



County Technical
Assistance Service

INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

STRATEGIC P L A N 2023-2028

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

The University of Tennessee (UT) County Technical Assistance Service (CTAS) is an agency of the UT Institute for Public Service (IPS). IPS is a statewide, system wide entity of the University that fulfills the University's public service mandate by applying its expertise to community and workplace needs. The work of CTAS is one of the many ways UT fulfills its outreach mission as a land-grant university to serve the citizens of Tennessee, by providing outreach to county governments.

CTAS was created in 1973 as an operating entity within the University of Tennessee to provide information, education, technical and managerial assistance for officials of Tennessee's 95 county governments (T.C.A. §§ 49-9-402, 54-4-103, 57-3-306 and 67-9-101 through 102). This founding legislation clearly articulates its partnership with Tennessee's county officials and specifically the Tennessee County Services Association by stating in part that "this program shall be carried on in cooperation with and with the advice of counties in the state acting through the Tennessee County Services Association and its board of directors, which is recognized as their official agency or instrumentality." In serving county officials, CTAS collaborates with agencies within IPS, the University system, state government, and federal government to leverage all resources and determine the best delivery of these services.

In 2003, CTAS acquired the County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP) when the Center for Government Training was dissolved. COCTP was initially created in 1989 through T.C.A. § 5-1-303 to provide continuing education for county government.

In 2018, the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury and CTAS developed the Certified County Finance Officer (CCFO) program that will provide continuing education for accounting and financial reporting principles, understanding how county governments are structured in Tennessee, and enhancing skills so county finance officials can carry out their responsibilities for the fiscal affairs of their county or department.

CTAS provides annual training for county commissioners to ensure they are well-equipped to serve their communities. Since September 1, 2018, newly elected or appointed commissioners must complete orientation training under T.C.A. § 5-5113, along with eight (8) hours of annual continuing education approved by CTAS. Training requirements, including exemptions, are outlined in state law. CTAS tracks and reports completed hours to the Tennessee Comptroller's Office, which publishes an annual report. Training covers key aspects of county government, helping commissioners make informed decisions and navigate local governance effectively.

CTAS also offers the County Officials Orientation Program (COOP) every two years for newly elected and re-elected officials. This training prepares them for office by covering county authority, legal and ethical duties, financial management, personnel policies, and public transparency, helping them serve constituents confidently.

CTAS' relationships with the Tennessee County Services Association (TCSA), Tennessee County Highway Officials Association (TCHOA), Tennessee Sheriffs' Association (TSA), County Officials Association of Tennessee (COAT), Tennessee County Commissioners Association (TCCA), Association of County Mayors (ACM), Tennessee Association of Assessing Officers (TNAAO), numerous state agencies, and most importantly Tennessee county officials, will influence the goals and objectives of CTAS and the success in obtaining its goals.

CTAS has been the answer to the technical assistance needs of county government for over 50 years and meeting county training needs for over 20 years. The goals set forth in this strategic plan are designed to ensure that CTAS continues to help counties and their associations deal with the daily demands and anticipated future needs of providing services to citizens.

VISION

To be the leading service provider of technical assistance and training to county governments in Tennessee.

MISSION

To promote better county government through direct assistance to county officials and their associations.

VALUES

Customer Service

Integrity

Innovation

Creativity

Organizational Excellence

PURPOSE

Helping Tennessee county government better serve its citizens.

Goal 1: Consulting Outreach

Improve the quality of Tennessee county government services by providing prompt, efficient, and accurate technical assistance.

OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVES

1. Provide expert consulting services to county government officials in the core areas of finance, law, and county operations and management, including but not limited to the following broad categories:
 - Legal
 - Financial
 - Property Valuation and Assessment
 - County Operations/Management
 - Environmental
 - Law Enforcement/Corrections
 - Fire/Emergency Services
 - Information Technology
2. Human Resources and Personnel
3. Provide managerial and technical assistance through personal contact.
4. Provide analysis, options and solutions to problems.
5. Identify new opportunities for improved government.
6. Provide quick response to emerging issues from federal and state government.

DASHBOARD/PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Number of projects and activities completed
- Level of customer satisfaction
- Number of customers served
- Number of counties served
- Amount of economic impact
- New opportunities for improved government



Goal 2: Training Outreach

Enhance the abilities of Tennessee county officials and their employees to perform their duties by providing quality training programs.

OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVES

1. Provide training for county government officials in areas such as leadership, management, and county government administration; and teach technical skills related to county operations.
2. Provide a multi-faceted delivery system for training, including classroom and online.
3. Enhance the quality of training programs and increase the number of graduates in the County Officials Certificate Training Program (COCTP), Certified County Finance Officers (CCFO) program, and county commissioner annual training program.
4. Provide timely training on emerging issues.
5. Develop new and enhanced existing certificate programs.
6. Work with IPS agencies to increase training opportunities available for county officials.

DASHBOARD/PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Number of contact hours delivered
- Number of participants served
- Number of COCTP graduates
- Number of CCFO graduates
- Number of county commissioner trainees
- Level of customer satisfaction
- Number of courses developed and delivered



Goal 3: Information Outreach

Enhance the abilities of Tennessee county officials and their employees to perform their duties by disseminating timely, accurate, and relevant information.

OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVES

1. Provide information to county government officials concerning county government management and administration.
2. Provide multi-faceted and innovative delivery systems for information and communications on pertinent issues affecting county government.
3. Provide timely information on emerging issues.
4. Ensure the website is customer-friendly.

DASHBOARD/PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Number of newsletters and emails opened
- Number of website users
- Number of social media followers
- Level of customer satisfaction



Goal 4: Association and Governmental Agency Outreach

Work with the associations representing county officials to better serve the interests of Tennessee county government, and act as a link between Tennessee counties and other governmental entities.

OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVES

1. Solicit input from county associations on the direction CTAS will take with regard to the services and programs provided by CTAS, as mandated by T.C.A. §§ 49-9-402 and 5-1-303, and meet with advisory committee for feedback and advice.
2. Provide assistance to all county associations in order to assist them in fulfilling their core functions and their role as an advocate for Tennessee county governments, including but not limited to providing technical assistance, conference support, training services, communications and publications assistance, and statistical and analytical research.
3. Work with state and federal government to provide technical assistance to counties, and to enhance the relationships between counties and those entities.
4. Provide trainings and briefings at association meetings as requested.

DASHBOARD/PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Number of association activities and projects
- Number of governmental activities and projects
- Amount of economic impact
- Number of trainings or briefings provided at association meetings



Goal 5: Organizational Excellence

Strive to improve the ability of CTAS as an organization to carry out its mission and vision.

OBJECTIVES/INITIATIVES

1. Recruit, retain, and develop a highly-qualified and diverse staff.
2. Provide competitive salaries based on the market salary plan.
3. Promote professional development.
4. Provide the most effective and appropriate resources available to enable employees to perform their jobs.
5. Promote collaboration and innovation.
6. Maintain balanced budgets with operating revenues meeting or exceeding operating
7. expenses.
8. Seek funding for CTAS endowments and other CTAS development priorities.
9. Use technology to enhance cost effectiveness.
10. Strengthen and streamline internal processes.

DASHBOARD/PERFORMANCE METRICS

- Percentage of employees at full market value
- Level of satisfaction as documented in the supervisor survey, employee engagement survey, and other employee surveys
- Maintenance of program funding sources
- Increase in private and foundational giving for development priorities
- Successful use of endowment and private funds to provide assistance to county governments
- Workforce diversity

