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# Jurisdiction of Circuit Court

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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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# Jurisdiction of Circuit Court

Reference Number: CTAS-490

The General Assembly may establish circuit courts, and may increase or diminish the jurisdiction. Tenn. Const., art. VI, §§ 1, 8. The court has general jurisdiction in all cases where jurisdiction is not conferred on another tribunal. T.C.A. § 16-10-101. The court may hear and determine suits of an equitable nature, if there is no objection, or may transfer such cases to the chancery court. If the circuit court chooses to hear an equity case, it must determine the case upon equity principles and may exercise equitable powers. T.C.A. § 16-10-111.

The circuit court has exclusive original jurisdiction in the following cases:

1. Correction of mistakes in deeds of conveyance of land or registration thereof. T.C.A. § 66-5-107;
2. Applications to restore citizenship by persons who have been rendered infamous by judgments of any court in the state. T.C.A. §§ 16-10-104, 40-29-101;
3. All matters relating to the seizure and destruction of intoxicating liquor if the circuit court has jurisdiction in a particular county over offenses against the state liquor laws. T.C.A. § 57-9-105;
4. Eminent domain cases and *in rem* eminent domain cases brought by the county, state, or United States. T.C.A. §§ 29-16-104, 29-17-701;
5. Motions to impose a \$500 forfeiture upon the county trustee for certain breaches of duty, and to impose liability on the trustee and the trustee's surety for breach of duty. T.C.A. § 8-11-106 through 8-11-108;
6. Writs of mandamus to enforce the performance of any duty made incumbent by law upon the county. T.C.A. § 5-1-107;
7. Suits to condemn land for the failure to pay taxes where personal property does not satisfy the distress warrant and where the sheriff has levied upon the real estate. T.C.A. §§ 67-4-110(c), 67-4-215(c);
8. Motions to proceed against any tax collector or other officer of the state who fails to collect taxes, who fails to pay over taxes received by him, or who commits any act of neglect, misprision, misfeasance, or malfeasance in office. T.C.A. §§ 67-1-1602(b), 67-1-1623(a); and
9. Petitions by the circuit court clerk, and the sheriff in counties without a separate criminal court, requesting authority to hire deputies or assistants. T.C.A. § 8-20-101.

Unless otherwise provided, the circuit court has appellate jurisdiction of all actions of any nature instituted before any inferior jurisdiction, whether brought by appeal, certiorari, or in any other manner prescribed by law. T.C.A. § 16-10-112. An appeal may be taken to the circuit court from the judgment of the general sessions court, city judge, recorder or other officer of a municipality. T.C.A. §§ 27-5-101, 27-5-108, 6-21-508. In 1996, the legislature amended Title 4, Chapter 21, to allow the circuit court to share jurisdiction with the chancery court over human rights actions. In 1997 the legislature also amended T.C.A. § 37-1-159 to give the circuit court appellate jurisdiction over unruly child proceedings and dependent and neglect proceedings heard in the juvenile court. In these cases, the circuit court shall try the case de novo.

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