



March 11, 2025

Qualifications and Title-County Mayor

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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The office of county executive was created by the 1978 amendment to Article 7, Section 1, of the Tennessee Constitution, when county executive was added to the list of county officials named in the Tennessee Constitution. In the implementing legislation, the General Assembly chose to designate members of the county legislative body as county commissioners, but left the county executive with the title given in the constitution with the option of establishing a different title by private act. This law was changed in 2003 to provide that the chief executive officer of each county, excepting counties with a consolidated (metropolitan) form of government, would hereafter be entitled "county mayor." This law was amended in 2004 to authorize the title to be changed to "county executive" by private act for the particular county. This law was once again amended in 2007 to remove the authority to re-designate county mayors as county executives by private act, but private acts enacted prior to the 2007 amendment remain in effect. T.C.A. § 5-6-101. The chief executive officers of metropolitan governments continue to use the title provided for them by their metropolitan government charter.

County mayors serve terms of four years or until their successors are elected and qualified. Terms begin on the first day of September following the election. T.C.A. §§ 5-6-101 and 5-5-102. There is no limitation on the number of terms county mayors may serve in most counties. In counties with a county charter or metropolitan government charter, the term and possible term limitation for county mayors is determined by the county's charter.

The office of county mayor is subject to the general qualifications for county offices as well as these specific qualifications.

To hold the office of county mayor in any particular county, a person must be at least 25 years of age and must be a qualified voter of the county. He or she must also have been a resident of the county for one year prior to filing a nominating petition for election to the office. To maintain this office, once elected, the county mayor must continue to reside in the county and may not hold any other public office of profit. T.C.A. § 5-6-104.

County mayors are elected county-wide by the qualified voters of the county. Regular general elections are held on the first Thursday in August in even numbered years for county offices, at the same time as primary elections are held for state offices. T.C.A. §§ 5-6-101, 5-5-102, 2-3-202 and 2-13-202.

After election, the county mayor must take an oath of office and execute a surety bond. Oaths of office and Bonds are covered under the General Information tab of the County Offices topic.

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