



April 11, 2025

Prisoners

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Prisoners

Reference Number: CTAS-135

Prisoners who are required to work by or for the government are not considered employees under the FLSA and need not be paid minimum wages or overtime. Use of inmate labor does not violate the FLSA if the prisoner works for or is required to work by the government having custody of the prisoner. However, if the inmates are contracted out to a private contractor, this can create an employment relationship requiring the payment of wages in accordance with the FLSA if the private contractor exercises sufficient control over the prisoner to give rise to an employer-employee relationship. Even where minimum wage is required, deductions for restitution or other matters set by law or court order may reduce the wages below minimum wage so long as the employer does not gain from the deduction.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/eli/prisoners>