

Municipal Court Clerk Certification Program

WHAT IS IT?

The Municipal Court Clerk Certification Program was established to encourage professional development and educational growth for court support personnel. It is sponsored by the Texas Court Clerks Association (TCCA) in cooperation with the Texas Municipal Courts Association (TMCA), the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC), and Texas State University-San Marcos.

The certification program is comprised of three levels. Participants will achieve certification upon successful completion of each of the three levels, earning the titles of Certified Court Clerk Level I, Certified Court Clerk Level II, and Certified Municipal Court Clerk.

Education

The applicant must provide proof that within three years preceding application, the applicant has successfully completed 40 hours of training sponsored by TCCA, TMCA, or TMCEC or an alternate approved provider; or a combination thereof.

Certification Exams

Participants in the program must pass a certification test to advance at each of the three levels. The tests are offered throughout the year. The 2013-2014 test schedule and test application can be found on the TMCEC website: www.tmcec.com. An individual may retake an exam until a passing grade is obtained. Level I and Level II exams have study guides which can be purchased from TMCEC or printed here: http://www.tmcec.com/Programs/Clerks/Study_Guides. The Level III exam is taken from 16 management books. For Level III, study questions are available online at www.tmcec.com.

Application

Once participants have completed 40 hours of education and passed the exam, application must be made. Applications must include proof of education hours, and proof of passing the exam. Applications can be found on the TMCEC website and the submitted to the Program Coordinator at TMCEC.

Continuing Education Requirement

In order to maintain certification at each of the three levels, it is required that the continuing education requirement be met each academic year. In order to maintain the Level I and Level II certification, 12 hours of continuing education must be completed each academic year (September 1-August 31). For those who are Certified Municipal Court Clerks, the continuing education requirement is 20 hours each academic year.

Clerks certified at each level must submit proof of their continuing education hours in order to maintain certification. A *Municipal Court Clerk Certification Renewal Application* must be completed and returned to TMCEC with the required documentation prior to September 1st each year.

WHAT'S NEW?

Level III Reading List: Effective September 1, 2012 two books will be added to the Level III Reading List. *Manager's Toolkit: The 13 Skills Managers Need to Succeed*, and *Skills for New Managers*. These books will replace *Management of Organizational Behavior* for Part C of the Level III exam. Testers will have until December 31, 2012 to decide which book to test on.

In Office testing: Testing at the TMCEC office is open to first time testers as well as retakes. Call TMCEC to set up an appointment.

Renewals: Starting in FY 2012 participants who have completed their continuing education requirements for the previous year, but fail to timely file their renewal application by the August 31st deadline, will be given two options to become compliant. The first option is to pay a \$50 late filing fee and then complete the standard 12 hours of continuing education in the following year. The second option is to complete 24 hours (for Level I and II) or 40 hours (for Level III) of education in the following year. Both options will satisfy the requirements. Please note: This policy only applies to participants who completed their education hours, but **did not** timely file their renewal application.

Webinars: TMCEC Archived Webinars can now be used for Clerk Certification Credit (up to **eight** hours). NCSC webinars, live or archived, can also be used for Clerk Certification Credit (up to **eight** hours). Please note: The total hours of online credit that can be obtained is 8 hours.

Participants no longer employed by a municipal court: If you are no longer employed by a municipal court, you will no longer be contacted with reminders for certification renewal purposes. Sole responsibility for verifying and maintaining standing lies with the participant.

TMCEC Pre-Conference Preparation Courses: TMCEC's four-hour study session is **free** of charge to attend. Study guides can be printed free of charge from www.tmcec.com or purchased for \$25.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I become certified?

In order to become certified at a particular level, a clerk must:

1. Pass the test for the level desired,
2. Fulfill the educational requirements, and
3. Fax or mail a completed application with the required documentation to TMCEC.

What does a completed application packet include?

A completed application packet must include:

1. A completed application for certification,
2. Proof of passing the exam within three years preceding the application for certification, and
3. Proof of completion of educational requirements within the three years prior to applying (which may include the following: certificates of completion from TMCEC training seminars; certificates of completion from other qualified training seminars; and/or proof of attendance at annual conferences of the TCCA or TMCA).

When are the tests?

TCCA administers exams usually from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. the day after each TMCEC regional clerks seminar. Four exceptions to this are the Assessment Clinic where testing will take place on the **first day** of the seminar from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the Traffic Safety Conference, Juvenile Case Managers Seminar and the Court Administrator Conference where testing will take place on the **last day** from 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. TCCA offers testing throughout the year at local chapters and at the annual TCCA conference.

What are the continuing education requirements?

Each academic year (September-August), Level I and Level II certified court clerks must attend 12 hours of continuing education. CMCC, Level III certified court clerks, must attend 20 hours of continuing education.

Which agencies are approved providers for continuing education?

TCCA, TMCA, TMCEC, Institute for Court Management, National Center for State Courts, TDLR Approved Court Interpreter Training, Teen Court Conference and National Association of Court Managers are all approved providers.

What happens if I do not meet my continuing education requirements?

If the continuing education requirements are not met for an academic year, including submitting the renewal application and documentation to TMCEC, those persons are not viewed as being certified for that year. In order to maintain certification, Level I and Level II certified clerks will be required to attend 24 hours of education the following year and *Certified Municipal Court Clerks (Level III)* will be required to attend 40 hours of education the following year.

If the continuing education requirements are not met for two or more academic years, including submitting the renewal application and documentation to TMCEC, those persons lose their certification and will be required to re-take the exam and re-apply for certification at Level I, regardless of prior certification.

How much will it cost to get Level I certification? My city wants to know so they can include it in the budget.

Optional Costs:

* *TCCA Annual Membership* - \$40
(www.texascourtclerks.org)

* *Study Guides:*

Level I - \$25 + \$3 Shipping

Level II - \$25 + \$3 Shipping

* *Pre-conference Preparation Courses:*

Level I - Free

Level II - Free

* *Level III Books:*

Approximately \$500

Study guides may be downloaded at no charge from the TMCEC web site: www.tmcec.com, and Level III books may be borrowed from TMCEC for a \$100 deposit.

Mandatory Costs:

* *Test Registration Fees:*

Level I - \$50 for TCCA members
\$90 for non-members

Level II - \$50 for TCCA members
\$90 for non-members
\$25 per part for re-tests

Level III - \$50 for TCCA members
\$90 for non-members
\$25 per part for re-tests

* *Assessment Clinic:*

\$100 registration fee (for Level III certification)

* *Court Administrators Seminar:*

\$100 registration fee (for Level III certification)

These are estimates only and subject to change based on costs of materials and grant restrictions for any given year.

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