



March 11, 2025

Relationship to County Legislative Body and Other Officials-Clerks of Court

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-82

The court clerk must interact with the county mayor and/or a finance/budget director as well as the county legislative body regarding the clerk'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 court clerks 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 clerk's budget that differ from those submitted by the court clerk. The county legislative body determines the amount of the clerk's budget, subject to certain restrictions, such as following the requirements of any court order regarding a salary suit for deputies or assistants. In many counties, depending upon the applicable law, the county mayor has the authority to approve line item amendments to the clerk's budget within major categories not affecting personnel, whereas major category amendments require the approval of the county legislative body. T.C.A. § 5-9-407.

Of course the clerks have a close working relationship with the judges or chancellors of the courts they serve. A good working relationship between judge and clerk is vital to the efficient operation of the courts. Court clerks also interact regularly with the office of sheriff and collect sheriff's fees as part of the bill of costs. Process directed to the sheriff is returned by the sheriff or deputy to the court clerk. The sheriff executes on property in proper cases and returns funds to the clerk to allocate according to law. If a county has constables who serve process, the court clerk may also interact with these officials in the performance of their duties.

All clerks interact with the trustee in the regular remittance of fees and local litigation taxes. Clerks and masters interact with the trustee and the delinquent tax attorney regarding collections of delinquent property taxes and tax sales.

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