



County Officials Orientation Program 2026

Hosted by University of Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service
*in coordination with the Tennessee County Services Association and the
County Officials Association of Tennessee*

KEYS TO SUCCESS

"The way you begin often determines where you end."

"Small beginnings often lead to extraordinary endings."

"Take your first step with purpose, and the rest will follow."

LEADING THROUGH TRANSITION

Managing employee relations after local
government elections

THE CHALLENGE



**NEWLY ELECTED
OFFICIALS INHERIT
EXISTING STAFF**



**EMPLOYEES ARE OFTEN
LOYAL TO PREVIOUS
LEADERSHIP**



**EXPECTATION
UNCERTAINTY**



**RISK OF
PERFORMANCE
REDUCTION**

LEADERSHIP ISSUES



BUILD TRUST EARLY

- Hold individual meetings
- Listen to concerns
- Respect prior institutional knowledge
- Clarify leadership style

INCREASE COMMUNICATION

Clearly share priorities

Explain reasons for changes that may occur

Provide regular updates

Encourage open dialogue

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Include staff in planning

Create opportunities for feedback

Use collaborative problem solving

Encourage suggestions

CREATE SHARED GOALS

Align goals with employee input

Set clear, measurable expectations

Involve staff in goal setting

Focus on a shared mission of public service

HELPFUL HINTS

From Heather and Tyler



HINTS 1-5

01

Don't make
promises you
can't keep

02

Don't be
afraid to ask
stupid
questions

03

Trash the “30
year rule”

04

Learn
something
new everyday

05

Trust the
people
around you

MORE HELPFUL HINTS



**Keep morale high
in your office**



**Strive to be the
most professional
Clerks office in the
state**



**Save money where
you can**



**Develop a good working
relationship with your county
mayor, county legislative body
and your budget/finance
director**

ADVICE FROM HEATHER AND HER MEMA

1

Remember where
you came from and
who sent you here

2

Vow that when you are
no longer eager to help
people or listen to their
problems, you will seek
a new profession

3

Find a friend in the
Clerks Association or
contact me at (931)
273-1080 and I'll be
yours

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FROM TYLER



GOOD LUCK



RELAX



**ENJOY YOUR FIRST
FEW DAYS**

Congratulations!

Welcome to county government!

