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# Assessor of Property

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Dear Reader:

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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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## Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-43

The assessor of property was a statutory office for many decades before it became a constitutional office following the 1978 amendments to the Tennessee Constitution. The assessor of property is elected to a four-year term in the August general election in even numbered years in which there is not an election for governor. T.C.A. § 67-1-502. This places the election of the assessor in years different from the other county constitutional officers who are popularly elected.

## Qualifications-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-44

The office of assessor of property does not carry any election qualifications beyond the general qualifications for county offices. However, the state board of equalization is authorized to prescribe educational and training courses to be taken by assessors and their deputies and to specify qualification requirements for certification of anyone who is to be engaged to appraise and assess property for purpose of taxation and be deemed a "qualified local assessor of property." T.C.A. § 67-1-509.

## Oath of Office and Bond-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-45

Each assessor and deputy assessor must take and subscribe to a special oath of office. Oaths of office are covered under the General Information tab of the County Offices topic.

The oath, which is different from that of other county officials, is to be attached to and filed with the bond in the amount of \$ 50,000 in the county clerk's office. T.C.A. §§ 67-1-505, 67-1-507. Bonds are covered under the General Information tab of the County Offices topic.

## Compensation-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-46

The assessor of property is listed as one of the "general officers" who must receive at least the minimum salary amount determined by statute. The county legislative body may set a greater amount for the "general officers." T.C.A. § 8-24-102. Also, the county legislative body may set a greater amount just for the assessor if in the judgment of the county commissioners, additional compensation is necessary to attract and retain the service of assessors of professional competence, technical skills and needed administrative abilities. T.C.A. § 67-1-508. The state board of equalization prescribes educational and training courses to be taken by assessors and their deputies and provides certification to those who complete these courses. T.C.A. § 67-1-509. Assessors (and deputy assessors) may be additionally compensated by the state board if necessary course work and training has been completed and the assessor has been designated as a "Certified Assessment Evaluator" by the International Association of Assessing Officers. The additional compensation ranges from \$750 to \$1,500 annually. Also, any assessor (or deputy assessor) who has completed the necessary courses of study and training and has been designated a "Tennessee Certified Assessor" or a "Residential Evaluation Specialist" by the International Association of Assessing Officers will receive from the state an additional \$750 per year. T.C.A. § 67-1-508. Any assessor or deputy assessor who has been designated as a "Master Assessor" will receive from the state additional compensation of \$1,000 per year. T.C.A. § 67-1-508. Additionally, T.C.A. § 67-1-508(c)(1) provides that the State Board of Equalization may provide grants to counties to provide cash salary bonus supplements to property assessors and deputies meeting certain educational and training criteria.

More information on Compensation can be found under the General Information tab for County Offices.

## Deputies and Assistants-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-47

Unlike many other officials who obtain authority for deputies and assistants through court order or letter of agreement, the assessor is limited by the budget adopted by the county legislative body with the following restriction: The assessor is authorized by statute to appoint one deputy for each 4,500 parcels of property over and above the first 4,500 parcels in the county. Each deputy has the same power, duties, and liabilities as the assessor concerning the appraisal, classification, and assessment of property. If an assessor does not have enough parcels of property to qualify for a deputy, a secretary may be employed

to assist in the operation of the office, with the approval of the legislative body. T.C.A. § 67-1-506.

## Duties-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-48

The assessor's duties include two basic functions: appraisal and assessment of taxable real and personal property in the county that is not appraised by the state. For more information, see Assessment in Property Taxes under the Revenue topic.

## Relationship to County Legislative Body and Other Officials-Assessor of Property

Reference Number: CTAS-49

The assessor must interact with the county mayor and/or a finance/budget director as well as the county legislative body regarding the assessor's budget and budget amendments. The exact procedures vary from county to county depending upon whether the county operates under a charter or optional general law regarding budgeting, or has a private act dealing with this subject. However, all assessors must submit budget requests in a timely manner in the first half of each calendar year for inclusion in the county's annual budget. Most counties have budget committees that may recommend appropriations for the assessor's budget that differ from that submitted by the assessor. The county legislative body determines the amount of the assessor's budget, subject to certain restrictions such as the requirement to fund a deputy for each 4500 parcels of land in the county over the first 4500 parcels.

The assessor has an important relationship with the county trustee. The assessor annually submits to the trustee the tax roll of the county, which includes the appraised and assessed valuation, including use value for "greenbelt" qualifying property; submits certification to the trustee for errors discovered in the tax rolls within specified time limits, as well as back assessments and reassessments of property; and certifies to the trustee changes in the classification of "greenbelt" property that requires the collection of rollback taxes.

The assessor also has an important relationship with the register of deeds in gathering information as each change of property ownership must be noted by the assessor as well as changes in value reflected in affidavits of value on deeds subject to the state transfer tax. Some county legislative bodies cause the offices of register and assessor to be located next to each other to facilitate the transfer of information. Other changes of ownership may be reflected in probated wills and divorce decrees; therefore, a good working relationship with the clerks of court also helps the assessor maintain up-to-date assessment rolls.

The assessor must also interact with county and state boards of equalization in determining the correct valuation of property when the taxpayer appeals the assessment.

The assessor receives assistance from the Division of Property Assessments, which has a major role in the periodic reassessment of property in the county. Certain utility property, such as that of telecommunications companies, railroad companies and pipeline companies, are centrally assessed by the Office of State Assessed Properties (OSAP), Comptroller of the Treasury. The state Board of Equalization reviews the assessments made by the comptroller and upon certification of these assessments, the comptroller certifies these valuations to the assessor and trustee of the county where the properties lie. T.C.A. §§ 67-5-1329, 67-5-1331. The assessor incorporates these central assessments into the county's tax roll.

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