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# Estimating Revenues

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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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# Estimating Revenues

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A common method for projecting the next fiscal year's estimates is to take the current year's eight or nine months actual, divide by the number of months, and multiply by 12 for a full year's estimate. This method assumes that the estimated three or four months' average will be the same as the actual months of receipts. However, very few revenues follow an average, constant pattern. The operating budget includes revenues from many sources (local, state, and federal). To be more accurate in preparing estimates, the budget coordinator should review each revenue separately, and use a different method to project each revenue. The following two methods are suggested for the various revenue sources.

1. Revenue Estimates Based on Precise Factors. Revenues from the state and federal governments for specific or earmarked purposes are based on precise factors; therefore, each revenue source must be individually calculated based on these factors. Below are the revenue sources included in this category.

- State grants
- State reimbursements
- State educational payments
- Federal educational payments
- Federal grants
- Contracts with other local governments and citizen

2. Revenues That Fluctuate Monthly. This group of revenue fluctuates monthly based on the economy, collection procedures, or legally required payment deadlines. A best method to estimate revenue is to (1) compare the current year's receipts for the same period of time for the previous year, (2) calculate the percentage increase or decrease, and (3) apply this percentage change to the uncollected months. The sum of this year's actual plus the projected uncollected months will provide a reasonable estimate for the current year. For estimating next year's receipts, use the current year's revised estimates and add or decrease using your best judgment. The revenue sources which best fit this group are—

- Current property taxes
- Delinquent property tax
- Litigation taxes
- Pick-up taxes
- Interest and penalties on property tax
- Business taxes
- Local option sales tax
- Wholesale beer tax
- Hotel/motel tax
- In-lieu of tax payments
- License and permits
- Wheel tax
- Fines
- State beer tax
- State alcoholic beverage tax
- State gas and fuel taxes
- State mixed drink tax
- Charges for current services
- Ambulance charges
- Fees in-lieu of salary or excess fees collections
- Other similar revenues

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