



February 05, 2025

Purchase, Sale and Lease of County Property

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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Reference Number: CTAS-577

Counties are statutorily authorized to acquire and hold property for county purposes. They may also make contracts governing its management, control, and improvement and may also dispose of their properties. T.C.A. § 5-7-101; Op. Tenn. Att'y Gen. 87- 133 (Aug. 5, 1987). Counties have the authority to levy taxes to build, extend, or repair county buildings. T.C.A. § 5-5-122. Counties are authorized under T.C.A. § 5-7-116 to lease land and buildings owned by them.

Counties are also authorized by T.C.A. § 7-51-901 *et seq.* to enter into long and short-term contracts, leases, and lease-purchase agreements. Long-term contracts are specifically authorized by statute, although lease terms for capital improvement property may not exceed forty (40) years or the useful life of the property, whichever is less. T.C.A. § 7-51-902. When the term of the contract, lease, or lease-purchase agreement is less than five (5) years, the agreement must be approved by a resolution of the county legislative body. If the agreement is for a term greater than five (5) years, county legislative body approval is also required, and public notice of the proposed contract must be given at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. T.C.A. § 7-51-904.

Before the county may sell, lease, exchange, option or make any material disposition of the assets of a hospital owned or operated by the county, the county must comply with the Public Benefit Hospital Sales and Conveyance Act of 2006. This act requires the county to give written notice to the state attorney general containing such information regarding the proposed action as the attorney general may require and then to publish this notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. The attorney general will examine the proposed transaction and report on it. T.C.A. § 48-68-204.

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