training can be completed at the County Officials Orientation Program during election years or through our online learning system, k@te.

### County Administrative Professional Certificate

The County Administrative Professional Certificate (CAPC) is designed for individuals who want to develop skills for a variety of administrative job functions or professional growth in relation to county government.

### Cybersecurity Awareness Training Certificate

The Cybersecurity Awareness Training Certificate is designed for individuals who want to have a solid understanding of cybersecurity, what it entails, and what you should do to prepare for a cyberattack.



*Interested in Training?*

Go to our website  
[www.ctas.tennessee.edu](http://www.ctas.tennessee.edu)



*Training Questions?*

Email us  
[ctas.support@tennessee.edu](mailto:ctas.support@tennessee.edu)

## Leadership



**Jon Walden**  
**Executive Director**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [jon.walden@tennessee.edu](mailto:jon.walden@tennessee.edu)**

Jon Walden, executive director, has been with UT CTAS since October 1993 as administrator of information technology. He was named executive director on December 1, 2021. Jon served as interim executive director from May 1, 2020 to November 30, 2021. Prior to serving as Interim executive director, Jon served as manager of information technology & environmental services from October 2002 until May 1, 2020. Before joining UT CTAS, he was a programmer analyst with Columbia State Community College. Jon holds a bachelor's degree in computer science from Tennessee State University and a master of arts in leadership and public service from Lipscomb University.

# Consulting Services

County government consultants are county officials' day-to-day connection with UT CTAS. While these consultants have specialty backgrounds, they are generalists who work within a geographical area. County officials should contact their county government consultant to initiate a request for assistance from UT CTAS.



**Jim Hart**  
**Manager of Field Services**

**Phone: (423) 413-7902**  
**Email: jim.hart@tennessee.edu**

Jim joined UT CTAS in January 2008. He began his career in corrections in 1975 while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. His 22-year career was spent working in five different Marine Corps correctional facilities, operating a correctional custody (boot camp program for minor offenders), and as the director of Marine Corps Corrections. Upon his retirement in 1997, Jim became jail captain for Hamilton County, where he was responsible for day-to-day operations. Later, he was promoted to chief of corrections responsible for the overall operation of the jail. He is a Certified Jail Manager with the AJA and a Certified Corrections Executive with the ACA. He holds a bachelor of science in criminal justice from Park College and a master of arts in leadership and public service from Lipscomb University. Jim was named manager of field services in April 2022.

# Primary Contacts for County Officials

County officials should contact their respective county government consultant to initiate a request for assistance from UT CTAS.

<p><b>Mike Galey</b> Region 8</p> <p>(731) 514-5499  <a href="mailto:mike.galey@tennessee.edu">mike.galey@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Benton, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, Weakley</p>	<p><b>Wesley Robertson</b> Region 6</p> <p>(931) 797-6474  <a href="mailto:wesley.robertson@tennessee.edu">wesley.robertson@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Macon, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson</p>	<p><b>Ben Rodgers</b> Region 4</p> <p>(931) 525-3535 or        (931) 510-6902  <a href="mailto:ben.rodgers@tennessee.edu">ben.rodgers@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, White</p>	<p><b>Rick Hall</b> Region 1</p> <p>(423) 282-4141 or        (423) 612-3325  <a href="mailto:rick.hall@tennessee.edu">rick.hall@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Carter, Claiborne, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington</p>
<p><b>Kelsey Schweitzer</b> Region 7</p> <p>(731) 336-3576  <a href="mailto:kelsey.schweitzer@tennessee.edu">kelsey.schweitzer@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Carroll, Chester, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McNairy</p>	<p><b>Melisa Kelton</b> Region 5</p> <p>(615) 969-5558  <a href="mailto:melisa.kelton@tennessee.edu">melisa.kelton@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Bedford, Davidson, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne</p>	<p><b>Heather Duncan</b> Region 3</p> <p>(931) 273-1080  <a href="mailto:heather.duncan@tennessee.edu">heather.duncan@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Bledsoe, Bradley, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie</p>	<p><b>Kaley Walker</b> Region 2</p> <p>(865) 898-9321  <a href="mailto:kaleywalker@tennessee.edu">kaleywalker@tennessee.edu</a></p> <p>Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Cocke, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Union</p>



**Rick Hall**  
**Region 1 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (423) 282-4141 or (423) 615-3325**  
**Email: rick.hall@tennessee.edu**

Rick joined UT CTAS in January 1992 as assistant county field advisor, working with counties which have adopted the Financial Management Act of 1981. Before coming to UT CTAS, Rick was finance director in Scott County. He serves counties in northeast Tennessee (Region 1). He has a bachelor's degree in political science and sociology and a master's degree in city management from East Tennessee State University.

**Serves Region 1:** Carter, Claiborne, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington



**Kaley Walker**  
**Region 2 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (865) 898-9321**  
**Email: kaley.walker@tennessee.edu**

Kaley joined UT CTAS in November 2017 as our Region 2 county government consultant, serving southern East Tennessee. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Kaley was the Rhea County finance director. She brings extensive experience in accounting, budgeting, and auditing. Prior to her position as finance director, Kaley worked in the private sector as an accountant and financial analyst. Kaley is a certified government financial manager and a graduate of Leadership Roane County and the Naifeh Center. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in Communications from Michigan State University and an MBA in Finance from Walsh College.

**Serves Region 2:** Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Cocke, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Union





**Heather Duncan  
Region 3 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (931) 273-1080  
Email: heather.duncan@tennessee.edu**

Heather joined UT CTAS in February 2021. Heather served as circuit court clerk in Coffee County from 1994 to 2021. During her tenure as clerk, Heather served as the president of the State Court Clerk's Association and as president of the County Officials Association of Tennessee (COAT) and earned the certified public administrator designation in June 1999. Heather has assisted in training newly elected circuit court clerks since 2002. Prior to being elected circuit court clerk, Heather was an accountant at the Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma. She holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a major in accounting from Tennessee Technological University. Heather earned a master's degree in business administration from Middle Tennessee State University with an emphasis in organizational management.

**Serves Region 3:** Bledsoe, Bradley, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie



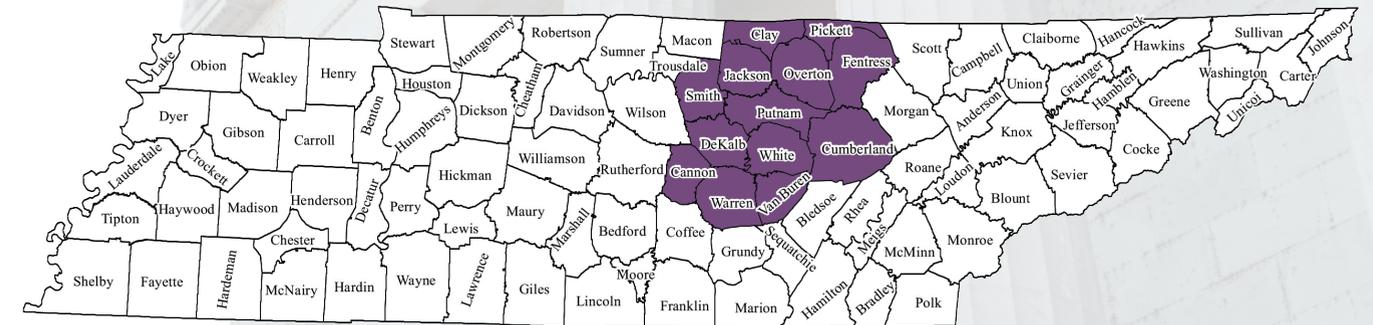
**Ben Rodgers  
Region 4 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (931) 510-6902  
Email: ben.rodgers@tennessee.edu**

Ben joined CTAS in 2005. He graduated from Tennessee Technology University in 2002 with a bachelor of science degree in business administration majoring in accounting. From 2002 through 2005 Ben worked in public accounting for a CPA Firm located in Nashville. He completed tax returns and audits for the music industry.

Ben is a native of Baxter in Putnam County and currently serves on the Putnam County commission. He also serves as a board member for the Emergency Communication District, the Highlands Residential Service, and the chamber of commerce. Ben became a Certified Fraud Examiner in 2019 and earned the designation of Certified Public Manager in 2020. He has been married to his wife, Amy, since 2008. They have three dogs; Bella, Sam, and Maggie.

**Serves Region 4:** Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, White





**Melisa Kelton**  
**County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (615) 969-5558**  
**Email: melisa.kelton@tennessee.edu**

Melisa joined UT CTAS in January 2017 as our finance and budget consultant. She was named county government consultant for the southern Middle Tennessee region in February 2020. She previously worked at the Center for Industrial Services, beginning in December 1996. She also has over 20 years of experience working in both private and public financial sectors. Melisa earned her undergraduate degree from Tennessee Technological University and her graduate degree from Middle Tennessee State University.

**Serves Region 5:** Bedford,, Davidson, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne

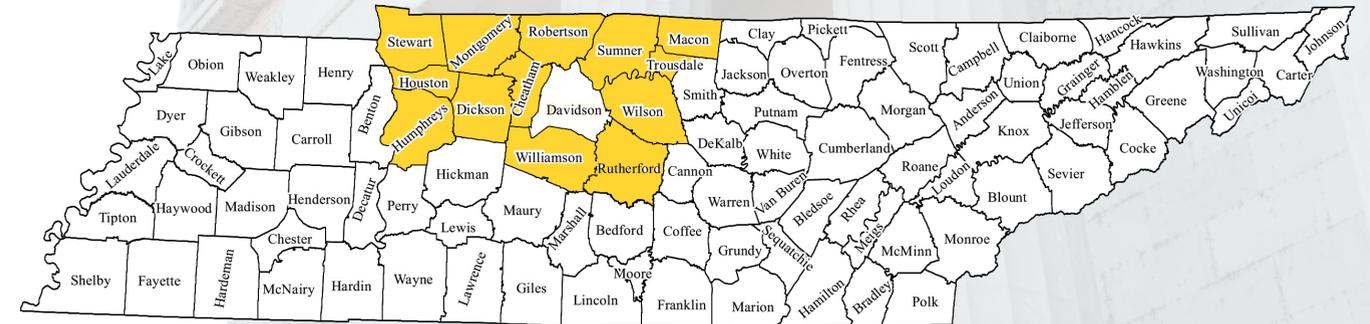


**Wesley Robertson**  
**Region 6 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (931) 797-6474**  
**Email: wesley.robertson@tennessee.edu**

Wesley joined UT CTAS in May 2011. Wesley received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Middle Tennessee State University and a master's degree in business administration from Tennessee Technological University. Prior to joining UT CTAS he served as the executive director of Local Finance with the Tennessee Department of Education. Wesley is also a certified government financial manager.

**Serves Region 6:** Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Macon, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson





**Kelsey Schweitzer**  
**Region 7 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (731) 336-3576**  
**Email: kelsey.schweitzer@tennessee.edu**

Kelsey joined UT CTAS in October 2017 as County Government Consultant for the southern West Tennessee region. He previously worked for the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury as a legislative auditor and in the banking industry. He earned a Master of Business Administration degree in 2017 and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, summa cum laude, in 2010, both from the University of Tennessee at Martin. Kelsey also earned the Certified Government Financial Manager designation in 2019.

**Serves Region 7:** Carroll, Chester, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McNairy



**Mike Galey**  
**Region 8 County Government Consultant**

**Phone: (731) 514-5499**  
**Email: mike.galey@tennessee.edu**

Mike joined UT CTAS in March 2011. Prior to his service with UT CTAS, he worked for 20 years with the Local Government Corporation, providing software training and support to city and county governments in Tennessee, managing the implementation and support staff for the last 10 of those years. Mike earned his masters of business administration in 2022 and a bachelor of science in business administration in 1986, both from the University of Tennessee at Martin. In 2020, he earned the designation of Certified Public Manager. Mike is married to his wife Ginger and they reside in Weakley County. They have two daughters and three grandchildren.

**Serves Region 8:** Benton, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Shelby, Tipton, Weakley



# Environmental Services

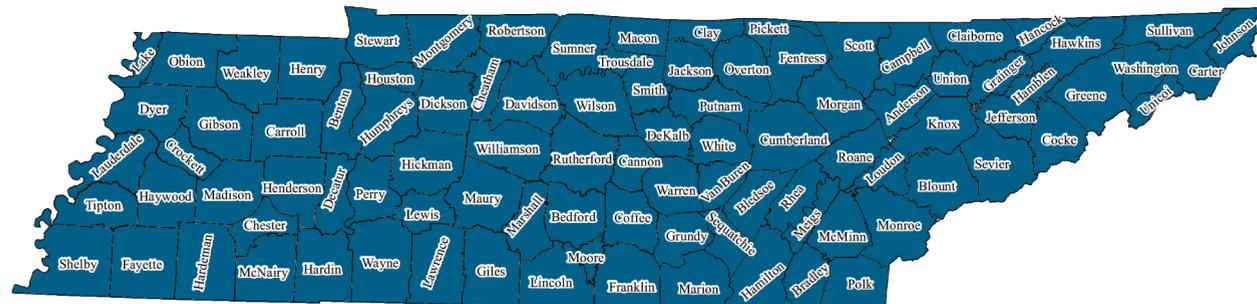
UT CTAS environmental services provide information on recycling, solid waste collection, and landfill management. This work has become more important as counties cope with an increased number of state and federal environmental regulations.



**Kim Raia**  
**Environmental Management Consultant**

**Phone: (865) 971-6434**  
**Email: [kim.raia@tennessee.edu](mailto:kim.raia@tennessee.edu)**

Kim has been with UT CTAS since 2000. Kim has worked in environmental services since the early 1980s. She has worked with federal, state and local officials on environmental issues related to GIS and land use planning, solid waste management, water quality, education, and environmental compliance. Kim holds three degrees from the University of Tennessee —bachelor's degrees in biology and geography and a master's degree in geography. She is a certified GIS Professional.



# Property Assessment Services

UT CTAS assists assessors of property and the property assessment community. Key areas of support include: reappraisal review and guidance; budget assistance; training opportunities; calculating a penny value; onsite assistance and guidance for day-to-day operations; appeal advice; and city cost sharing calculations.



**Joe Griffin**  
Property Assessment Consultant

Phone: (931) 215-1635  
Email: [joe.griffin@tennessee.edu](mailto:joe.griffin@tennessee.edu)

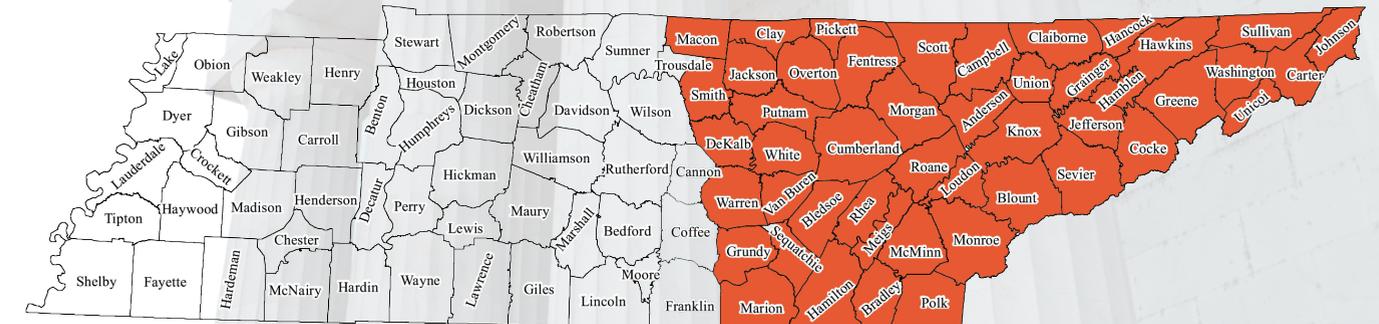
Joe joined UT CTAS in 2016 to become one of two property assessment consultants. Joe has over 23 years of property assessment experience. Prior to joining CTAS worked for the Metro Nashville Davidson County Property Assessor's office for three years where he served as the assessments manager. Prior to working for Davidson County, Joe worked as a Area Supervisor for the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury's Division of Property Assessments. In 2004 Joe earned the Residential Evaluation Specialist Designation (RES). He earned the designation of Tennessee Master Assessor in 2005, and he received the TNAO Award of Excellence in 2011. In 2012, he was awarded the IAAO designation of Assessment Administration Specialist (AAS). In 2017, he became an IAAO instructor. Joe earned his BBA in business management with a minor in general business/marketing from Austin Peay in 1993.



**Gabe Looney**  
Property Assessment Consultant

Phone: (865) 271-7803  
Email: [gabe.looney@tennessee.edu](mailto:gabe.looney@tennessee.edu)

Gabe joined UT CTAS in March 2017. Gabe has over 20 years of property assessment experience. Gabe previously worked for the Blount County Property Assessor's Office as the Assistant Property Assessor and for an assessor in Clay County, Florida, as a commercial/industrial field appraiser. After serving on the Executive Board of the Tennessee Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers he stays active as a committee chairman and as a state representative to IAAO. In 2017 he was awarded the IAAO designation of Assessment Administration Specialist and the Tennessee Master Assessor from the State Board of Equalization. Gabe earned his Bachelor of Arts with emphasis in Psychology and a minor in Criminal Justice from the University of North Florida in 1995.



# Public Safety Services

Public safety consultants provide specialized technical assistance to counties, especially to sheriffs and jail administrators. These consultants each cover all 95 counties in Tennessee.



**Jim Hart**  
**Manager of Field Services**

**Phone: (423) 413-7902**  
**Email: jim.hart@tennessee.edu**

Jim joined UT CTAS in January 2008. He began his career in corrections in 1975 while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. His 22-year career was spent working in five different Marine Corps correctional facilities, operating a correctional custody (boot camp program for minor offenders), and as the director of Marine Corps Corrections. Upon his retirement in 1997, Jim became jail captain for Hamilton County, where he was responsible for day-to-day operations. Later, he was promoted to chief of corrections responsible for the overall operation of the jail. He is a Certified Jail Manager with the AJA and a Certified Corrections Executive with the ACA. He holds a bachelor of science in criminal justice from Park College and a master of arts in leadership and public service from Lipscomb University. Jim was named interim manager of field services in January 2021.



**John Rose**  
**Criminal Justice Consultant**

**Phone: (423) 956-1200**  
**Email: john.rose@tennessee.edu**

John joined UT CTAS in November 2017 as criminal justice consultant. John has an extensive background in law enforcement including 18 years of sworn law enforcement experience. He has taught many classes on various law enforcement topics including active shooter situations, ethics, forensic science and counter terrorism. He has been an adjunct faculty member at East Tennessee State University and associate professor of criminal justice at Walters State Community College. Prior to his training career, John was a police officer in New Jersey and Kingsport, Tennessee. He has also worked for the Sullivan County Sheriff's Office in several roles since 1995. John earned a masters of arts in criminal justice and criminology in 2006, a bachelor of science in criminal justice in 1984, and an associate of science in law enforcement in 1982, all from East Tennessee State University.

# Finance & Budget Services

UT CTAS Finance & Budget Services includes support for county officials in relation to debt studies, budgeting assistance, and other financial needs. This group also supports many internal finance & budget processes.



**Kerry Watkins**  
**Finance & Budget Consultant**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [kerry.watkins@tennessee.edu](mailto:kerry.watkins@tennessee.edu)**

Kerry joined UT CTAS in June 2021. He is a graduate of Memphis State University with a bachelor's degree in finance. Kerry previously worked with Memphis City Schools/Shelby County Schools for 20 years and five years with the City of Memphis. In the last few years of Kerry's role with the school systems, he was responsible for leading the accounting function for the division of Nutrition Services. These duties included but were not limited to coordinating month end and year end close, working with external auditors, filing a monthly federal claim for reimbursement with the state of TN Dept of Education and preparing a yearly budget totaling \$60m to \$70m. His position as CIP senior financial analyst with the City of Memphis allowed him the opportunity to assist in developing and monitoring an \$88m budget for the city's capital improvement program.



**Pam Peters**  
**Accounting Specialist**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [pam.peters@tennessee.edu](mailto:pam.peters@tennessee.edu)**

Pam joined UT CTAS in March 1997. Previously, Pam was the office supervisor at the Center for Industrial Services (CIS), where she started in December 1988. Prior to working at CIS, she was the office manager and executive assistant to the director of the state of Tennessee Military Department Facilities Engineering office. She graduated from Draughtons Business College and has attended TSU and Nashville State Technical Community College.

# Legal Services

UT CTAS attorneys author many UT CTAS publications, draft and review legislative proposals, monitor Tennessee General Assembly action, and compile the private acts of each county. These lawyers also respond to questions and issue written legal opinions.



**Kristy Godsey Brown**  
**Manager of Legal Services**

Kristy joined UT CTAS in February 2007. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Kristy practiced real estate and regulatory law at a Nashville law firm. She received her bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, in political science from the University of Tennessee in 1999 and was the College of Arts and Sciences Top Graduate, graduating with a 4.0 GPA. She received her law degree from Vanderbilt University Law School in 2003 and was the Elliott E. Cheatham Scholar, a Dean's Scholar and on the Dean's List.



**Stephen Austin**  
**Legal Consultant**

Stephen joined UT CTAS in January 2003. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Steve served as an assistant attorney general for the State of Tennessee, assigned to the criminal justice division, handling federal and state capital case litigation. Before that, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a judge advocate, receiving the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He retired from the U.S. Marine Corps at the rank of major after 23 years of service. He received his law degree from the University of Memphis in 1989 and his bachelor's degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in 1986.



**Jeff Metzger**  
**Legal Consultant**

Jeff joined UT CTAS in 2007. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Jeff was an associate at Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis. He graduated magna cum laude from Tennessee Technological University with a bachelor of science degree in 2001. He received his law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2005, graduating summa cum laude. While at the University of Tennessee College of Law, he received a Chancellor's Citation for Extraordinary Professional Promise.



**Laylah Smith**  
**Legal Consultant**

Laylah joined UT CTAS in September 2020. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Laylah was the chief legal counsel for the Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC), where she focused primarily on legal issues affecting local government, government contracts, and employment law. Before joining GNRC, Laylah was a solo practitioner focusing mainly on elder and family law. Laylah received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Belmont University in 2004 and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, in 2008. She received her law degree from Nashville School of Law in 2013.

# Training Services

UT CTAS offers several training opportunities for county officials and their employees. Our programs cover a wide variety of topics related to county government, administrative operations, and technical skills.



**Nikki Ballentine, CPTM**  
**Manager of Training & Technology Services**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [nikki.ballentine@tennessee.edu](mailto:nikki.ballentine@tennessee.edu)**

Nikki joined UT CTAS in October 2019. Prior to joining UT CTAS, she was a senior instructional developer for the Cizik School of Nursing at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, Texas. She holds a master of science in instructional design & technology from Emporia State University, a master of education in workforce development education from the University of Arkansas; and a bachelor of arts in human development from Christian Brothers University. In 2021, Nikki earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM).



**Kim Henry, CPTM**  
**Training Consultant**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [kimberly.henry@tennessee.edu](mailto:kimberly.henry@tennessee.edu)**

Kim joined UT CTAS in January 2004. She was previously employed with the administrative office of the Tennessee Supreme Court as a conference coordinator. Prior to her experience with the Tennessee Supreme Court, Kim was a retirement specialist and marketing representative with the Treasury Department. She also has experience as a correctional officer with Corrections Corporation of America. Kim has a bachelor's degree in communications, with a criminal justice minor, from Tennessee State University. She earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM) in 2021.



**Chris Payne, CPTM**  
**Training Consultant**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: [chris.payne@tennessee.edu](mailto:chris.payne@tennessee.edu)**

Chris has been with CTAS since July 1999. Before Chris began working in the CTAS Training Department, he provided IT and GIS consulting to Tennessee counties. In addition, Chris has worked with the County Officials Certificate Training Program for more than twelve years. Chris has a bachelor's degree in geography from the University of Alabama. In 2021, Chris earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM).

## Technology Services

UT CTAS information technology and regional field consultants assess IT needs and help troubleshoot when counties encounter technical issues.



**Wes Doyle**  
**Communications Specialist**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: wesley.doyle@tennessee.edu**

Wes joined UT CTAS in November 2021. He comes to UT CTAS from a Franklin-based financial firm working in corporate marketing and digital strategy. Prior to that role, Wes worked for the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts (GACD), where he was responsible for communications, developing outreach plans, managing statewide partnerships, and providing technical assistance to farmers and landowners on behalf of conservation districts serving Fayette, Lamar, Monroe, Pike, Spalding, and Upson Counties in central Georgia. Wes is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science in mass communication and a Bachelor of Arts in political science. In his free time, Wes loves to cook, watch movies, read, listen to podcasts, and do DIY projects around the house.



**Liz Gossett**  
**E-Media & Information Specialist**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: liz@tennessee.edu**

Liz joined UT CTAS in September 2012. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Liz was a research associate for the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Long Range Planning Division. She received a bachelor of science in 2007 in urban policy studies and a bachelor of arts in sociology in 2005, both from Georgia State University in Atlanta. Liz graduated with a master of science in information science from the University of Tennessee in May 2015.



**Jacob Kennedy**  
**Database Consultant**

**Phone: (615) 532-3555**  
**Email: jacob.kennedy@tennessee.edu**

Jacob joined UT CTAS in February 2020 as database consultant. Prior to UT CTAS, he worked seven years as an information systems auditor for the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury and three years as the database administrator for the enterprise resource planning system of Williamson County. He earned a master of business administration from Middle Tennessee State University in 2016. Jacob has been a Certified Information Systems Auditor since 2013.

# Certified County Finance Officer (CCFO) Program

The Comptroller of the Treasury and UT CTAS have developed the Certified County Finance Officer (CCFO) program that will provide Tennessee's county financial officers an opportunity to learn about accounting and financial reporting principles, understand how county governments are structured in Tennessee, and enhance their skills in order to carry out their responsibilities for the fiscal affairs of their county or department. UT CTAS administers the educational program and testing required to achieve the CCFO designation. The Comptroller's Office has been designated as the certification authority.

## John Sutton, CPA, CPTM CCFO Program Manager

Phone: (865) 963-5633  
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John started with UT CTAS in July 2019 with 35 years' experience in local governmental accounting, auditing and financial reporting. Previously, John was a senior audit manager with PUGH CPAs, an RSM US Alliance Firm, and with another local certified public accounting firm both located in Knoxville. After graduating with a bachelor of business administration degree with a major in accounting from Middle Tennessee State University, he began his career as a staff auditor with the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury Division of Local Government Audit. John has extensive experience working with counties, boards of education, cities, utility districts and governmental pension and retirement plans. John has been a licensed certified public accountant in Tennessee since 1987 and in April 2021 he became a Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM). He is a member of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), Tennessee Society of CPAs (TSCPA), Association of Government Accountants (AGA) and the TN Government Finance Officers Association (TGFOA).



## Rachel Ellington, CPA, CPTM Training Consultant

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Rachel joined UT CTAS in February 2019. Previously, Rachel worked as the budget director for Haywood County and as a tax consultant for Deloitte Tax LLP. She graduated cum laude from the University of Mississippi with a bachelor of accountancy degree in 2013 and a Master of Taxation in 2014. Rachel is a licensed certified public accountant in Tennessee and a member of the American Institute for Certified Public Accounts and the Tennessee Society of CPAs. In 2021, she earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM).

## Kelley McNeal, CPA, CGFM, CPTM Training Consultant

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Prior to joining UT CTAS in July 2018, Kelley worked as an information systems auditor with the Comptroller of the Treasury's Division of Local Government Audit for 23 years. Kelley holds a bachelor of business administration in accounting and a master of business administration with an accounting concentration from Tennessee Technological University. She has served as an adjunct faculty member at Nashville State Community College and Tennessee Technological University. Kelley is a licensed certified public accountant and a certified government financial manager. In 2021, she earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM).



## Brandon Marks Training Consultant

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Brandon started with CTAS in March 2022. Prior to joining CTAS, Brandon worked as a legislative auditor with the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury for nine years. He holds a bachelor of science in business administration with a major in accounting from the University of North Alabama. Brandon earned a master's degree in business administration from Tennessee Technological University in 2012.



# Operations & Customer Service

UT CTAS prides itself on maintaining high-quality, responsive, and effective customer service for both external and internal customers.



**Gabrielle McCollum**  
**Manager of Operations & Customer Service**

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Gabrielle joined UT CTAS in 2018. Prior to joining UT CTAS, Gabrielle was in public education for 17 years in Texas as a classroom teacher and then as an instructional technology specialist. Gabrielle earned a bachelor of interdisciplinary studies degree in education from Abilene Christian University in Abilene, TX. She is a native of Colorado and loves to travel.

**Mary Grace Donaldson**  
**Administrative Intern**

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Mary Grace joined UT CTAS in November 2021 as an administrative intern. She works in the Nashville office and provides additional support for the Tennessee County Services Association in communication and legislative monitoring. Before coming to UT CTAS, Mary Grace worked with JohnsonPossKirby Government Relations in Nashville. She has experience in writing, government relations, and organization. Mary Grace earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Covenant College.



**DeAnna Ledbetter**  
**Administrative Coordinator**

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DeAnna joined UT CTAS in March 2020. She previously worked as a service consultant at Forklift Systems. She is a Tennessee native who loves to travel and spending time with her nephews.



**Rachel Ruble**  
**Administrative Coordinator**

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Rachel joined UT CTAS in August 2021. Prior to joining UT CTAS, she worked in higher education throughout Middle Tennessee for over 11 years, including eight years as an admissions advisor for Volunteer State Community College, helping students from application to graduation. She also worked previously in customer service within the private sector. She holds a bachelor of science degree in advertising from the University of Tennessee as well as an associate of science degree in communication from Volunteer State Community College.



**Karisma Williams, CPTM**  
**Operations & Customer Service Specialist**

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Karisma joined UT CTAS in February 2019. Prior to joining UT CTAS, she worked as the UT CTAS administrative intern at the Tennessee County Services Association. She holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration management from the University of Southern Mississippi and a master of public administration management degree from Arkansas State University. In 2021, Karisma earned the designation of Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM).



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