UT | **CTAS** 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. The goal is to help them run their office more efficiently and effectively. It also offers a comprehensive knowledge of the inner workings of county government. CTAS believes that having a broader understanding of county government operations will help officials and their employees serve their constituencies better. In short, graduates of COCTP will obtain a thorough knowledge of county government and will be designated as Certified Public Administrators.

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:

- Complete 7 Core classes, out of which 3 classes are mandatory, while 4 can be chosen by you;

- Complete 65 credits of electives;
(35 credits of County Electives; 30 credits of Choice Electives)

- Score at least 70% on the County Government Overview test;

- Score at least 70% on the Exit Exam; and

- Attend a 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:
- *County Government Environment**
- *County HR Issues**
- *County Operating Budget**
- Audit
- Capital Budgeting
- Debt Management
- Ethics
- Financial Issues
- Legal Issues – for each Elected Office
- Operating Budget
- Personnel
- Purchasing
- Risk Management

Required Core class.

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 65 credits of Electives (35 credits of County Electives and 30 credits of Choice Electives) 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 Capstoneevent, 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 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.

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 notification of your eligibility from CTAS 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 to login to our learning management system, called k@te. From the k@te welcome screen, click the Transcript button.

If you have forgotten your k@te username or password, please send an email to ctas.support@tennessee.edu to request assistance.

When does recertification begin and end?

Once you become a Certified Public Administrator, ou 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 Training on the CTAS website, then select the Credit Requests link at the bottom, and choose Recertification Credit from the Type of Request dropdown.

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:

- Paid enrollment fee ($300) within six months of completing first class;
- Completed 7 Core classes of which 3 are required;
- Completed 65 credits of elective classes (35 credits of County Electives and 30 credits of Choice Electives;
- Score at least 70% on the County Government Overview test;
- Score at least 70% on the Exit Exam; and
- 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 k@te, our learning management system, at kate.tennessee.edu/ctas. Click on any of the categories of COCTP Training Classes to view our various course offerings. Click on the class you'd like to attend, then Launch for Online Classes or View Details then Request for live in-person 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 or 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	7 Core classes must be complete • *County Government Environment** • *County HR Issues** • *County Operating Budget** • Audit • Capital Budgeting • Debt Management • Ethics • Financial Issues • Legal Issues – for each Elected Office • Operating Budget • Personnel • Purchasing • Risk Management ** Required Core Classes*	
ELECTIVE CLASSES	Complete 65 credits of Electives • 35 credits of County Electives • 30 credits of Choice Electives	
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW	Online course about county government operations using e-Li	
EXIT EXAM	Score of at least 70% on 50 question test	
CAPSTONE EVENT	Attend three-day program. Attendance at all three days is mandatory.	

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